

# Academic and Non Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy and Procedures

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. to ensure that Monash College (MC) and Monash University English Language Centre (MUELC) have processes to enable student academic and non academic complaints and grievances to be resolved as quickly, inexpensively and effectively as possible;
2. to ensure that the resolution of student academic and non academic complaints and grievances follows standard procedures across MC and MUELC; and
3. to codify, collate and publish internal student complaints and grievance procedures in accordance with Commonwealth Government requirements.

This policy is available on the MC website at:

<http://www.monash.edu/monashcollege/australia/currentstudents/policies/grievance/>.

Hard copies of this policy are also available by contacting Dr Greg Cusack on (03) 9905 5507 or by email: [Greg.Cusack@college.monash.edu.au](mailto:Greg.Cusack@college.monash.edu.au).

## Scope

This policy applies to complaints and grievances that are lodged by:

1. a person currently enrolled in studies at MC or MUELC (a current student);
2. a person who has completed studies at MC or MUELC within the last six months (a past student); and
3. a person seeking to enrol in a course of study at MC or MUELC (a prospective student).
4. This policy and procedure covers complaints and grievances of an academic and non academic nature. There are separate policies that cover exclusion, discipline, harassment and discrimination. A different range of people may be involved in different complaints.

Current and past students may lodge academic or non academic grievances. Prospective students may only lodge non academic grievances relating to the admissions process.

Current, past and prospective students are entitled to utilise this grievance procedure within the parameters set out above, regardless of the location of the MC or MUELC campus, the student's place of residence, or the mode in which they study (or propose to study).

## Definitions

*Student* – a prospective, current or past student of MC or MUELC

*Complaint* – an expression of dissatisfaction from a student with a process, decision or service offered or provided by MC or MUELC

*Student Grievance* – a written notice expressed by an MC or MUELC student following an unresolved complaint which initiates the Student Academic and Non Academic Complaints and Grievances Procedures

*Completion of studies* – the date on which the final results of a course in which a student is enrolled are ratified

*Studies* – academic activities undertaken to fulfil the requirements of an MC higher education course or single unit, or a MUELC course of study

*Course of study* – an award, non-award or enabling course at MC or MUELC

*Working days* – all days other than Saturdays, Sundays, and university holidays

*Monash College Pty Ltd* – the Company which owns MC and MUELC

## **Principles of the Student Academic and Non Academic Complaint and Grievance Policy**

MC and MUELC are committed to the effective and efficient resolution of student complaints and grievances. The principles of this policy are outlined below:

1. All students will be advised during MC / MUELC orientation programs of complaint and grievance policies and procedures and student support services.
2. All student complaints and grievances will be handled in a serious, sensitive, confidential and timely manner and discussed only with those persons relevant to the case or who can provide specialist advice.
3. It is desirable that student complaint and grievance procedures are kept as informal as possible, based on principles of mediation and negotiation.
4. Students who lodge a complaint in accordance with this policy or appeal at any level in accordance with this policy will not be victimised or discriminated against..
5. Staff involved in resolving student complaints or grievances will act fairly at all times and ensure that decisions will be based on a thorough and unbiased consideration of the facts and the views expressed by all parties.
6. No action will be taken or suggested to a student without consultation with the relevant staff member.
7. Outcomes or decisions reached through application of complaints and grievances must be achievable within MC's and MUELC's lawful powers and policies, and State or Commonwealth legislative requirements.
8. This policy will be communicated to academic and support staff through the Monash College Pty Ltd intranet site and the MC and MUELC websites. The Executive Principal, MC, and the Principal, MUELC, will be responsible for the training of academic staff in the application of this policy. Team Leaders and Managers are responsible for the training of support staff.
9. Students will not be charged for making a complaint or lodging a grievance.
10. Students' enrolment status will not be affected by the lodging of a complaint or grievance.

## **Procedural Matters**

1. Students are encouraged to raise their complaints directly with the person concerned in the first instance. If effectively handled, most complaints will not escalate to the level of a grievance.
2. Students may only make a complaint or give notice of a grievance according to this policy.
3. Students making complaints or lodging grievances will be made aware of relevant support services.
4. Students and staff members may be accompanied by one support person at any mediation, consultation or hearing. This person may be a student advisor, staff or student member of MC or MUELC, a family member or any other person approved by the leader of the mediation or consultation (although the accompanying person is not to act as an advocate for the student or staff member).
5. Students may withdraw a grievance at any stage by giving written notice to the officer currently handling the grievance.
6. Where it is determined to be frivolous or vexatious, a student's complaint or grievance may be dismissed. In this case the student will be notified in writing of their right of appeal, the appeal process and support available.
7. Records of all grievances, applications for the review of decisions, and the outcomes of the grievance process will be retained for a period of five years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and filed separately to the student or staff file. Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.

## Complaint and Grievance Procedures

### Making a complaint

1. A student should attempt to resolve the complaint with the staff member concerned.
2. If the complaint is not resolved informally or it involves an allegation of bias on the part of the staff member concerned, the student may direct the complaint to the staff member's supervising officer.

