

 <b>BOND UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</b>
Contact Officer	Chief Integrity Officer
Date First Approved	19 December 2022
Approval Authority	University Registrar
Date of Next Review	December 2023

### 1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Student Complaints Procedure outlines the process for implementing the complaints component of the Student Grievance Management Policy. For the purposes of this Procedure, a complaint is defined as a University-related concern or claim of dissatisfaction with an aspect of the student experience.

Bond University is committed to a culture of continuous improvement and views feedback as essential to the provision of quality support services to the University community. Genuine complaints on the part of students are regarded as a source of feedback which enables the University to identify inconsistencies between the standard of service promised and/or provided, and student expectations. This information can be used to instigate preventative strategies to reduce recurrence and to undertake targeted continuous improvement.

The purpose of this Procedure is to:

- outline the steps involved in making a complaint;
- explain the processes for managing student complaints in an equitable and timely manner; and
- describe the expectations and responsibilities of staff and students engaged in the student complaints management process.

### 2. AUDIENCE AND APPLICATION

This Procedure applies to all feedback and complaints raised by current, former and prospective Bond University students in relation to services, processes and actions of the University, or of any entity operating on behalf of the University.

#### 2.1. Procedure Exclusion

The University has separate and established reporting, review and/or appeal procedures for matters relating to:

- refunds of student fees (refer to Student Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy);
- review or appeal of formal University decisions (refer to Student Review and Appeals Procedure); and
- alleged research misconduct by staff or students (refer to Research Misconduct Policy).

A student whose concern or claim of dissatisfaction relates to the areas listed above may seek resolution of the matter in accordance with the relevant policy and/or procedure.

#### 2.2. Time Limits

A formal complaint may be lodged up to 12 months after the action, event or incident that is the basis of the complaint.

Refer to Schedule A for timelines relevant to the management of student complaints.

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
University Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Procedure owner</li> <li>▪ Reviews complaint outcome</li> </ul>
Chief Integrity Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Delegate of the University Registrar</li> </ul>
Provost Vice President, Operations Vice President, Engagement Vice President, Future Students Director, Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reviews complaint outcome</li> </ul>
Executive Dean of Faculty or Head of University Academic Unit (UAU), or delegate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responds to complaint or reviews complaint outcome</li> </ul>
Director, Bond International Director, Campus Life Director, Information Technology Services Director of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responds to complaint</li> </ul>

Director of Sport Director, Student Business Services Director, Student Success & Wellbeing Faculty Business Director, or equivalent	
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#### 4. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

It is recognised that students accessing this Procedure may require personal support. Bond University offers advice and support tailored to individual student needs. This may include academic support, counselling support, assistance with welfare issues and referrals to off-campus support programs. Access to such support is available to students whether or not a complaint is lodged. Students are encouraged to contact the Student Success & Wellbeing Team for a confidential and free consultation to identify the advice and support required. A comprehensive list of services that are available can be accessed [here](#).

It is expected that students represent and speak for themselves in relation to meetings to resolve complaints. Students may have a support person present but are advised that this person must be either a representative of the Bond University Student Association (BUSA) or another person not acting as legal counsel or solicitor. Students may confer with the support person but the support person may not advocate on the student's behalf.

#### 5. FEEDBACK OR COMPLAINTS

##### 5.1. Purpose of Providing Feedback

Bond University is always working to improve its processes and service delivery. If a student's intention is to provide general feedback, any compliments or constructive comments are welcome as part of this process. The University will:

- acknowledge the feedback upon receipt;
- forward the feedback for consideration by the relevant area;
- use the feedback provided to inform continuous improvement; and
- report on any themes or trends as part of the feedback/complaints reporting procedure.

Current students also have the opportunity to provide feedback through Class Representatives, teaching evaluations (eTEVALs) and intermittent surveys.

##### 5.2. Purpose of Making a Complaint

In making a complaint, a student raises a University-related concern or claim of dissatisfaction regarding the quality of, or service provided by, an identified area of the University for the purpose of:

- improving existing services by highlighting inconsistencies or perceived gaps in policy or procedure;
- correcting a perceived error;
- achieving a particular outcome in relation to service provision; and/or
- receiving acknowledgement and/or an apology.

#### 6. MAKING A COMPLAINT

In making a complaint, students are encouraged to follow the process set out below. A student may seek the assistance of BUSA's Student Advocacy services to navigate any stage of the complaints process and may be accompanied by a support person (not acting as legal counsel or solicitor) at any stage of the complaints process.

##### 6.1. Resolve the Concern Informally

In many cases, problems can be resolved through informal enquiries, discussion and clarification. Prompt resolution may be more likely to occur where the problem has arisen from a misunderstanding or error that can be rectified easily.

It is expected that, in most instances, a student will initially attempt to resolve a concern informally by contacting the person or service area involved directly, as follows:

- make a face-to-face or telephone appointment to discuss the concern; or
- send an email detailing the concern and the outcome being sought.

For concerns relating to a subject in which a student is currently enrolled, students may prefer to contact the Class Representative for that subject (where one is designated). For any concern within the Faculty or UAU of study, students may contact the Associate Dean or Manager, Student Affairs & Service Quality (or equivalent). For general University concerns, or for assistance in identifying the relevant person or area to approach, students may contact the Student Business Centre ([abc@bond.edu.au](mailto:abc@bond.edu.au)).

If a student is uncomfortable about approaching the relevant person directly, they may request that another staff member raise the matter with the individual concerned, where applicable.

