



# Complaints/Grievances Policy

Policy Domain:	Education
Policy Area:	Training Program
Policy Author:	National Education Committee
Contact:	Director Education Services
Approved by:	Board of Directors
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Related Policies:	Appeals

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the mechanism and procedure for investigating and managing complaints and grievances by Fellows or trainees engaged in College activities or other individuals enrolled in College training programs/courses.

## SCOPE

This policy applies Fellows or trainees engaged in College activities or other individuals enrolled in College training programs/courses or matters/circumstances specified by the Board from time to time.

## WHAT IS A COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE

A complaint/grievance\* (hereafter referred to as a complaint) is an expression of dissatisfaction by an individual about an issue related to a College activity, or an individual associated with College which requires a resolution. All individuals participating in College activities are entitled to access the complaints process. It is understood that the policy will not apply to employment related matters or matters which are the subject of a disciplinary or review process under the policy of a third party (e.g. trainee as an employee to bring complaints under policies of their employer).

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Complaints will be addressed on a case by case basis depending on their particular circumstances however the following general principles will also be adhered to:

- Complaints will be dealt with in a timely manner according to the process
- Resolution of a complaint may be reached at any stage.

- Upon resolution of a complaint all further investigation ceases, except in the situation where the investigating officer considers further investigation is warranted to provide additional feedback to the College.
- Complaints and their outcome will be documented and filed appropriately and can be requested at any stage of the process by the individual or respondent.
- In the event of a complaint not being resolved internally, College may appoint an independent arbiter to review the complaints and recommend a solution.
- All complaints are dealt with free of charge.
- The individual will not be victimised or discriminated against in any manner and all details of the complaint and investigation will remain confidential.
- Assistance in the form of a translator/interpreter may be requested at any time during the process.
- The individual is permitted to bring a support person (such as a friend, family member, counsellor or other support person) to support them to any meetings during the complaint process.
- Individuals will continue their training or College activity during the complaint procedure, except in circumstances where their health or safety is potentially at risk or if they pose a health or safety risk to others.

## **PROCESS FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS**

Complaints may be of an academic, professional, or administrative nature.

Activities which may give rise to academic complaints may include:

- Application/Selection process
- Academic programs (content or structure)
- Course delivery, assessment, learning environment, access to resources
- Administrative action/inaction, procedure or decision
- Individuals who believe that they have been treated unfairly on the grounds of access and equity;

Activities which may give rise to non-academic complaints may include:

- Professional behavior of a fellow or the College
- Issues relating to service of members (e.g. website, database)

## **STAGE 1: INITIAL CONTACT**

As a general rule, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved.

If this is not possible, issues relating to Academic complaints should be raised with the Director of Education Services at the College. Non-academic complaints should be raised with the Chief Executive Officer at the College

At this level an informal discussion may take place to try and resolve the issue.

**STAGE 2: LODGING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, the individual is advised to lodge a formal written complaint to the Honorary Secretary. The complaint should be lodged using the Complaints Form (Appendix A) at the end of this document. Individuals are encouraged to provide a summary of the complaint and provide any evidence of attempts to resolve the matter. Details of where to send the complaint form to, is included in the form.

**STAGE 3: REVIEW OF EVIDENCE**

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Hon Sec will review evidence provided. The Hon Sec may request additional information from the individual, the College staff or fellows as appropriate. The Hon Sec may request assistance from the Dean (for Academic Complaints) or a nominated member of the Board of Directors (for professional complaint matters) to review the evidence.

**Interview conducted**

Should there be grounds for further investigation of the complaint, a formal interview or meeting with the individual/s involved in the complaint may be conducted. This will be conducted by the Hon Sec, the Dean and the nominated member of the Board of Directors.

It is expected that stage three could take up to fifteen working days, but may take longer due to availability of individuals. If for some reason the investigation or determination takes longer, the individual will be advised.

**STAGE 4: RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINT**

Once the investigation has been conducted according to the general principles outlined above and a determination made, the individual will receive a written response detailing the actions taken. This will usually occur within ten (10) working days of resolution of the complaint.

If College receives no communication from the individual within ten (10) working days of them receiving its response, the complaint will be considered closed except in exceptional circumstances.

**APPEAL**

Where an individual wishes to appeal against the resolution, they should follow the Appeals Policy

## Appendix A: Complaint Form

Before lodging a formal complaint, please ensure that you have followed Stage 1 of the complaints procedure.

Completed Complaint Forms are to be emailed to the Honorary Secretary at [honsec@dermcoll.edu.au](mailto:honsec@dermcoll.edu.au)

The email subject title should be: Formal Complaint (followed by your initials).  
For example: Formal Complaint (TW)

<b>Mr/Mrs/Ms:</b>	<b>Surname or family Name:</b>	<b>Other or Given Names:</b>
<b>Address:</b>		
<b>Contact Phone Numbers:</b>	<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Type of Complaint (circle or highlight)</b>		
<b>Academic</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Describe your complaint (include details, information etc)</b>		
<b>What action has been taken up until this point? (provide evidence)</b>		
<b>Outline the outcome being sought</b>		
<b>Signature:</b> _____		
<b>Date:</b> _____		