

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



Date Updated:	May 2014
Approved by:	
Responsible Faculty/Department:	PYP Coordinators, Appeals Committee
Related Documents	Student Appeals Policy and Procedure
Related Forms	Student Handbook
Date of Next Review:	2016

1. Scope

This policy applies to all Students and Staff of The William Light Institute who are involved in the grievance process.

2. Policy

In line with The William Light Institute (TWLI) Mission, the institute aims to promote and maintain an open and supportive learning environment within which students can optimise their personal, academic and professional development. The aim of the Student Grievance Policy and its associated guidelines is to provide processes that enable student concerns to be addressed quickly, without fear of reprisal pertaining to the source of the concern as practicable.

TWLI is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible to all complainants.

2.1 Grievances Management Principles

The student Grievance Policy is based on the principles that TWLI has:

- Developed a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works
- Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps TWLI to prevent grievances from recurring
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



- Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances
- A grievance can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of TWLI's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:
 - the enrolment, induction/orientation process
 - the quality of education provided
 - academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study
 - handling of personal information and access to personal records
 - the way someone has been treated.
- These grievance procedures are designed to ensure that TWLI responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2.2 Policy Coverage

In relation to non-academic grievances, the term "complainant" applies to both current students of TWLI and mode of study and persons seeking to enrol with TWLI. These grievance procedures will be made available to complainants regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence. At any time complaints can be discussed with the person/s involved. However, if this is impracticable, complainants have the following complaint mechanisms available. Please note that all mechanisms are free of charge.

The policy will apply to management of grievances arising between parties include:

1. student: student
2. student: staff member
3. student: external agency - such as those co-operating with the institutes practical placements (eg. clinical, school, business placements) provided that the student should first have exhausted avenues of resolution under any applicable complaint or grievance handling procedure of the co-operating institution.

2.3 Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. The student can first discuss his/her concern with the Student Support Officer who can direct and give the student an advice.

If the concern is still has not been resolved, the student can file a complaint.

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



2.4 Lodging a Complaint

If a student cannot resolve the issue informally and they wish to lodge a formal complaint, they should:

1. Fill out the Complaint form.
2. Provide their name, contact details (must not be anonymous) and details of the complaint in writing to the PYP Coordinator. They should also detail the steps that have been taken so far.
3. Make the complaint themselves, as complaints on behalf of someone else will not be accepted.
4. Understand that it is a serious procedure and it will be investigated.
5. Understand that it is a formal complaint as opposed to comments, feedback or suggestion.
6. Be aware that the staff member concerned will be informed that a complaint has been made against them or in relation to a decision they have made.
7. The PYP Coordinator will acknowledge receipt in writing within 5 days.

3. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Grievances of a non academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that TWLI holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure TWLI will take all steps to ensure that:

- the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against
- the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings
- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, TWLI will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome
- there is no cost to the complainant during the internal stages of this grievance procedure
- International students must pay a lodgement fee to the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) to lodge an external appeal.

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



3.1 Stage one – informal grievance:

The student can talk to any of the academic or student support staff about their grievance. If the matter is not resolved then the student can lodge a formal grievance.

3.2 Stage two – formal grievance

The student should complete the grievance/complaints form and attach all supporting documents. The form can be downloaded from the TWLI Moodle or taken from the Student Support Officer.

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the Principal as follows:

To the Principal
The William Light Institute
Level 1, 211 Pulteney Street
Adelaide South Australia 5000

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable. If the grievance is of an academic nature the Principal will nominate the Academic Director to handle the grievance. The Principal, or their nominee, will then, if necessary seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Principal, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, Academic and Non-academic Grievances and Appeals Policy including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

3.3 Stage three – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance they may lodge an appeal to the Student Appeals Committee within 15 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The student must complete the appeal form (can be downloaded from TWLI Moodle or obtained from the Student Support Officer).

The Academic Appeals Committee will consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days. Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face meetings. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



Following the consultation, the Academic Appeals Committee will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

3.4 Stage three – external appeal:

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may lodge an external appeal within 15 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal. The purpose of an external appeal is not to review the determination of the internal appeal (for example the external review will not review what an assessment or subject grade should be) but rather it will evaluate whether the policies and procedures of the internal appeal process were complied with. The external appeal is handled by the Office of the Training Advocate.

3.5 Further action

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

All students have the right to refer complaints to the:

- Office of the State Ombudsman of South Australia
Website: <http://www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au>
- Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia
Website: <http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au>
- Office of Consumer and Business Affairs
Australian Human Rights Commission
Website: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au>

International Students may contact the:

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) through the ESOS mailbox: esosmailbox@dest.gov.au
or through the ESOS Helpline: (02) 6240 5069
- Office of the Training Advocate
GPO Box 320 Adelaide SA 5001
55 Currie Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Telephone: 1800 006 488
Website: <http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/>

Student Grievance Policy & Procedure (Professional Year Program)



The services of the Office of the Training Advocate are provided free of charge. At TWLI, towards the end of every semester, any data relating to grievances is collated and reviewed by our Academic Director and the Academic Board. In the event there is a need to improve our processes this is then modified which is incorporated into our benchmarking policy. This gives the Institution the opportunity to continuously improve on the standards and services to student and staff.

3.6 Grievance Data

At TWLI we have maintained a grievance log which is being used to monitor cases and improve our internal procedure. In addition to resolving individual disputes, the grievance mechanism gives us the opportunity to make changes and improvements where needed. The grievance log (or register) is vital for our practice as it helps us to analyse information about grievance, conflict trends, personal and academic issues so that we are in a position to implement changes if need be to managing grievance procedure in an efficient manner.

3.7 Record keeping & confidentiality

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Principal. All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by TWLI's *Privacy and Personal Information Policy*.

3.8 Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, TWLI will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing. This does not necessarily mean that the student will be entitled to attend workshops, submit assessments or undertake examinations.

Version Control	Date Revised	Revised by	Amendment
1	2014	R Abadia	Combined policy and procedures