



**EXCELSIA
COLLEGE**
Sydney - Australia

THIS POLICY IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW

Document Name

STUDENT APPEALS AGAINST ACADEMIC DECISIONS POLICY

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students are treated fairly in relation to the assessment of their work and progress within their course, by providing an internal appeal mechanism that reflects Excelsia College's commitment to fair academic decision making.

2. Definitions

- *Academic Decision* means a decision made by the College that affects the academic assessment or progress of a person within his or her Course.
- *Course* means a formally approved program of study at Excelsia College

3. Principles

- 3.1 Any student may complain about an academic decision that affects him or her. Firstly, at a local level, to enable a student's concerns to be addressed in an informal way and secondly, by means of a formal, central procedure.
- 3.2 The College is committed to fair academic decision-making.
- 3.3 Academic decisions are entrusted to members of the academic staff acting reasonably in accordance with due academic process.
- 3.4 A student who believes that there are genuine grounds for contesting an academic decision may apply to have the decision reviewed.
- 3.5 The College will handle all student concerns and appeals regarding academic decisions in a procedurally fair and reasonable manner, having regard to the principles of timeliness, confidentiality, absence of bias and freedom from victimisation.

4. Confidentiality

All student appeals will be treated confidentially at all stages of the process.

5. Without disadvantage

The fact that a student has made a complaint under these procedures should not disadvantage the student in any way, especially by way of victimisation.

6. Procedural fairness

All staff involved in a complaint or an appeal have a duty to observe the principles of natural justice.

7. Support

Any person involved in this process who is disadvantaged in any way in their ability to present their case should be allowed the support and advice they need to participate

effectively. To provide for this, the Student Advocate will be available to attend any and all meetings involving the student, should the student wish to have them there as support.

8. Record keeping

Staff should keep notes of any discussions with students.

9. Access

Students should normally have a right of access to all documents concerning their appeal. Such access is governed by the Government Information Public Access Act (2009).

10. Step 1: Resolution with lecturer/tutor/course coordinator

If a student is concerned about any academic decision, he or she should first discuss the issue informally with the relevant lecturer/tutor/course coordinator. This should be done within 5 working days of the particular academic decision being made. The lecturer should then deal with the issue giving a full explanation to the student of the reason(s) for the academic decision. Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of their discussion with their lecturer or tutor they can escalate the matter to the Course Coordinator who will review the matter in consultation with the relevant staff and student.

Most complaints should be resolved at this stage.

If a student's concerns are not resolved by this means, then the lecturer/tutor/course coordinator should:

- explain the next step and the procedure which is set out at Clause 11 (Step 2) below.
- give the student a copy of this policy or advise the Student how to access this policy online.

Students are encouraged to take the earliest opportunity to discuss their concerns with relevant School academic staff. This must occur within:

- (a) 10 working days of the student being advised of the academic decision;
- (b) in the case of academic decisions relating to completion of a unit of study, within 10 working days of the unit of study result being published after moderation; or
- (c) such other extended time as the Head of School may reasonably authorise.

11. Step 2: Appeals to the relevant school

If a student's concerns cannot be resolved under Clause 10 (Step 1) the student may appeal to the Head of school.

12.1 Informal complaints

The student may approach the Head of School on an informal basis. The student should do this within 10 working days of the outcome of discussion with the lecturer/tutor/course coordinator. The student may, if not satisfied, lodge a written formal appeal.

12.2 Formal complaints

The Student must submit his or her written appeal, including any supporting evidence:

(a) to the Head of School

(b) within 10 working days of the date on which he or she was advised of the outcome of discussions under Clause 10, or such other extended time as the Head of School may reasonably authorise, at his or her absolute discretion.

The Head of School must acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing within 3 working days of receipt.

Applications that do not have adequate evidence will not be accepted for consideration

The Head of School must try to resolve the complaint within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, and then advise the student in writing of his or her decision:

- setting out the reasons for the academic decision;
- advising that if the student does not agree with the decision, then the student has a right of further appeal under clause 12 (Step 3) below.

12. Step 3: Appeals to the Chief Academic Officer

If the student perceives there has been a failure to follow due process, the student may then appeal to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) by completing the Appeal of Assessment Grade form (online). The CAO must try to resolve the complaint then advise the student in writing of her/his decision within 10 working days:

- setting out the reasons for the academic decision;

If not satisfied with a decision by the CAO, the student may, within 5 working days of receiving the decision, submit a request in writing to the CAO that the matter be further reviewed by an Academic Appeals Review Committee.

The CAO will forward the case including all related documents to the Registrar, who files all documents relating to the appeal in confidential storage.

The CAO will report annually to the Learning and Teaching Committee as well as the Academic Board on:

(a) the number of Academic Review appeals; and

(b) Academic Appeals Review Committee decisions.

13. Step 4: Academic Appeals Review Committee

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the CAO, the student may lodge a written appeal within 5 working days to the Academic Appeals Review Committee. The written appeal should be sent to the Chief Academic Officer. The Academic Appeals Review Committee should consist of the Registrar, the specific Head of School, the Chief Academic Officer, a student representative and any other academic staff nominated by the Registrar, in consultation with the relevant Head of School. The Registrar will consult with the President of the Students' Representative Council regarding student appointments to the Academic Appeals Review Committee, without prejudice to the Registrar, retaining the ultimate discretion as to whom to recommend.

The student appeal will only be heard if the Registrar confirms that the basis for the appeal has already been considered by the Head of School, and if the student sets out in writing their reasons for believing that due academic process has not been observed in relation to this academic decision.

Except where an extension is authorised by the Registrar, the student will need to lodge their appeal within 5 working days of the written decision from the Registrar or representative.

The student will receive at least 10 working days' notice of the date of an appeal hearing.

The student will be invited to appear in person at an appeal hearing. If the student doesn't appear in person, hearing will proceed with the student in absentia.

The student may be accompanied by a representative, who may speak on the student's behalf.

The Academic Appeals Reviews Committee may uphold or dismiss an appeal in its absolute discretion and the decision of the Academic Appeals Review Committee is final.

The student will be advised as soon as practicable of the Academic Appeals Review Committee's decision and the reasons for it.

Where a decision of the Appeals Review Committee reveals a systemic or other serious failure by the School or the CAO's office to observe due academic process, the Chair of the Academic Appeals Reviews Committee will send a copy of the decision to the Chief Executive for consideration and action.

Advice and support on the appeals process is available from Student Support Centre.