



Academic Grievance Policy

Effective date	7 August 2009
Version number	1.4
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Updated	Jenny Kenyon
Policy type	External
Status	Active

Purpose

At Bradford College we are committed to resolving any student complaint or grievance promptly, equitably and in a professional manner that respects the privacy of all parties involved.

Version Control

Version Date	Version Number	Reference sections	Description of the change
19/06/2006	1.0	Not Applicable	New document introduced
01/06/2007	1.1		Changes due to alterations in ESOS compliancy
18/11/2008	1.2	Appeals section	Addition of Course Progress appeal process
17/04/2009	1.3	Informal resolution, External Complaints procedures	Changes to <i>Informal resolution</i> section—list of staff members to contact. Changes to <i>External complaints procedures</i> —deletion of ACPET involvement, replaced with information about the Office of the Training Advocate
07/08/2009	1.4		Definition of Student Counsellors added. Statement included about record keeping.

Scope and Responsibilities

Students or parents who have a complaint about marks, assessment, late submission, credit transfer or any other academic issue are deemed to have an academic matters complaint and must follow the Bradford College process as outlined here.

This grievance procedure is for academic complaints from:

- current Bradford College students
- parents or legal guardians of students under 18 years old

Students or parents who have a complaint about marks, assessment, late submission, credit transfer or any other academic issue are deemed to have an academic matters complaint and must follow the College process as outlined here.

Complaints are accepted from all students regardless of:

- whether they are currently residing in Australia or overseas
- the location of the campus they are attending or applying to attend
- the mode in which they study

All formal complaints and appeals from students or parents are dealt with free of charge, a \$50 fee applies to re-marking. The complainant (i.e. student or parent) and respondent (i.e. staff member concerned) will not be victimised or discriminated against in any manner and all details of the complaint and subsequent investigation will remain strictly confidential.

The complainant is entitled to ask for assistance in the form of a translator/ interpreter at any time during the process. The complainant and respondent may bring one person (such as a friend, family member, counsellor or other professional support person) to represent or support them to any meetings arranged at any stage of the process.

All parties may have recourse to a third party mediator at the informal or formal appeals stage. Bradford College's dispute resolution processes do not prevent a person's right to pursue other legal remedies.

Students will continue to attend their classes as usual whilst Bradford College and the student are attempting to resolve the issue by following this grievance procedure. The only circumstances in which a student would not continue attending classes is if their health or safety is potentially at risk or if they pose a health or safety risk to other students or staff members.

Note: The College Director will handle all formal complaints from Bradford College students. The College Director will respond to all appeals. Any staff member involved can respond to an informal complaint—please see list of staff members under “Informal Resolution” for further information.

Student Counsellors

For the purposes of this policy, *student counsellor* will be deemed to be any of the appropriate staff below:

- the Director of Studies for ELICOS (GAE program)
- the Manager of Student Learning (DT/DTB program)
- the Student Counsellor (FSP program)

Informal resolution

In the first instance, students or parents are encouraged to reach an informal resolution by approaching the staff member concerned to discuss the issue at hand.

For academic complaints, this would usually be directed to one of the following staff members:

- Teaching staff
- The Student Counsellor (Degree Transfer students)—Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street
- The Student Counsellor (Foundation Studies students)—Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street

- The Student Counsellor (General Academic English students)—Level 5, 195 North Terrace

An initial complaint is dealt with at a local level (i.e. lecturer/teacher/tutor) in an informal manner. Students are encouraged to raise any academic concerns at any time with the teaching staff.

In some circumstances students may feel uncomfortable speaking with the lecturer/teacher/tutor concerned, for example, if it is a complaint about their style of teaching. In this case it is appropriate that the student contact the Student Counsellor and discuss the issue informally with them.

Re-Marking

If a student feels that the mark they have been given for a piece of work is unfair or unjustified, they may take the following actions in the following order (N.B.: any requests for re-marking must be made within 10 weeks of the assignment, test or examination results being released):

- The student should approach their teacher/lecturer/tutor informally and ask the teacher to explain the mark they have given the student. The teacher may wish to explain how they arrived at this mark, what the process of marking the paper involved (e.g. if moderation took place), and how the student could improve on their next piece of work.
- If, after speaking to their teacher/lecturer/tutor, the student still feels that their work has not received a fair mark, they should speak to the Student Counsellor who will take the following action:
 - explain to the student that submitting work for remarking is a risk, they may receive a lower mark than their initial one, and this new mark will then be recorded as the student's grade
 - inform the student that there is a \$50 fee for re-marking
 - if the student still wishes to proceed, take a copy of the student's assignment, test or exam. If the student is requesting that an assignment be re-marked, then the student will need to provide a clean copy of the assignment.
 - organise for the student's work to be re-marked by another teacher of the same subject. At this stage, the student's teacher will be informed that the work is being re-marked. The re-marking teacher will be given a clean copy of the assignment and if it is a test or exam, the student's name and marks will be removed from the paper. The teacher should let the Student Counsellor know the final mark they have given the paper.
 - if the new mark is within 5% of the original mark, the student's mark will not be changed. If the mark is not within 5%, this new mark will be recorded as the student's new grade.
 - the re-marking will be completed within the following timeframes:
 - Assignments & class tests—2 weeks
 - Examinations—1 month
 - a meeting will be arranged with the student to discuss the outcome of the remarking and record these details in the student's record on the database. Re-marked assignments and class tests will be kept on file for three months. Re-marked examination scripts will be kept on file for one year.
 - if the student still feels that the mark they have been given is unfair, they may invoke the formal complaints process.

