INTRODUCTION

1.1 Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that arise in the course of being a student or a prospective student of the Adelaide Central School of Art ('the School'). The Grievance Policy and Procedures describes how the School will deal internally with complaints by students against the School. Its purpose is to ensure a safe and fair learning environment for all. Academic grievances are complaints made by students. Non-academic grievances are complaints made by staff or students.

1.2 The School recognises that a student may refer a grievance to a relevant external agency at any time. External agencies may include the Equal Opportunity Commission, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Ombudsman or Police, or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal or Office of the Training Advocate of South Australia.

PURPOSE

2. This policy provides a framework for the resolution of grievances in order to provide a safe and fair learning environment for all students and outlines the procedures to be used in addressing student grievances.

SCOPE

3. This policy applies to all enrolled students and covers academic and non-academic grievances.

DEFINITIONS

4.1 Grievance: A concern, problem or complaint against the School arising within the context of being a student or prospective student.

4.2 Academic grievance: A complaint relating to an academic decision including but not limited to:
   a. academic progress
   b. assessment results
   c. an improper or unfair action taken or procedure followed by the School that is related to curriculum or awards in a course of study.

4.3 Non-academic grievance: A complaint that does not relate to student progress or assessment or curriculum or award in a course of study. It includes but is not limited to behaviour that the student perceives as bullying, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, victimization or vilification or complaints about the School's services or implementation of policies or procedures eg relating to fees, enrolment, and complaints about personal information the School holds in relation to a student.

4.4 Student: The term ‘student’ includes enrolled students and prospective students. See 8.1 below.
POLICY

5.1 The School will seek to ensure that all grievances are dealt with fairly, constructively, promptly and with due regard for confidentiality.

5.2 A student may make a complaint about a matter relating to their studies, their student life or an alleged unfair or adverse experience which concerns the School and relates to the operations of the School.

5.3 The School will try and maintain the anonymity of the complainant wherever requested, to the extent possible. However, it may not be possible to progress anonymous grievances (where the identity of the complainant is not disclosed) due to the difficulties of investigating such complaints in accordance with principles of natural justice. Natural justice requires that all parties (including the subject of the complaint) are provided with the opportunity to present their version of events with all relevant information available.

5.4 Grievances made by a group having identified a common issue may be considered under this policy.

5.5 Grievances withdrawn by a student will be considered resolved.

5.6 The School will not normally consider previously withdrawn grievances that are resubmitted, except in exceptional circumstances.

5.7 Every attempt will be made to ensure that complainants and respondents are not victimised or discriminated against.

5.8 The School will ensure that an internal review of the outcome of any grievance will be conducted by independent and impartial reviewers. (See 7.1, Stage 3 below.)

5.9 Both complainants and respondents are allowed to be accompanied by a third party as a support person at any stage of the grievance process if so desired, but that support person should not be a legal representative acting in a professional capacity unless everyone involved agrees.

5.10 Where grievance procedures are initiated by an international student, the Academic Administration Manager (AAM) will use reasonable endeavours to have the grievance resolved prior to the expiry date of the student’s visa.

5.11 Complaints lodged by a former student of the School more than six (6) months after completing their studies will not be considered.

RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the School is responsible for ensuring that staff follow the School’s policy and procedures for dealing with student grievances and complaints.

6.2 The Academic Administration Manager (AAM) is responsible for assisting students who wish to make a complaint under this policy.

6.3 All staff are responsible for complying with the School’s Student Grievance Policy.

PROCEDURES

7. Academic grievance process
Where a student is dissatisfied with decisions relating to their academic progress, results of assessment or believes that proper procedures in any matter related to curriculum or awards in a course of study have not been properly or fairly followed, the steps outlined below can be taken.

7.1 Timeframe for Academic Grievances

Stage 1: Where a student has an academic grievance, they should raise the grievance with the lecturer concerned in writing within seven calendar days. The lecturer will respond in writing within seven calendar days.

Stage 2: If not satisfied, within a further seven calendar days, the student may notify the Academic Administration Manager (AAM) of their grievance in writing. The AAM will attempt to arbitrate the grievance with the lecturer and student.

Stage 3: If not satisfied, the student may request, via the CEO, a review by the Academic Committee which will be tabled at the next scheduled meeting of the Academic Committee. The Academic Committee will notify the student of their determination within 14 calendar days. Should independent mediation then be required, this will take place within 14 calendar days of the Academic Committee’s response to the student. The Academic Committee may decline to participate in independent mediation if it does not consider it likely to lead to a resolution of the complaint or where it considers the complaint to be unfounded or vexatious.

Stage 4: If not satisfied, the student may seek external mediation (appeal) with the Training Advocate SA.

8. Non-Academic Grievance Process

8.1 These procedures apply to:

a. students
b. persons seeking to enrol in courses of study

8.2 The procedures will be used to deal with all complaints relating to non-academic related matters which have a connection with the School in the course of School business including but not restricted to alleged instances of discrimination or harassment appearing to relate to sexual, ethnic, racial, age or disability based issues.

8.3 These procedures provide five options which are processes internal to the School for resolving complaints relating to non-academic matters in a timely manner.