### Lodging a grievance

1. If the complaint is not resolved, the student may make a written request for resolution of the matter to the Grievance Officer. This matter is now considered a grievance. Students may seek assistance from Student Advisors in preparing a written grievance. [The pro forma Grievance form is available on this link.](#)
2. Students should lodge a grievance with the Division, Section or Unit responsible for the function that has given rise to the grievance.

### Role of the Grievance Officer

1. The Grievance Officer must ensure that their name and contact details are published in the MC Student Resource Guide, the MUELC Student Handbook and on the MC and MUELC websites.
2. To avoid conflicts of interest or a perceived bias, at least one Assistant Grievance Officer will be appointed to process cases where the Grievance Officer is personally involved or unavailable.
3. The Grievance Officer must record and monitor the number and nature of grievances received from students.

4. The Grievance Officer must maintain a file of all correspondence and communication in relation to a grievance.

### **Processing of the grievance**

1. The Grievance Officer will assist students to determine whether the grievance is academic or administrative in nature, record details of the grievance, acknowledge the receipt of the grievance and explain the timelines for resolution and any other relevant information.
2. The Grievance Officer will provide students with information about relevant student support services.
3. In the case of an Academic grievance (which relates to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study), the Grievance Officer will direct the matter to the Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), and the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances). In the case of an administrative grievance, the Grievance Officer will direct the matter to the Director, Education Division.

### **Investigation and conciliation**

1. The person to whom the grievance has been directed will attempt to resolve it through investigation and conciliation, and may also direct students to appropriate support services.
2. The person to whom the grievance has been directed must conduct an investigation, normally within ten working days of receiving the grievance, and consult with relevant staff.
3. The person to whom the grievance has been directed may determine that the grievance is frivolous or vexatious, and decide that no inquiry is necessary. The student must be advised in writing of this decision.
4. The person to whom the grievance has been directed may call a conciliation meeting with all parties concerned, for the purpose of arriving at an agreed resolution. The findings of the investigation to date may be presented at this meeting in writing which will normally be held within ten working days of the conclusion of the investigation.
5. If, due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. staff on leave), an investigation or conciliation cannot be concluded within ten working days, the person to whom the grievance has been directed will keep the student informed of the status of the matter and the reasons for any delay.
6. If a resolution cannot be reached after two conciliation meetings, the person to whom the grievance has been directed will offer MC's or MUELC's best available solution to the student in writing. If the student does not accept this offer, details of the grievance will be forwarded to the Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances), or the Director, Education Division (for administrative grievances), within ten working days of the conclusion of the investigation or dismissal of the grievance.
7. If the grievance relates to Monash College's or MUELC's determination that an international student is not achieving satisfactory course progress, and the student has chosen not to access the complaints and grievance policy and procedures within 20 working days, withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the determination of Monash College or MUELC, the Department of Education, Science and Training will be informed of the student not achieving satisfactory progress as soon as practicable.

## **Role of the Executive Principal, MC, the Principal, MUELC, and the Director, Education Division**

1. The Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances), or the Director, Education Division (for administrative grievances), will conduct an investigation and may consult with any person relevant to the matter.
2. The Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances) or the Director, Education Division (for administrative grievances), will reach a decision within twenty working days from receipt of the grievance.
3. The Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances), or the Director, Education Division (for administrative grievances), will communicate the decision by registered mail to the student and any other affected parties within ten working days of making the decision.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Principal, MC, (for MC grievances), the Principal, MUELC, (for MUELC grievances), or the Director, Education Division (for administrative grievances), the student may appeal at no financial cost, in writing, to:

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority  
(03) 9637 2775  
PO Box 266 Melbourne VIC 3001

OR

The Victorian Ombudsman  
Level 9, 459 Collins Street (North Tower)  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Telephone: (03) 9613 6222  
Toll Free: 1 800 806 314  
Facsimile: (03) 9614 0246  
Email: [ombudvic@ombudman.vic.gov.au](mailto:ombudvic@ombudman.vic.gov.au)

If the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) or the Victorian Ombudsman makes recommendations in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, those recommendations will be forwarded to the Grievance Officer within 30 working days who will be responsible for implementing or effecting such recommendations within 30 working days.

If, in the opinion of the Grievance Officer, any recommendations made by the VRQA or the Victorian Ombudsman cannot be implemented, the Grievance Officer will, where possible, seek an alternative recommendation from the VRQA or the Victorian Ombudsman. If no alternative recommendation is made, the Grievance Officer will use their best endeavours to implement the recommendation and otherwise report to the Board of Directors as to the reason for and the extent of, the non-compliance with the recommendation.

### **Schedule 1**

Contact details of Grievance Officer  
Dr. Greg Cusack  
Telephone: (03) 9905 5507  
Email: [Greg.Cusack@college.monash.edu.au](mailto:Greg.Cusack@college.monash.edu.au)

Contact details of Assistant Grievance Officer  
Mr Karl Lyon  
Telephone: (03) 9905 0903  
Email: [Karl.Lyon@college.monash.edu.au](mailto:Karl.Lyon@college.monash.edu.au)