



Complaints and Appeals Policy

1. Purpose

ALACC is committed to providing a fair, accessible, timely, and documented complaints handling and appeals process. This process ensures that grievances between overseas students and ALACC are addressed efficiently and professionally, in accordance with the requirements of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code). This policy also aims to comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021, where applicable.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all overseas students enrolled with ALACC. ALACC will:

- Implement and maintain a documented internal complaint handling and appeals policy and procedure.
- Advise an overseas student of their right to access an external appeals process, and provide current contact details, if the overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints and appeals process. This advice will be provided within 10 working days of the completion of the internal appeals process.
- Immediately implement any decision or recommendation made in favour of the overseas student through either the internal or external appeals process.
- Ensure that the complaints and appeals process is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, language barriers, or other needs.
- Maintain records of all complaints and appeals, including the outcomes and any actions taken.
- Ensure staff are trained in the complaints handling and appeals policy and procedure.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the complaints handling and appeals process and implement improvements as necessary.
- Ensure that the complaints handling and appeals process is free of charge to the student.
- Ensure that the student's enrolment is maintained while the internal and external complaints and appeals processes are ongoing.



3. Procedure and Process

3.1 Principles of Complaints Handling and Appeals

ALACC's complaints handling and appeals process is based on the following principles:

- **Fairness:** All parties are treated impartially and with respect.
- **Accessibility:** The process is easy to understand and use.
- **Timeliness:** Complaints and appeals are dealt with promptly.
- **Transparency:** The process is open and accountable.
- **Confidentiality:** Information is handled sensitively and in accordance with privacy legislation.
- **Natural Justice:** All parties have the opportunity to be heard.
- **No Victimisation:** Students making complaints or appeals will not be penalised or disadvantaged.

3.2 Internal Complaints and Appeals Process

ALACC will ensure that information about its complaints handling and appeals policy and process is comprehensive, free, and easily accessible to all overseas students.

The internal complaints and appeals process will include the following:

- **Informal Resolution:** Where possible, complaints should be resolved informally in the first instance, through discussion and negotiation between the parties involved.
- **Formal Complaint:** If informal resolution is not possible, or if the student prefers, they may lodge a formal complaint.
 - A student may lodge a formal complaint in writing, outlining the details of the complaint, the outcome sought, and any supporting documentation. Assistance will be provided to students who have difficulty putting their complaint in writing.
- **Acknowledgement:** ALACC will acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days.
- **Assessment:** ALACC will begin assessing a complaint or appeal within ten (10) working days of the student lodging it, and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable.
- **Conduct of Assessment:** The assessment of the complaint or appeal will be conducted in a professional, fair, and transparent manner. The person handling the complaint or appeal will be impartial and have no prior involvement in the matter.



- **Opportunity to be Heard:** The student will be given the opportunity to present their case at minimal or no cost, and may be accompanied and assisted by a support person if necessary.
- **Evidence:** All relevant evidence will be considered, including written submissions, witness statements, and any other relevant documentation.
- **Decision:** A decision will be made based on the balance of probabilities.
- **Written Statement:** The student will be given a written statement of the outcome of the appeal, including the reasons for the outcome, within ten (10) working days of the decision.
- **Record Keeping:** A written record of all complaints and appeals will be kept on the student's file, including the outcome and any actions taken. These records will be kept confidential and in accordance with privacy legislation.
- **Implementation of Outcome:** ALACC will implement the outcome of the internal appeal promptly.

3.3 External Complaints and Appeals Process

If the overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of ALACC's internal complaints handling and appeals process, ALACC will advise the overseas student of their right to access an external complaints handling and appeals process at minimal or no cost. This advice will be provided within ten (10) working days of the completion of the internal review.

ALACC will provide overseas students with the current contact details of the relevant external complaints handling body, which is the Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO) for private providers.

ALACC will make clear to overseas students that, in most cases, the purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether ALACC has followed its policies and procedures, rather than to make a decision in place of the institution.

ALACC will only report an overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS after:

- The internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the breach has been upheld;
- The overseas student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20-working day period;
- The overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process after being informed of their right to do so; or



- The overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process, by notifying the registered provider in writing.

When an external appeals process has been completed, ALACC will immediately implement the decision or recommendations and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the outcomes of the external complaints handling or appeals process, and notify the overseas student of the outcome.

3.4 Further Complaints and Appeals

If an overseas student is not satisfied with the outcome of either ALACC's internal appeals process or the following external appeals process, they may seek further avenues for complaint. ALACC will provide information regarding other avenues, if requested by the student.

4. Related Policies/Acts and Legislation

- *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 (where applicable)
- ALACC Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- ALACC's Privacy Policy

5. Documented Evidence

The following will be retained as evidence of compliance requirements:

- Register of Complaints and Appeals, including:
 - Date of complaint
 - Name and contact details of complainant
 - Details of the complaint
 - Actions taken to address the complaint
 - Outcome of the complaint
 - Date of outcome
 - Any appeals lodged
 - Outcome of any appeals
 - Any systemic issues identified.



- Written statements of outcomes provided to students.
- Any other relevant documentation.

6. Document Control

Policy:	Complaints and Appeals Policy
Policy owner:	CEO / Director of Studies
Reviewed by:	Compliance Team
Approval authority:	Dr Janet Lawrence, D.Ed., FACN CEO/Director of Studies
Last Review date:	April 2025
Version:	2025.1
Next review:	April 2027
Summary of changes:	Updated this policy to ensure ALACC addresses and manages complaints and appeals from students. The revisions ensure the policy adheres to the updated ASQA 2025 standards.