

Student Complaints Policy

1. Rationale

The Student Complaints Policy has been developed as an interim response to TEQSA’s Statement of Regulatory Expectations: Student grievance and complaint mechanisms and the National Student Ombudsman’s Confidentiality requirements in complaint-handling policies: Guidance for higher education providers. The College is assessing and redefining its current student grievance and complaint mechanisms and this policy, approved until 31 December 2026, states how the College’s intends to meet TEQSA’s regulatory expectations.

2. Purpose

The Student Complaints Policy sets out the College of Law (the College) approach to addressing complaints brought by students or College Workplace Participants on behalf of students in Australian award programs or short courses.

3. Applicability

This policy applies to all College of Law students (whether current, prospective or former) and Workplace Participants (ie employees, agents and contractors, including temporary contractors) in relation to Australian award programs or short courses.

This policy does not apply to academic conduct matters which are addressed pursuant to the [Academic Conduct Policy](#).

This policy does not apply to student dissatisfaction with a grade awarded in a subject which is addressed pursuant to the [Practical Legal Training Assessment Rules](#) and [Postgraduate Programs Assessment Rules](#).

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4. Definitions

Complaint means any grievance or complaint about any aspect, whether academic or non-academic, of a prospective, current or former student’s experience with the College or parties related to the College, subject to Applicability of this policy as described above.

Complainant means a prospective, current or former student who has made a complaint.

Director means the director of an Australian College program, short courses or a business unit.

Informal Complaint means a minor complaint that is suitable to be addressed informally and is usually resolved by a discussion with local staff or clarification of a misunderstanding.

Formal Complaint means an official, documented expression of dissatisfaction that typically involves a submission of details, evidence and a request for action, distinguishing it from an Informal Complaint.

Support Person is an individual who accompanies a Complainant or any persons being the subject of the complaint to meetings with the College. The role of a Support Person is limited to providing emotional support, taking notes and seeking breaks so that the person they are supporting can regain their composure.

Student Liaison Officer means a member of College staff whose role is to provide guidance and information to students regarding complaints or concerns related to College policies and procedures. The Academic Secretary is the Student Liaison Officer.

Workplace Participant means all employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors) of the College, as per definition in the staff [Code of Conduct](#).

5. Principles

For all complaints and grievances, academic and non-academic, the College will apply the following principles:

- a) Complaints are handled:
 - i) Consistently;

- ii) Effectively;
 - iii) Efficiently;
 - iv) Professionally;
 - v) Transparently; and
 - vi) Fairly.
- b) Complaints handling is person-centred and trauma-informed.
 - c) Complainants and Workplace Participants raising complaints on a student's behalf, if that student has complained to them, and any persons being the subject of the complaint, are protected from reprisal or victimisation.
 - d) Complaints concerning the behaviour of students or Workplace Participants are assessed against policies that outline relevant matters such as the rights of academic freedom and freedom of speech, and wellbeing and safety.
 - e) The transfer of complaints casework between Workplace Participants is minimised.
 - f) College management culture prioritises and resources complaints handling and values complaint data.
 - g) College senior leaders demonstrate a firm commitment to review, design, manage and deliver processes and policies to improve complaints mechanisms.
 - h) The principles of natural justice will be observed.
 - i) Both the Complainant and any persons being the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by a Support Person at any meeting in relation to the complaint.
 - j) The College will not charge the Complainant any costs or fees in relation to the complaint process.
 - k) The Board of Governors assures itself that the College meets the current expectations and their obligations around student grievance and complaint management and maintaining the wellbeing of staff (including staff involved in complaints-handling).
 - l) The Board of Governors reviews reports including de-identified complaints data at least once every 6 months and can assure itself that any underlying causes of identified trends or issues are being adequately addressed.
 - m) Student feedback on this policy and related procedures is genuinely considered by the Board of Governors.
 - n) Nothing in this policy or related procedures affects a Complainant's rights to complain externally or to seek remedies at law where available.
 - o) Staff involved in a complaint or complaint handling will keep information about the complaint and the Complainant confidential except when accessing their own psychosocial support, health professional support or legal advice.
 - p) Any confidentiality requirements to be imposed on a student will be set out clearly in writing to a student, including when those requirements may end and exceptions to

allow a student to access psychosocial support, health professional support or legal advice.

6. Accountabilities

Workplace Participants must assess whether a complaint is informal or formal and inform students about their rights to make a formal complaint in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.

Directors must manage Formal Complaints in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure. 'Directors' in this context does not refer Board Directors.

Principal must manage Formal Complaints relating to a breach of the Code of Conduct for Workplace Participants in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure. The Chief Executive Officer is the Principal of the College.

Academic Secretary facilitates training for relevant Workplace Participants on making entries into the Formal Complaints Register, maintains the Formal Complaints Register, provides advice to Workplace Participants in relation to complaints processes, reviews this policy from time to time and analyses formal student complaint data in the annual Academic Baseline Report.

Student Liaison Officer provides information and support to students in relation to making complaints.

Academic Board monitors Formal Complaints and makes recommendations to the Board of Governors through the Chair.

Chief Academic Officer reports on Formal Complaints to the Academic Board and the Board of Governors on a quarterly basis and reports on identified themes or opportunities for improvement to the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee considers risks, identified themes or opportunities for improvement arising from Formal Complaints and decides upon what, if any, action is required.

