

UNIVERSITY STUDENT OMBUDSMAN PROCEDURE

SCOPE

- current and former Monash University students;
- prospective students whose complaint relates to administrative process(es) during application, selection or admission;
- all courses and units; and
- all staff, including associates with teaching or supervisory responsibilities.

For the purpose of this procedure, references to 'the University' includes activity at Monash University Australia, Monash University Malaysia, Monash University Indonesia, Monash Suzhou and the Monash University Prato Centre, unless indicated otherwise.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

This procedure outlines the process for students to lodge a request for review with the University Student Ombudsman (USO) as the final stage for internal resolution of a complaint that has progressed to stage 4 of the complaints process, as set out in the [Student Complaints Policy](#). This procedure also outlines the processes for complaint management and resolution by the USO.

1. Lodging a complaint

- 1.1 Students must attempt to resolve their complaint via the formal complaints process as outlined in the [Student Complaints Procedure](#). If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of a stage 3 complaint they are eligible to lodge a request for review by the USO.
- 1.2 Students seeking review by the USO must do so within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of the stage 3 complaint, and should lodge their complaint for review using the [online form](#).
- 1.3 Students must provide all relevant information at the time of lodging their complaint with the USO or as soon as practicable upon request. Failure to do so may result in the process being dismissed or discontinued.
- 1.4 The USO's office will acknowledge all complaints within five working days of receipt.
- 1.5 Students may seek support from their [relevant student association](#).

2. Assessment of complaint

- 2.1 The USO will initially assess that a complaint falls within the scope of this procedure and that stages 1-3 (informal direct complaint, informal escalated complaint, formal investigation) have been completed before submission.

Privacy and recordkeeping

- 2.2 Information relating to a complaint submitted to the USO will be handled in accordance with the applicable [data protection and privacy obligations](#) and will only be communicated:
 - in the process of investigating the complaint;
 - to those parties directly involved in the investigation and complaint resolution;
 - for the purpose of meeting government legislative requirements including privacy and disclosure requirements; or
 - with the consent of the person providing the information.
- 2.3 The USO will maintain a register of complaints received and responses provided with documentation managed in accordance with the [Recordkeeping Policy](#).

Preliminary review

- 2.4 The USO may conduct informal enquiries to determine whether a matter warrants formal review.

- 2.5 In undertaking informal enquiries, the USO may request information and documentation from a student and relevant faculty or portfolio. The USO will assess whether the matter may be resolved by further action such as negotiation or conciliation, or whether the matter should proceed to a formal review.
- 2.6 If the USO considers that there is potential for the complaint to be resolved informally by the relevant faculty or portfolio, the USO will refer the matter to that faculty or portfolio with a suggested approach to resolution. The outcome of this referral must be reported to the USO in order to determine if further action is required.

3. Formal review of complaints

Initiating the review

- 3.1 When a formal review is to be undertaken, the USO will advise the following roles and areas of the intention to investigate, broadly outline the complaint, and specify areas which will be required to participate in the review process:

For academic matters:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) (for matters relating to coursework students) or Chair of the Graduate Research Committee (for matters relating to graduate research students);
- Dean of the relevant faculty, relevant Associate Dean (or equivalent) and relevant Faculty Manager; and
- Student Conduct and Complaints, Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

For matters not related to education or research:

- Relevant portfolio head; and
- Student Conduct and Complaints, Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

- 3.2 When a formal review is initiated the USO will advise the student of the scope of the complaint to be investigated and request any further information required.