## **6.2. Submit a Formal Complaint**

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally, the student may submit a formal complaint. The complaint should be lodged with the Chief Integrity Officer. If an attempt at informal resolution has not been made, the student will normally be redirected back to the appropriate person or area, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

A formal complaint must be in writing and should include the following details:

- the nature of the student's complaint;
- the timelines for events pertinent to the complaint;
- what action has been taken to resolve the matter to date;
- the evidence available to support the complaint;
- the outcome the student is seeking; and
- additional support material to explain special circumstances not raised previously.

The University will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five business days. The student will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint submission at regular intervals.

The outcome of a formal complaint may include the University taking one or more actions that may or may not be in the student's favour. For example:

- correcting an error in relation to the student or the student's record;
- making a commitment to review and improve existing services and processes;
- rejecting the complaint as unsubstantiated, frivolous or vexatious;
- issuing an apology to the student; or
- referring the grievance as an allegation of misconduct for investigation under the Student Code of Conduct Policy.

The response letter will outline:

- the reasons for the outcome;
- advice on options to seek a review of the outcome, if available; and
- support services available to the student.

## **6.3. Review of Complaint Outcome**

Following receipt of an outcome to their complaint, a student may escalate the complaint and submit an application for review.

In requesting a review of a complaint outcome, students are required to provide a clear rationale as to why they believe the original outcome to be incorrect and attach copies of all relevant documentation. If the student appears to have no reasonable grounds, or lacks appropriate evidence to support the review, the University will advise the student within five business days that their application cannot be progressed unless further information is provided. It will not be sufficient for students to assert circumstances or changes to circumstances without evidence to substantiate or support their claims.

A request for review must be submitted within 20 business days of the formal complaint response. Review applications will be acknowledged within five business days of receipt. The student will be kept informed of the progress of the review submission at regular intervals.

The outcomes of an application for review may include one or more of the following actions:

- upholding in its original form the previous outcome;
- recommending an alternative action to assist with the resolution of the complaint; and
- recommending actions and improvements to the responsible officer of the University to address systemic issues arising from the review of the complaint.

The outcome letter will outline:

- the process of review followed by the reviewing officer;
- the reasons for the outcome;
- advice about options to seek an external review (if available); and
- support services available to the student.

## **6.4. Withdrawal of Complaint**

A student may withdraw their complaint, in writing, at any stage of the process.

## 6.5. Making an External Complaint

A student may, at any stage, refer their complaint to an external agency. However, most external agencies encourage the student to attempt to follow internal complaint processes before taking this step. If the student wishes to explore this option, they may refer to the External Review and Complaints Procedure.

## 7. MONITORING AND ASSURANCE

The University Registrar will monitor the occurrence and nature of formal complaints received to identify if systemic issues exist across the University. A report will be produced annually which may include recommendations for changes to policy or procedure to address any systemic issues identified.

The University Registrar will periodically review the volume of complaints received by the University and the timelines for processing these complaints through the University's complaints management system. Statistics and trends will be reported back to relevant areas to facilitate continuous improvement.

## 8. RECORD KEEPING

All files relating to complaints will be retained and disposed of in accordance with University and statutory requirements.

The University will maintain confidentiality relating to the management of complaints in accordance with the Privacy Policy.

## 9. DEFINITIONS, TERMS, ACRONYMS

<b>Business days</b>	Days falling from Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm excluding public holidays.
<b>Faculty</b>	Bond Business School, Faculty of Health Sciences & Medicine, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Society & Design (each of which is headed by an Executive Dean).
<b>University Academic Unit</b>	Bond University College (headed by the Director) and Transformation CoLab (headed by the Assistant Provost).

## 10. AFFILIATED PROCEDURES AND SCHEDULES

[Schedule A: Student Complaints – Summary of Timelines](#)  
Student External Review and Complaints Procedure

## 11. RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Bond University Student Charter](#)  
[Class Representatives Policy](#)  
[Privacy Policy](#)  
[Research Misconduct Policy](#)  
[Sexual Exploitation, Assault, Abuse and Harassment \(SEAAH\) Policy](#)  
[Student Code of Conduct Policy](#)  
[Student Evaluation of Teaching Policy](#)  
[Student Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy](#)  
[Student Grievance Management Policy](#)  
[Student Support Policy](#)  
[Student Wellbeing and Safety Policy](#)  
[Student Review and Appeals Procedure](#)

- Review of Results Procedure
- Appeals against Academic Exclusion Procedure
- Appeals against Findings of Misconduct Procedure

[Survey Policy](#)

## 12. MODIFICATION HISTORY

Date	Sections	Source	Details
December 2022			Regulations to Procedure

**STUDENT COMPLAINTS – SUMMARY OF TIMELINES**

If other timelines apply under a specific policy or procedure, they will take precedence over the general provisions in this Schedule.

**Formal Complaint**

Action	Responsible party	Timeframe
Lodge formal written complaint	Student	Within 12 months of the action, incident or event
Commence process to resolve	University	Within 10 business days of receipt of complaint
Finalise and advise outcome	University	*Normally within 20 business days of receipt of complaint

**Request for Review of Complaint**

Action	Responsible party	Timeframe
Lodge formal written grievance	Student	Within 10 business days of receipt of complaint outcome notification
Commence process to resolve	University	Within 10 business days of receipt of request for review of complaint
Finalise and advise outcome	University	*Normally within 20 business days of receipt of request for review of complaint

**External Review**

Action	Responsible party	Timeframe
Lodge complaint with domestic Student Ombudsman	Student	In accordance with the process set by the External Review and Complaints Procedure
Lodge complaint with an external agency other than the domestic Student Ombudsman. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Ombudsman (for international students)</li> </ul>	Student	In accordance with the process set by the relevant external agency

\*The University recognises that, in order to ensure an equitable outcome is achieved, complex issues involving may take longer to resolve. In such circumstances, an extension to these timelines may be approved by the University Registrar.