Board of Governors assures itself that it is meeting the TEQSA Threshold Standards in relation to how it handles student complaints.

7. Complainant support

The Student Liaison Officer can assist Complainants to understand the complaints process, their rights and available internal and external support services, and can facilitate referral to those support services.

Complainants and any student who is the subject of a complaint can contact the Student Liaison Officer prior to submitting a complaint or at any time during the complaint process. The assistance of the Student Liaison Officer may be also sought for the Complainant by any Workplace Participant where appropriate and with the Complainant's consent.

The Student Liaison Officer can be contacted by addressing an email to complaints@collaw.edu.au.

8. Staffing

Workplace Participants allocated to handle, and those responsible for making decisions about student complaints, will be given appropriate training, including in:

- a) Trauma-informed and person-centred practice;
- b) Supporting culturally and racially marginalised persons;
- c) The College's policies and procedures around complaints handling; and
- d) If their role requires, administrative decision making.

The Executive Committee will ensure that:

- a) Appropriate mitigations and supports are in place to respond to the wellbeing and safety needs of Workplace Participants handling complaints; and
- b) Action is taken to address underlying risks to workplace participants.

9. Making a complaint

A student can make a complaint by:

- a) Telephone to the College's central number being 1300 856 111 or to any of the College's state offices;
- b) Email to complaints@collaw.edu.au or directly to any Workplace Participants at the College;
- c) In-person at any of the College's state offices or to any Workplace Participant at the College; or
- d) Other means as agreed to between the Complainant and the Student Liaison Officer.

10. Anonymous complaints

A Complainant can submit a complaint anonymously or confidentially, however, the extent to which the College will be able to:

- a) Investigate the complaint;
- b) Seek further information or clarification from the Complainant to assist in any assessment;
- c) Fully consider all issues relevant to any assessment;
- d) Communicate with the Complainant in relation to the complaint; or
- e) Communicate the outcome in relation to the complaint

will be limited and in some circumstances it may not be possible to follow some or all of the complaints process.

11. Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints must contain:

- a) a submission of details;
- b) supporting evidence if relevant; and
- c) a request for action.

The relevant Director must write to the Complainant within 10 working days of the Formal Complaint having been made in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.

If any of the requirements for a Formal Complaint are not met, the relevant Director or their delegate must first request further details from the Complainant before commencing their assessment.

If all or part of a Formal Complaint alleges a breach of the staff Code of Conduct applicable to Workplace Participants, that part of the complaint relating to the breach will be referred to the Principal or their delegate who will instead be responsible for assessing that part of the complaint.

The Principal or the relevant Director as the case may be will keep the Complainant informed in relation to timeframes and the manner in which their complaint will be handled.

The Complainant may have a Support Person attend any meeting with them.

12. External complaints

Complainants can make an external complaint to the:

- a) [National Student Ombudsman](#);
- b) [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#); or
- c) [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) for Complainants holding a student visa

If a Complainant makes an external complaint, they are encouraged to provide feedback to the College on their experience.

13. Monitoring and improvement

Formal Complaints are reported by the Chief Academic Officer utilising deidentified data (including handling data) from the Formal Complaints Register on a quarterly basis to the Academic Board and Board of Governors. Barriers to making complaints will be identified and reasonable steps will be taken to minimise or remove those barriers.

The Chief Academic Officer's report includes:

- a) Analysis of complaint trends, identification of underlying causes, and actions taken to address underlying causes; and
- b) Review and improvement activities undertaken related to complaints handling, including identification of areas for improvement, and actions taken to improve service delivery, and clearly identify delegations of authority and accountability.

Access to the Formal Complaints Register is limited to College Workplace Participants involved in complaints handling. The Formal Complaints Register is maintained by the Academic Secretary.

Identified themes or opportunities for improvement are reported to the Executive Committee by Chief Academic Officer to inform the Executive Committee's consideration and responses to key risks and actions.

Formal Complaints data is additionally analysed as part of the Academic Baseline Report which is presented annually to the Board of Governors and Academic Board.

14. Policy review

This policy is approved as an interim instrument and must be reviewed in time for submission to the November 2026 meeting of Academic Board. The review will focus on refining the College's approach to identifying, managing and resolving complaints, and developing an implementation plan and supporting procedures. The Academic Secretary will invite the Student Reference Group to contribute to reviews and proposed changes to this policy and related procedures. A summary of the College's responses to Student Reference Group feedback is to be provided to Student Reference Group members.

15. Related documents

Supporting procedure

Student Complaints Procedure

Policies and Procedures

[Academic Conduct Policy](#)

[Postgraduate Programs Assessment Rules](#)

[Practical Legal Training Assessment Rules](#)

[Privacy Policy \(Australia\)](#)

[Privacy Policy \(New Zealand\)](#) [for data collected by COL NZ only]

[Student Non-Compliance Rules](#)

[Support for Students Policy](#)

Other documents

[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students](#)

[TEQSA Guidance Note: Grievance and complaints handling](#)

[TEQSA Statement of Regulatory Expectations: Student grievance and complaint mechanisms](#)

[TEQSA Threshold Standards \(Standard 2.4\)](#)

16. Approval information

Policy Owner	Chief Academic Officer
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Review date	By 31 December 2026
Policy file	Student Complaints [Restricted staff access]
Superseded documents	Student Complaints and Grievances Policy

17. Version history

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
1.0	COLAB	26/05/2026	23/06/2026	New policy