Conducting the review

- 3.3 Through the course of a review, the USO may obtain expert advice, including independent legal advice.
- 3.4 If further complaints arise during a review, the USO may decide to investigate or refer such complaints to the relevant area, or to another appropriate body for investigation in accordance with the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).
- 3.5 At any stage in the review the USO may determine that informal resolution should be attempted and make that recommendation to both parties. If either party suggests informal resolution, the USO will raise this proposal with the other party for its consideration.
- 3.6 All requests for documentation will be made in writing to the student and/or the relevant area related to the complaint.
- 3.7 The relevant area must provide details pertaining to the complaint and all associated documentation within five working days of receiving the request from the USO, unless otherwise specified.
- 3.8 Any student or staff member who is a party to a complaint review will be notified and provided with all information required to enable them to prepare for the review and provide any required response.
- 3.9 A student making a complaint may be assisted, but not represented, by one support person at any meeting or consultation including:
- a member of staff of a recognised Monash student association;
 - a student of the University;
 - a member of staff of the University; or
 - a close family member or friend of the student.
- 3.10 The USO must be notified of the attendance of a support person at least two working days prior to the meeting or consultation.

4. Review outcome

Initial report of findings

- 4.1 The University Student Ombudsman's initial report of findings will include:
- a summary of the complaint including details of the outcome of the stage 3 complaint, and the student's request to the USO for review;

- an analysis of the matter, including the application of any relevant legislation, policies and procedures, principles of good practice and fairness; and
- reasons for the finding and proposed resolution.

4.2 The initial report of findings will be provided in writing to the student and the relevant area(s) for response.

4.3 The responses of all parties will be considered in the final report provided by the USO to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Chair of the Graduate Research Committee or the relevant portfolio head, and will include recommendations for resolution of the complaint.

Final report and recommendations

4.4 The USO will make recommendations in the final report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Chair of the Graduate Research Committee, or the relevant portfolio head for resolution of the complaint within 20 working days of commencement of the formal investigation. If this timeline cannot be met due to extenuating circumstances, the USO will make an interim report to the relevant area(s) and provide details of the timeline extension to the student.

4.5 A copy of the final report will also be provided to the relevant area(s) as follows:

For academic matters:

- Dean of the relevant faculty, relevant Associate Dean (or equivalent) and relevant Faculty Manager; and
- Student Conduct and Complaints, Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

For matters not related to education or research:

- Student Conduct and Complaints, Office of the Chief Operating Officer.

4.6 The relevant area must acknowledge receipt of the final report and advise the USO in writing whether the recommendations are accepted. If the USO's recommendations are not accepted or cannot be implemented the relevant area will liaise with the USO to reach an acceptable resolution.

4.7 The USO will notify the student of the recommendations made in the final report and the response of the relevant area(s) to the recommendations.

External avenues for complaint

4.8 Current or prospective students may seek external review of a complaint via the following:

4.8.1 Monash University Australia students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint after review by the USO can progress to stage 5 of the Student Complaints process and contact the [Victorian Ombudsman](#).

4.8.2 Monash University Malaysia students have the option to request an external review by the Registrar General. Students may do so through the [Ministry of Higher Education's Public Complaints Management System](#) (SISPAA).

4.8.3 Monash University Indonesia students have the option to make a complaint through the [Ministry of Education and Culture Information and Complaint Services](#).

4.8.4 Monash Suzhou students have the option to make a complaint through the [Ministry of Education](#).

DEFINITIONS

Associate	For the purposes of this policy, 'associates' are defined as contractors, conjoint appointments, affiliates and adjunct appointees.
Working day	A day other than a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday under the Public Holidays Act 1993 (Vic), or a university holiday. In Malaysia, working day means a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday in the relevant state in Malaysia. In Indonesia, working day means a day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	University Student Ombudsman Policy
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated procedures	Student Complaints Procedure

	Student Complaints Management Procedure Data Protection and Privacy Procedure Data Protection and Privacy Schedule Monash University Indonesia
Related legislation	Higher Education Threshold Standards (2015) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018) Higher Education Support Act (2003)
Category	Governance
Approval	Academic Board 24 November 2021 Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee 12 October 2021
Endorsement	President and Vice-Chancellor 12 October 2021
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Content enquiries	ombudsman@monash.edu