Lodging a complaint

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

- provide their name, contact details (must not be anonymous) and details of the complaint in writing to The College Director, Bradford College, Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street, Adelaide, 5000. They should also detail the steps that have been taken so far.

- make the complaint themselves, as complaints on behalf of someone else (hearsay) will not be accepted. If the student is under 18 years old then a parent or guardian can lodge a complaint with the student's consent.
- understand that it is a serious procedure and it will be investigated.
- understand that it is a formal complaint as opposed to comments, feedback or suggestion
- 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.

The College Director will acknowledge receipt in writing within 5 days.

The acknowledgement will:

- provide their contact details.
- outline the complaints process and advise that a decision will be made within 14 business days of receiving the complaint in writing.
- identify any foreseeable delays.

Investigation

Investigation stage by the College—the College Director will:

- request a formal meeting with the student or parent
- record minutes of any meetings as a formal record. A record will also be made in the database.
- ensure that any complaint with regard to an assessment is referred to the relevant assessment committee. The College Director will handle grievances with reference to a teaching method, staff member or the curriculum.
- contact the respondent to inform them that a complaint has been made against them or in relation to a piece of work assessed by them. The staff member will be given details of the complaint and an opportunity to respond. Arrange a separate meeting with the respondent, if necessary.
- hear the student or parent's complaint without prejudice giving the student ample opportunity to air their grievance
- listen to the respondent's response to the complaint without prejudice
- notify the complainant and respondent in writing within 14 business days of the result of the deliberations of the committee or the decision by the College Director, whichever is applicable. The written notification will outline the reasons for the decision being made and any action(s) taken by the College.
- advise the complainant in writing that the decision may be appealed if they are not satisfied with the investigation process or outcome. Appeals should be lodged in writing to The College Director of Bradford College who is located on Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street, Adelaide, 5000.

Appeal procedures

In case of an appeal the College Director will:

- acknowledge the appeal in writing to both parties within 5 business days
- conduct an independent investigation that is fair & impartial
- contact the student or parent to arrange a meeting in person or over the telephone
- contact the respondent to gather information on why the decision was made and arrange a separate meeting with the respondent, if necessary
- notify the complainant and respondent in writing, within 30 days, of the appeal outcome and reasons for the decision being made and any action(s) taken by the College
- provide the complainant with information on external complaints together with the appeal outcome notification. The complainant will be advised in the letter that they should notify the College Director in writing if they wish to pursue the external complaints procedure.

Course Progress appeals

International students who fail to make satisfactory course progress in two consecutive semesters in their program can appeal Bradford College's decision to cancel their enrolment and notify DIAC on the following grounds:

- there are verifiable compelling or compassionate circumstances which prevented the student from achieving satisfactory course progress
- after the intervention strategy was implemented, the student demonstrated a strong commitment to their studies and there was a significant improvement in their grades in the second semester. The student must, in the College's opinion, have the potential to successfully complete their program within two semesters and transfer to university.

Students wishing to lodge an appeal regarding a course progress decision will need to do so in writing to the Manager of Student Learning or the Student Counsellor. The written appeal will need to outline on what grounds the student is making the appeal and any evidence should be attached to the application (i.e. medical certificate for compassionate grounds).

The Manager of Student Learning or Student Counsellor will make a decision within 14 business days and will notify the student in writing of the decision. The written notification will outline the reasons why the decision was made.

Any decision overturned on these grounds is made solely at the discretion of Bradford College.

External complaints procedures

If the complainant requests involvement by the Office of the Training Advocate, the process detailed below will be followed by the College Director:

- acknowledge the request in writing within 5 business days
- contact the respondent to advise that the complainant is pursuing an external complaint avenue and give them with the opportunity to provide any further information in regards to their actions or the decision made by them
- contact the Office of the Training Advocate within 24 hours of receiving the request for their involvement
- if the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant can request mediation. Bradford College will pay for the cost of mediation.
- the College Director will ensure that any recommendations stated in the agreement are implemented within 14 business days. The complainant and respondent will be notified in writing of any action(s) taken by the College as a result of the mediation.

Office of the Training Advocate

Ground Floor, 55 Currie Street (entrance doors at Bus Stop W1, Currie Street)
Adelaide SA

GPO Box 320
Adelaide SA 5001

Freecall: 1800 006 488

Email: trainingadvocate@saugov.sa.gov.au

Website: www.training.sa.gov.au

The Office of the Training Advocate can provide information and advice regarding complaints and will offer prompt attention, confidentiality, respect, fairness, impartiality, recognition of rights, and free consultation.

Recording complaints

Records of all dealings where a formal complaint has been lodged will be stored in a secure file in the College Director's office. These records will remain completely confidential and only parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records, upon application to the College Director. All complaint records will remain on file for a period of five years.

Regardless of outcome

Regardless of the findings the College will consider whether the service or process in question could be improved as a result of information received in the complaint or revealed by the investigation, with a view to improving service.

Information on grievance procedures

Bradford College's grievance procedures are placed on student noticeboards and are available for prospective and current students on the Bradford College website at: www.bradford.adelaide.edu.au. The student diary directs students to the website for further information about grievance procedures.

The Student Related Policies Handbook containing this policy is given to academic staff and administration staff during their induction. The College Director is responsible for training all staff in its application.

This policy was approved by the Bradford College Board on 1 June 2007.