

UNIVERSITY STUDENT OMBUDSMAN POLICY

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.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University Student Ombudsman (USO) is appointed by Monash University Council to provide an avenue for an independent and impartial review to ensure the investigation and resolution of a student complaint has been carried out in accordance with the [Student Complaints Management Procedure](#). This policy sets out the general principles that guide the review of student complaints undertaken by the USO

General Principles

- 1.1 The University strives to resolve complaints as close as possible to where the complaint arose and with the people most directly involved. Students can seek to resolve complaints by following the process set out in the [Student Complaints Policy](#). Complaints may be escalated according to the following stages:
 - Student complaint stage 1: Informal, direct complaint
 - Student complaint stage 2: Informal, escalated complaint
 - Student complaint stage 3: Formal investigation
 - Student complaint stage 4: Internal review
 - Student complaint stage 5: External review
- 1.2 Students must lodge any request for review by the USO within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of a stage 3 complaint.
- 1.3 The principles of natural justice will be followed in the conduct of all reviews undertaken by the USO and, where possible, the preferred approach will be resolution by conciliation or negotiation.
- 1.4 No student will experience disadvantage as a result of making a complaint to the USO, or in assisting a USO review.
- 1.5 Staff members must cooperate with USO reviews and no staff member will experience disadvantage as a result of assisting a USO review.
- 1.6 Where the USO is considered to be affected by a reasonable apprehension of bias or is absent from the University, the Vice-Chancellor can appoint a person (in addition to and not in place of the USO) to review and make recommendations in relation to a particular complaint or matter. This person, for the purposes of that particular review, has all the responsibilities and powers of the USO.
- 1.7 The privacy of all parties involved in complaints will be maintained, and information handled, in accordance with the applicable [data protection and privacy obligations](#). All parties involved in the resolution of a complaint will restrict information about the complaint, including the identities of those involved, strictly to the minimum number of parties who require information in order for the complaint to be resolved.
- 1.8 The USO has broad authority to conduct independent reviews at its discretion and to make recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Chair of the Graduate Research Committee, or the relevant portfolio head, as applicable, on improvements to policies, processes and practices.
 - 1.8.1 If in the course of a review the USO becomes aware of what may be a systemic issue requiring action, the USO may notify the relevant area of that issue.
- 1.9 Where a student's complaint is upheld, recommendations will not only focus on resolution for the individual but also on any improvements that could be made to systems, policies and processes.

- 1.10 The USO will provide an annual report to Monash University Council outlining the volume, nature and trends of complaints received, and the outcome of these complaints. Following the provision of this report to Monash University Council it will be made available to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Chair of the Graduate Research Committee and the Chief Operating Officer.

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

Supporting procedures	University Student Ombudsman Procedure
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated policies	Student Complaints Policy
Related legislation	Monday University Act (Vic) 2009 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Higher Education Support Act 2003
Category	Governance
Approval	Monash University Council 8 December 2021
Endorsement	Academic Board 24 November 2021 Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee 12 October 2021
Policy owner	University Student Ombudsman
Date effective	1 January 2022
Review date	1 January 2025
Version	2.0
Content enquiries	ombudsman@monash.edu