

# UNIVERSITY STUDENT OMBUDSMAN POLICY

## SCOPE

- All currently enrolled students
- All courses
- All locations
- Prospective students whose complaint or grievance relates to administrative processes during application, selection or admission
- Complaints and grievances by past coursework students may be lodged up to six months after course completion, or after enrolment is discontinued.
- Complaints and grievances by past graduate research students within six months:
  - of the written notification of the individual's thesis examination;
  - of written notification that the individual's enrolment has been discontinued in good standing;
  - of written notification that their enrolment has been withdrawn in good standing.
- The University has separate procedures for exclusion for unsatisfactory academic progress, discipline, exclusion for health reasons and sexual harassment. These matters are not within scope of this policy.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The University Student Ombudsman (USO) strengthens accountability within the University by contributing to a consistent and transparent approach to resolution of student grievances, and for ensuring that students and staff are aware of the process for independent review of unresolved complaints by the USO.

The USO provides an independent and balanced review of student complaints that are included within the scope of the policy.

The USO is not an advocate for the student or for the faculty/department.

### 1. Principles

- 1.1 No student will suffer disadvantage as a result of making a complaint to the USO or assisting a USO enquiry.
- 1.2 The Office of the USO is an avenue of complaint of last resort within the university and the aggrieved student will first be required to complete the relevant grievance procedures.
- 1.3 The USO has broad authority to conduct independent investigations at the USO's discretion and to make recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) for resolution of the grievance.
- 1.4 Confidentiality will be respected. All parties involved in the resolution of a complaint will restrict information about the complaint, including the identities of those involved, strictly to the minimum number of parties who require information in order to resolve the complaint. All materials related to a complaint will be held securely by the Office of the USO and labelled strictly confidential.
- 1.5 The principles of natural justice will be followed in the conduct and reporting of investigations.
- 1.6 Staff members will cooperate with enquiries and investigations and no staff member will suffer disadvantage as a result of assisting a USO enquiry.
- 1.7 Every attempt will be made to resolve complaints informally at the lowest level possible.
- 1.8 The preferred approach will be resolution by conciliation or negotiation to avoid an adversarial approach.
- 1.9 Recommendations will focus on system improvement.
- 1.10 The implementation of recommendations will be monitored and reported to the University Council as part of the USO's Annual Report.

## DEFINITIONS

Student complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction from a student with a process, decision or service offered or provided by the University.
Student grievance	A formal written notice given by a student after an unresolved complaint which initiates Complaints and Grievances Procedures.
Course	An award, non-award or enabling program.
Completion	The date on which the final results of a student's course/units are ratified by the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners or equivalent.
Completion of graduate research degree	The date on which the final result of a student's graduate research course is ratified by the Graduate Research Committee.
Discontinued studies – coursework	Enrolment which has ceased on written advice from the student that he/she has withdrawn; or when the student's enrolment has been discontinued by the University.
Discontinued studies – graduate research	Graduate research enrolment which has ceased as a result of a student having either withdrawn in good standing or been discontinued in good standing; or where graduate research enrolment has been lapsed or terminated.
Graduate research	A master's by research or doctoral degree of the University. Interchangeable with higher degree by research (HDR).

## GOVERNANCE

Supporting procedures	University Student Ombudsman Procedure
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated policies	Student Complaints and Grievances Policy Privacy Procedure
Policy owner	University Student Ombudsman
Legislation mandating compliance	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Support Act 2003
Category	Academic
Approval	Vice-Chancellor September 2007 Agenda item 4
Endorsement	University Student Ombudsman Implementation Committee 11 September 2007
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