



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

CONTENTS

1	PURPOSE.....	1
2	SCOPE.....	1
3	POLICY STATEMENT	1
4	PROCEDURES for Non-Academic Grievance	2
5	DEFINITIONS	7
6	RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS.....	7
7	FEEDBACK.....	10
8	APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS.....	10
9	APPENDIX – PROCESS FLOW CHARTS.....	11

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Polytechnic Institute Australia ('PIA') is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system, which is easily accessible to all complainants. The grievance process is designed to ensure that PIA responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure apply to all students at PIA, and to all staff involved in student grievance handling. It can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance and appeals of an academic or non-academic nature; however, this policy excludes matters relating to grade appeals.
- 2.2 For all matters relating to grade appeals please refer to the Assessment Policy and Procedure.
- 2.3 Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters, including grievances about the personal information that PIA holds concerning an individual. With non-academic grievances, the term "complainant" applies to both current students of PIA and persons seeking to enrol with PIA.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 This policy and procedure support PIA's commitment to:
- developing a culture that views grievances as opportunities to improve the organisation and how it works;
 - setting in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps PIA to prevent grievances from recurring;
 - ensuring that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and with complete confidentiality;
 - ensuring that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised; and
 - ensuring that there is a consistent response to grievances.

Policy Coverage

- 3.2 This policy does NOT cover the review of results for assessments tasks or the review or appeal of final unit grades. Please see the Assessment Policy and Procedure for details.

Created: 23 October 2014

Modified: 2 March 2022

Review Date: January 2025

Document Owner: BoD

Version: 3.5

Page 1 of 14

Once PRINTED, this is an UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENT. Refer to Policy Portal for latest version

Polytechnic Institute Australia Pty Ltd.

ABN: 34 145 333 795 Provider Number PRV14049 CRICOS 03535M

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

- 3.3 A grievance can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of PIA's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters. Grievances may relate to the following:
- the enrolment or induction/orientation process;
 - the quality of education provided;
 - academic issues, including student progress, assessment practices, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
 - the handling of personal information and access to personal records; and
 - the way someone has been treated.
- 3.4 Complainants 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 mode of study or place of residence.

Approach

- 3.5 During all stages of the grievance handling process, PIA will take all steps to ensure that:
- the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;
 - the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case;
 - each party to a grievance is advised of their right to be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
 - a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
 - where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, PIA will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome; and
 - the complainant has access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by PIA and the complainant.

4 PROCEDURES for Non-Academic Grievance

Informal Grievance Resolution

- 4.1 Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible and appropriate, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist in the resolution of issues at this level.
- 4.2 All PIA staff will undergo training as part of the induction program to ensure that they are aware of the requirements to apply this policy.
- 4.3 Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the administration in person or by phoning (02) 8319 8202 and asking to speak to the Registrar.

Where the informal grievance is about the Registrar or their decisions, contact: compliance@pia.edu.au to be contacted by the Compliance, Quality and Risk Manager.

- 4.4 Where students are dissatisfied with the informal grievance resolution, they may raise either a formal non-academic grievance or a formal academic grievance. It is not mandatory for informal complainants to raise a formal grievance.

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

Stage One: Formal Non-Academic Grievance

- 4.5 Formal non-academic grievances must be submitted in writing and marked to the attention of the Registrar as follows:

The Registrar
Polytechnic Institute Australia
Level 16
233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

registrar@pia.edu.au

Where the non-academic grievance is about The Registrar or their decisions the grievance is to be addressed to:

The Compliance, Quality and Risk Manager
Polytechnic Institute Australia
Level 16
233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

compliance@pia.edu.au

- 4.6 Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance. All reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- 4.7 The recipient of the grievance, or their delegate, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the complainant or respondent may be accompanied by another person to support them who cannot act in the capacity of legal representative for them
- 4.8 The recipient of the grievance, or their delegate, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.
- 4.9 Where the grievance is of an academic nature that does not relate to the review of results or grades, the grievance will be treated under the Stage One: Formal Academic Grievance process of this policy.
- 4.10 Once the non-academic grievance is investigated, the recipient of the grievance will report an outcome to the student for notification.
- 4.11 The recipient of the grievance will also log the details of the grievance on the Complaints register.
- 4.12 Students dissatisfied with the out pf the Formal Non-Academic Grievance may proceed to stage two Internal Appeal (Non-academic).

Stage One: Formal Academic Grievance

- 4.13 Formal academic grievances must be submitted in writing and marked to the attention of the Dean as follows:

Created: 23 October 2014
Modified: 31 March 2022
Review Date: January 2025

Document Owner: BoD
Version: 3.5
Page 3 of 14

Once PRINTED, this is an UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENT. Refer to Policy Portal for latest version

Polytechnic Institute Australia Pty Ltd.

