

Policy and Procedure

Name:	Grievance Policy
Approved by:	The Dean of AIM Business School
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Approved by:	Head of Compliance, Partners
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Implementation Owner	The Dean
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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

AIM Business School aims to provide a fair, equitable and productive learning environment for all its learners. This policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving academic and non-academic complaints.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all campuses and all staff and students of AIM Business School.

SECTION 2 – POLICY

PRINCIPLES

AIM Business School (ABS) welcomes all forms of feedback and students are openly invited to offer feedback on any matter at any time. In the interests of providing high quality services the following principles apply:

- grievance and review procedures will be readily available to ensure that all stakeholders understand their rights and responsibilities;
- ABS will respond to any grievance or appeal raised by students, staff, consultants or other stakeholders, quickly and objectively in order to reach satisfactory outcomes for all parties;
- where students raise an issue, concern or grievance, the appropriate staff member will respond to the matter immediately;
- the ABS Grievance Procedure will be followed when a grievance or appeal is being raised by any ABS stakeholder;
- in the event that a grievance or appeal cannot be resolved informally, the aggrieved party will be encouraged to formally advise the Postgraduate Executive Office of ABS of their issues and expected outcomes utilising the ABS Grievance Form;
- in the event that a grievance or appeal cannot be resolved by ABS, the aggrieved party will be encouraged to seek assistance from the relevant external agencies as outlined in the Grievance Procedure;
- parties to the grievance resolution process will not be disadvantaged as a result of lodging the grievance, investigation the grievance or responding to the grievance; and
- at all times, ABS will respect the rights of all students to use any avenue available to them to address their grievance and/or appeal

The Grievance Policy and Procedure is communicated:

- to academic and support staff via the Facilitator Handbook; and
- to students via the Student Handbook.

OVERVIEW

All stakeholders are entitled to access an efficient mechanism to raise and settle grievances. ABS is committed to identifying and responding to any issue or grievance considering any aspect of its business operations. ABS has established a complaint a grievance resolution system to resolve:

- academic appeals and grievances relating to student progress, assessment, facilitators, plagiarism, course materials, curriculum or awards in a course of study;
- non-academic appeals and grievances relating to personal information held and any other administrative matters; and
- grievances between staff and students, between staff members and between students.

To achieve this, ABS will respond to any grievance raised by participants, candidates, employees, facilitators, students, and any other stakeholders promptly and objectively regardless of the location of the teaching site, the place of residence of the complainant or the mode of study.

ABS welcomes all forms of feedback, and students are openly invited to offer feedback on any matter at any time.

At all times, ABS will respect and reserve the rights of all students to use any avenue available to them to address their grievances and/or appeals.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records of grievances and their outcomes and the Grievances Register will be kept for 7 years in strictly confidential files. Parties to the grievance will be allowed supervised access to these records on request.

Management of and access to any grievance records (including the Grievances Register) will be restricted to the Academic Manager, Postgraduate Executive Officer and the Dean of ABS.

All parties, subject to the grievance process, shall at all times treat Grievance as confidential and shall not reveal the names of complainants making a grievance or where applicable those referred to in the grievance to any third party without the express permission of those concerned.

- each stage of the following procedure is free of charge;
- the complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against at any stage of this procedure; and
- the complainant and respondent have the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person, other than a lawyer).

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURE**INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

In the first instance, grievances should be discussed with the person/s involved and an informal resolution sought. However, if this is impracticable, complainants should communicate with one of the staff below:

- Academic Manager, ABS; and
- Postgraduate Executive Officer (PGEO), ABS.

LODGING A COMPLAINT

If a complainant cannot resolve the issue informally and they wish to lodge a formal grievance, they should:

- Complete the Grievance form by providing your name, contact details and details of the grievance;
- The Grievance form can be downloaded from the Learning Management System, MyABS and submitted to the ABS student support team at absstudentsupport@aim.com.au;
- detail the steps taken so far;
- understand that it is a serious procedure and it will be investigated;
- understand that it is a formal grievance as opposed to comments, feedback or suggestion; and
- be aware that the parties concerned will be informed that a grievance has been made against them or in relation to a decision they have made.

The Academic Manager, ABS will:

- acknowledge the receipt of the grievance in writing within 5 business days. The acknowledgement will:
 - Outline the investigation process and advise that a decision will normally be made within 14 business days of receiving the grievance in writing; and
 - Identify any foreseeable delays.
- record the grievance/appeal on the grievances register which is kept in the secure Student Records section.

THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The Academic Manager, ABS will:

- arrange a meeting with the complainant;
- arrange a meeting with the respondent to gather information on why the decision was made;
- record minutes of any meetings as a formal record;
- hear the complainant without prejudice giving them ample opportunity to air their grievance;
- listen to the respondent's response to the grievance without prejudice;
- make every effort to advise the complainant and the respondent in writing the outcome of the investigation within 14 business days, outlining the reasons for the decision and the actions to be taken;
- enter formal resolutions, reasons for decisions and actions to be taken onto the grievances register which is kept in the secure Student Records section; and
- advise the complainant in writing that the decision may be appealed if they are unsatisfied with the process or outcome. Appeals may be made in writing to the Dean or the complainant may explicitly seek the involvement of the AIMET ABS Academic Board.

FORMAL RESOLUTION

After investigation the resolution could be:

- further investigation is required;
- providing more information to the student about the situation or reasons the decision was made e.g. explain the rules;
- to remedy a mistake;
- to revoke decision;
- change a policy or procedure;
- recompense grievance; and/or
- retrain/discipline staff member.

If the resolution is in favour of ABS, the reasons may be:

- lack of data or evidence;
- insufficient grounds for grievance;
- resolution is not practical;
- grievance is without substance; and/or
- student wishes to withdraw grievance as not serious – more a comment or feedback.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution an appeal can be made in writing to the Chair of the Academic Board.

The Chair of the Academic Board will:

- acknowledge the request in writing within 5 business days;
- conduct an independent investigation as per the investigation procedure that is fair and impartial;
- make every effort to advise the complainant and the respondent in writing the outcome of the investigation within 14 business days, outlining the reasons for the decision and the actions to be taken; and
- provide the complainant with information on external grievances together with the appeal outcome notification. Advise the complainant that they should notify them in writing within 20 days if they wish to pursue the external grievances procedure.

EXTERNAL APPEALS PROCEDURE

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the proposed outcome, they may seek assistance from an external agency such as:

- independent mediator which will be selected using the Australian Mediation Register at www.amr.asn.au; and
- where the independent mediator is unable to mediate a satisfactory outcome for all parties, the Community Justice Centre can be contacted via 1800 990 777.

Recommendations by the appropriate external agencies in relation to a grievance will be implemented within 14 days of written notification.

If a student has a grievance that does not directly concern AIM Business School but may affect their ability to achieve the desired course outcomes, they shall be referred to appropriate external support groups for assistance.

SECTION 4 – REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Grievance	An official statement of a complaint or appeal over something believed to be wrong or unfair
Complaint	Is a formal statement made in writing that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.
Appeal	Is a formal application in writing to a higher authoritative figure or court to have a decision reversed
Mediation	Is the intervention of a third party in a dispute in order to resolve it in a fair and equitable manner
ABS	AIM Business School

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document name	Document type	Location
Grievance Form	Form	<i>G:\Compliance\Policies & Procedures</i>
Grievance Register	Register	<i>G:\Compliance\Policies & Procedures</i>

SECTION 5 – CHANGE HISTORY

CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Approval date
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V1.0	14.06.17
V2.0	21.06.17
V3.0	30.06.17