8.4 The AAM will decide the appropriate option for any given complaint with regard to what is considered fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

8.5 Timeframe for Non-Academic Grievances

a. A person wishing to lodge a complaint should first approach the AAM in the School Office to register the complaint in writing as soon as possible after the alleged incident. Delays made in making complaints may affect the ability of the School to effectively and fairly deal with and/or investigate the complaint.

b. Reasons for decisions and actions taken throughout the grievance procedure will be provided in writing to both complainant and respondent if so requested at any stage during the grievance procedure.

8.6 Non-Academic Grievance Assessment

The AAM makes an initial assessment of the validity of the complaint based on the information available and may make preliminary enquiries as necessary, including interviewing relevant parties. The initial assessment also determines how the complaint should be addressed and whether the grievance can be resolved informally or whether a formal investigation should be
conducted. The AAM will then determine the appropriate avenue for the matter to be addressed from the following options.

Option 1: The AAM determines that there is no basis for taking further action.

Option 2: The AAM may try and resolve the matter directly with the complainant and/or utilise Options 4 or 5 to attempt resolution.

Option 3: The AAM may recommend that the complainant and other relevant parties engage in informal conciliation to attempt resolution.

Option 4: The AAM may recommend that the complainant and other relevant parties engage in a formal conciliation with an independent mediator to attempt resolution.

Option 5: The AAM may arrange for the complaint to be formally investigated and take action as necessary at the conclusion of the investigation which may include any of the other options.

8.7 Nothing in this policy prevents the AAM from taking any one or more of these options in any particular order. The AAM will make decisions based on the evidence available, fairness to all parties involved, with impartiality and objectivity. The AAM will at all times comply with its obligations under applicable equal opportunity and safety legislation.

9. **External appeals**

9.1 If not satisfied with the School’s decision in relation to a grievance made under this policy, a complainant may seek external mediation (appeal) with the Training Advocate SA or other external agency.

9.2 The Office of the Training Advocate SA

The South Australian Office of the Training Advocate (OTA) provides guidance about the training system in South Australia and offers independent advice and support. It negotiates on behalf of students to resolve issues and investigates complaints or refers them to the appropriate authority. It is important to note that the OTA does not overturn academic results, does not provide legal advice, and will not investigate a complaint if the Registered Provider has not had the opportunity to review a complaint through its own internal processes.

**The Office of the Training Advocate**

Ground Floor West
55 Currie Street, Adelaide
Office hours:
Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.30pm
Phone: (toll free) 1800 006 488
Outside Australia call (country calling code)
+ 61 + 8 + 8226 4242
Fax: 8226 4278
Email trainingadvocate@sa.gov.au
Post: GPO Box 320 Adelaide SA 5001

9.3 International Students

International students may seek advice and support for any matter (academic or non-academic) that impacts on their ability to live, work and study effectively in South Australia from the Office of the Training Advocate SA (see contact information above). External appeals are conducted in accordance with the standards required under the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 for students seeking to appeal a registered provider’s internal complaint process.

9.4 Administrative Appeals Tribunal – Fee HELP
a. To appeal decisions of the School relating to FEE-HELP (particularly refusal to re-credit a person’s FEE-HELP balance), the external appeals body is the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

b. Applications for review must be made within 28 days of receiving the decision.

c. A fee must be paid: The full application fee is $816. In certain circumstances, this fee can be reduced to $100.

d. Contact details for the Adelaide Registry of the AAT are as follows:

   Administrative Appeals Tribunal
   11th Floor Chesser House
   91 Grenfell Street
   Adelaide 5000
   Office hours:
   Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm

   Phone: 1300 366 700 (local call charge from fixed phone lines; calls from mobiles may cost more)
   Email Adelaide.Registry@aat.gov.au
   Post: GPO Box 9955 Adelaide SA 5001

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Handbook

AUTHORISATION

[Signature of Board Chairperson]
[Date of approval by the Board]
Adelaide Central School of Art
APPENDIX: PROCESS CHARTS FOR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE

Non-Academic Grievance Process

Student has grievance

Notifies Academic Administrator

Academic Administrator investigates and determines best course of action from the following options

Opt 1: NFA
Opt 2: Deal with individually
Opt 3: Informal conciliation
Opt 4: Formal conciliation
Opt 5: Formal complaint

In all options, Academic Administrator notifies student of decision in writing

Yes: NFA
No

Training Advocate SA*

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Academic Grievance Process

Informal process

Stage 1
Student notifies relevant lecturer
Lecturer responds

Student satisfied
Yes – Lecturer documents with Academic Administrator
No
Proceed to Stage 2

Formal process

Stage 2
Student notifies HOAS
HOAS arbitrates with lecturer and Student

Student satisfied
Yes – HOAS documents with Academic Administrator
No
Proceed to Stage 3

Stage 3
Student requests review by Academic Committee
Academic Committee reviews & responds

Student satisfied
Yes – GAC documents with Academic Administrator
No
Independent mediator* brought in

Stage 4
Outcome of this review is final and binding on both parties

Training Advocate SA*

* The independent mediator works on behalf of both the School and the student.

* Training Advocate SA is a free service, ACPET charges a fee.

Appeal

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