ABN: 34 145 333 795 Provider Number PRV14049 CRICOS 03535M

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

The Dean
Polytechnic Institute Australia
Level 16
233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

dean@pia.edu.au

- 4.14 Receipt of the academic grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance. All reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- 4.15 The Registrar, or their delegate, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the complainant or respondent may ask that another person accompany them.
- 4.16 The Dean, or their delegate, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.
- 4.17 Where the grievance is with regards to a review of a grade or appeal of a grade the student will be directed to follow the Assessment Policy and Procedure unless they have already followed such a process.
- 4.18 Once the academic grievance is investigated the Registrar will report an outcome to the student for notification.
- 4.19 The Registrar will also log the details of the grievance on the Complaints register.
- 4.20 Students dissatisfied with the outcome of the Formal Academic Grievance may proceed to stage two Internal Appeal (Academic).

Stage Two: Internal Appeal (Academic)

- 4.21 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal academic grievance, they may lodge an appeal within ten (10) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as follows:

The CEO
Polytechnic Institute Australia
Level 16
233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

ceo@pia.edu.au
- 4.22 The CEO, or their delegate, will request the Chair of the Academic Board to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.
- 4.23 Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person (who cannot act in the capacity of a legal practitioner) to accompany them to these interviews.
- 4.24 Following the consultation, the CEO, or their delegate, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

- 4.25 Before proceeding to stage three of the appeals process the student must have exhausted all internal appeals first.

Stage Two: Internal Appeal (Non-Academic)

- 4.26 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance, they may lodge an appeal within twenty (20) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance to the COO as follows:

The COO
Polytechnic Institute Australia
Level 16
233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

coo@pia.edu.au

- 4.27 The Chief Operating Officer (COO) or delegate will consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.
- 4.28 Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person (who is not a legal practitioner) to accompany them to these interviews.
- 4.29 Following the consultation, the COO or delegate will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.
- 4.30 Before proceeding to stage three of the appeals process the student must have exhausted all internal appeals first.

Stage Three: External Appeal (International Students only – Ombudsman)

- 4.31 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal and they are an international student, they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman.
- 4.32 The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a grievance or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by PIA.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman considers grievances relating to Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018) and PIA policies and procedures about the following matters:

- being refused admission to a course;
- course fees and due dates;
- course or provider transfers;
- being reported for failure to meet course progression or attendance requirements (for ELICOS students) ;
- cancellation of enrolment;
- accommodation or work arranged by a provider; and
- incorrect advice is given by a provider's Education Agent.

- 4.33 The Ombudsman considers cases of inaction or delay, for example, failure of a provider to issue student results within the normal timeframes, or failure to provide services that were included in the student's written agreement with the education provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

- 4.34 PIA agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman, and the Chief Executive Officer will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of such recommendations.

Stage Three: External Appeal (Domestic Students and International Students, where the matter is not covered by the Overseas Students Ombudsman)

- 4.35 If not satisfied with the decision in Stage Two, and the matter is not within the purview of the Overseas Students Ombudsman, the complainant or PIA may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process via IHEA (Independent Higher Education Australia). The contact details for IHEA are:

info@ihea.edu.au

Marking the email to the attention of the IHEA CEO.

- 4.36 IHEA will appoint an external reviewer with an appropriate background who is acceptable to both parties.

- 4.37 The process is as follows:

- An application will be made by PIA in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of IHEA, detailing the grievance, the process applied as at that point in time, the decision to be reviewed and grounds for an external review of the decision.
- The complainant will not, at any stage in the process, be in any way discriminated against or victimised, and in any meeting may be accompanied and assisted by a third party if that is their wish. The complainant will be advised of the cost, if any, for utilising the external grievance appeals process.
- The IHEA appointed reviewer must make a determination and advise the relevant senior officer of PIA, the complainant, and IHEA, within thirty (30) days, providing in writing the reasons and rationale for any decisions and/or actions to be taken.

- 4.38 The cost of fees incurred from the external bodies will be borne at 50% each by both the complainant and PIA.

Further Action

- 4.39 If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as the Anti-Discrimination Board, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission or the Office of Fair Trading or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).
- 4.40 The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Enrolment Status

- 4.41 Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, PIA will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Reporting

- 4.42 A written record of all grievances handled under this policy and procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at:

Created: 23 October 2014

Modified: 31 March 2022

Review Date: January 2025

Document Owner: BoD

Version: 3.5

Page 6 of 14

Once PRINTED, this is an UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENT. Refer to Policy Portal for latest version

Polytechnic Institute Australia Pty Ltd.

