

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY

Policy Statement

The Australian International Conservatorium of Music (AICM) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective complaints and grievance handling system.

We view receipt of a complaint or grievance as an opportunity to improve our ability to meet the needs of our students and potential students. All students and staff of the AICM, or those seeking to enrol in a course of study with the AICM, are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the staff/student's place of residence or the mode in which they study/teach.

We aim to -

- Develop a culture that views student complaints and grievances as an opportunity to improve our organisation and how we work;
- Ensure that any complaints or grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- Set in place a complaints and grievances handling system that is student focused and helps us to prevent complaints or grievances from recurring;
- Ensure that we are consistent in our response to complaints and grievances; and
- Ensure that complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.

Definition of a Complaint or Grievance

A complaint or grievance can be defined as a staff/student expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of AICM's services and activities.

A complaint or grievance may be a student or staff member expressing dissatisfaction with -

- The enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- The quality of course delivery provided;
- Access to personal records; and/or
- The way they were treated.

All students and staff of the AICM can also use these procedures to submit a grievance about an academic matter. Academic Grievance Procedures are for grievances which relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study.

It is our policy to ensure that AICM responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by students, potential students and staff regardless of the campus on which the incident took place, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. There are three stages at which a complaint may be addressed. There is no financial charge for each stage. The complainant and respondent will not be victimised or

discriminated against in any of the three stages set out in this policy. The complainant and/or respondent has the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if they so desire at any stage of the grievance process. At all stages of the process, if so requested by the complainant and/or respondent, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures must be given.

Stage One

In the first instance, complaints should be discussed with the lecturer involved. To facilitate this, students may take the complaint to any of the following: Mr Ian Brooks, Campus Dean, or Ms Mee Ja Yoo, International Student Officer. At this stage the complainant is assisted in formulating the complaint and in making a decision as to whether it is appropriate to have a direct informal meeting with the person/s involved, or a more formal and structured meeting. The Campus Dean, or his nominee, will liaise with the complainant and their advisor Ms Meeja Yoo to clarify the outcome that the aggrieved person hopes to achieve. This process of clarification and resulting meeting (formal or informal) will take place within 14 days of receiving the complaint. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview with the aggrieved person, they and/or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them. The Campus Dean, or nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance, providing, if requested, a written report (within 14 days) to the aggrieved person on the steps taken to address the grievance. The majority of complaints are resolved successfully at this stage.

Staff/students then have three options for proceeding -

- Take no further action;
- Make comments or suggestions; or
- Take the grievance to Stage Two.

Stage Two

The second stage of the process at which a complaint is addressed is as follows:

If unsatisfied with the response to the complaint or the time taken to resolve the matter, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to Professor Lee, the President, and/or explicitly seek the involvement of the Grievance Committee.

The Grievance Committee is a panel of five people selected for their experience in handling disputes. They are –

Dr Greg Whateley (Chair)

Mr Ian Brooks (Secretary)

Em Prof John Painter

Dr Darrell Hines

Mr. Art Philips

The Grievance Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. The President, or nominee, will provide a written report to the aggrieved person on the further steps taken to address the grievance within 14 days of receiving a report of the consultation procedure. If the Grievance Committee makes recommendations in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, the Grievance Committee will forward those recommendations to the President, within 30 days who will

ensure the recommendations are implemented within the next 30 days.

Stage Three

External Review

If the aggrieved person remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the AICM's procedures, mediation is available through the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). AICM will provide the complainant with contact details for ACPET and refer the matter to them within 14 days of the receipt of the request. At any stage, the complainant or respondent may request review by an independent external body. AICM will inform the complainant of their right to an external review in each report provided to them.

AICM has ascertained that the Australian Council for Private Education and Training can and is prepared to perform this function. They can be contacted at:

ACPET
Box Q1076, QVB PO
SYDNEY NSW 1230
Ph: (02) 9299 4555
Fax: (02) 9299 4221
acpet@acpet.edu.au
www.acpet.edu.au

This stage has a financial charge of \$200 for the complainant. The complainant and respondent have the right to be accompanied by another person. At any stage both complainant and respondent may request reasons and a full explanation for decisions and actions in writing. AICM will endeavour to achieve resolution within 30 days. If the Australian Council for Private Education and Training makes recommendations in relation to a grievance they have reviewed, they will forward those recommendations to the President within 30 days, who will ensure the recommendations are implemented within the next 30 days.

If grievances remain unresolved, the aggrieved person may decide to refer the matter to another external agency such as The Anti-Discrimination Board or the Department of Fair Trading.

Records

Records of all grievances and applications for review of decisions must be kept and be accessible to all interested parties for a period of at least five years. Such records will remain confidential. Records of grievances and their outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and filed in a separate file (not kept on the student or staff file) and stored in the office of the Campus Dean, for a period of at least five years. Only senior members of staff have access to AICM locked files (Professor Lee, President and Ian Brooks, Campus Dean). Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records at any time by making a written request to the Campus Dean.

Publication of this Policy and Procedure

This document is made available in the Staff and Student Handbooks, in the Policy and Procedures Manual and publicly on the AICM website in order to be readily accessible.

Authority and Implementation

This policy and procedure was agreed to by the AICM Board of Directors at its December meeting, 2007. The Board of Directors determined that a copy of this procedure be made available to all staff and support staff through the Staff Handbook. The President and the

Campus Dean, are responsible for the training of staff and support staff in the application of the policy. Staff members are trained in the policy no less frequently than at the beginning of year staff meeting, or for new staff as a part of their general orientation.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this Complaints and Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure limits the rights of students to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these dispute resolution procedures do not circumscribe student's rights to pursue other legal remedies.