



# Non-academic Grievance Policy

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Updated	Jenny Kenyon
Policy type	External
Status	Active

## Purpose

This policy is for current students and those persons seeking to enrol in courses of study. The aim of the policy is to inform students of the process for making and resolving non-academic complaints.

## 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
17/04/2009	1.2	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	1.3		Statements included about record keeping

## Scope and Responsibilities

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.

This grievance procedure is for non-academic complaints from:

- current Bradford College students
- persons seeking to enrol in a course of study at Bradford College
- parents or legal guardians of customers (students or prospective students) under 18 years old

Complaints are accepted from all customers 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 complaints by students, parents or prospective students are dealt with free of charge. The complainant (i.e. student, parent or prospective student) 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.

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.

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.

*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.*

## **Informal resolution**

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

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

- The Admissions Manager—Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street
- The Manager of Student Learning (Degree Transfer students)—Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street
- The Student Counsellor (Foundation Studies students)—Level 5, 10 Pulteney Street
- Director of Studies ELICOS (General Academic English students)—Level 5, 195 North Terrace

## Lodging a complaint

If a student, parent or prospective student 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 at 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 or prospective student is under 18 years old then a parent or guardian can lodge a complaint with the student or prospective 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 Bradford College—the College Director will:

- request a formal meeting with the student, parent or prospective student, for prospective students this meeting can be conducted over the telephone.
- record minutes of any meetings as a formal record. A record will also be made in the database.
- contact the respondent to gather information on why the decision was made. Arrange a separate meeting with the respondent, if necessary.
- hear the student, parent or prospective student's complaint without prejudice giving the student ample opportunity to air grievance.
- listen to the respondent's response to the complaint without prejudice.
- advise both the complainant and the respondent in writing of the outcome of the investigation within 14 business days, outlining the reasons for the decision being made and the actions taken.
- advise the complainant in writing that the decision may be appealed if they are unsatisfied 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.

## Formal resolution

After consultation the resolution could be one of the following:

- providing more information on the background to the decision or situation to the student, parent or prospective student, i.e. explain rules etc.
- remedy a mistake
- revoke a decision
- change a policy or procedure
- recompense student, parent or prospective student by way of offering a refund, changed class, waive a debt—whichever is appropriate
- retrain/discipline staff member

If the resolution finds in favour of the College the reasons may be:

- lack of data or evidence
- insufficient grounds for a formal complaint in the view of College management
- resolution is not practical
- complaint is without substance
- student wishes to withdraw complaint as not serious—more a comment

## 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 and impartial
- contact the student, parent or prospective student to arrange a meeting in person or over the telephone
- contact the respondent to gather information on why the decision was made. 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 within 20 days if they wish to pursue the external complaints procedure.

## 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 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.
- at the end of the mediation session, Bradford College and the complainant will sign an *agreement* consenting to the outcomes of the 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](mailto:trainingadvocate@saugov.sa.gov.au)

Website: [www.training.sa.gov.au](http://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](http://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 the training of all staff in its application.

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