ABN: 34 145 333 795 Provider Number PRV14049 CRICOS 03535M



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

Level 16, 233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney, NSW, 2000.

- 4.43 All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by PIA's Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure.
- 4.44 All formal academic grievances will be reported to the Academic Board whilst maintaining student confidentiality.
- 4.45 All formal non-academic grievances will be reported to the Executive Management Committee.
- 4.46 A summary reporting showing the effectiveness of the grievances process will be reported to the Board of Directors annually.

Approval, Publication and Training

- 4.47 This policy and procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with PIA through publication on the Learning Management System (LMS) and on PIA's website (www.pia.edu.au).
- 4.48 For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this policy and procedure will form part of the staff induction process.

Reviewable Decisions

- 4.49 PIA must acknowledge receipt of an application for review of a reviewable decision in writing and inform the applicant that, if the reviewer has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision.
- 4.50 The reviewer of a reviewable decision must inform applicants of their right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the reviewable decision that has been confirmed, varied or set aside under section 209-5 or 209-10 of the Act, and provide the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Registry and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the PIA glossary.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Documents

Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure
Student at Risk and Early Intervention Policy and Procedure

Higher Education Standards Framework

- 6.1 This policy and procedure comply with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, Standard 2.4, which states:
 - 1. Current and prospective students have access to mechanisms that are capable of resolving grievances about any aspect of their experience with the higher education provider, its agents or related parties.
 - 2. There are policies and processes that deliver timely resolution of formal complaints and appeals against academic and administrative decisions without charge or at a reasonable cost to students, and these are applied consistently, fairly and without reprisal.

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

3. Institutional complaints-handling and appeals processes for formal complaints include provision for confidentiality, independent professional advice, advocacy and other support for the complainant or appellant, and provision for review by an appropriate independent third party if internal processes fail to resolve a grievance.
4. Decisions about formal complaints and appeals are recorded and the student concerned is informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons and of further avenues of appeal where they exist and where the student could benefit.
5. If a formal complaint or appeal is upheld, any action required is initiated promptly.

National Code 2018

- 6.2 The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 10 states that:
- 10.1 The registered provider must have and implement a documented internal complaints handling and appeals process and policy, and provide the overseas student with comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about that process and policy.
 - 10.2 The registered provider's internal complaints handling and appeals process must:
 - 10.2.1 include a process for the overseas student to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally
 - 10.2.2 include that the provider will respond to any complaint or appeal the overseas student makes regarding his or her dealings with the registered provider, the registered provider's education agents or any related party the registered provider has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas student's course or related services
 - 10.2.3 commence assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of it being made in accordance with the registered provider's complaints handling and appeals process and policy and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable
 - 10.2.4 ensure the overseas student is given an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings
 - 10.2.5 conduct the assessment of the complaint or appeal in a professional, fair and transparent manner
 - 10.2.6 ensure the overseas student is given a written statement of the outcome of the internal appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome
 - 10.2.7 keep a written record of the complaint or appeal, including a statement of the outcome and reasons for the outcome.
 - 10.3 If the overseas student is not successful in the registered provider's internal complaints handling and appeals process, the registered provider must advise the overseas student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the overseas student's right to access external complaints handling and appeals process at minimal or no cost. The registered provider must give the overseas student the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body.
 - 10.4 If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the overseas student, the registered provider must immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision, and advise the overseas student of that action.

Higher Education Support Act 2003

Created: 23 October 2014
Modified: 31 March 2022
Review Date: January 2025

Document Owner: BoD
Version: 3.5
Page 8 of 14

Once PRINTED, this is an UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENT. Refer to Policy Portal for latest version

Polytechnic Institute Australia Pty Ltd.

ABN: 34 145 333 795 Provider Number PRV14049 CRICOS 03535M

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

19-45 Student grievance and review procedures

Must have grievance and review procedures

- (1) A higher education provider must have:
 - (a) a grievance procedure for dealing with complaints by the provider's students, and persons who seek to enrol in courses of study with the provider, relating to non-academic matters; and
 - (b) a grievance procedure for dealing with complaints by the provider's students relating to academic matters; and
 - (c) a review procedure for dealing with review of decisions made by the provider:
 - (i) under section 36-20; or
 - (ii) relating to assistance under Chapter 3.

Note: Part 5-7 also deals with reconsideration and review of decisions.

- (2) Except where the provider is a Table A provider, the grievance procedures referred to in paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) must comply with the requirements of the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.
- (3) The review procedure referred to in paragraph (1)(c) must comply with the requirements of the Higher Education Provider Guidelines.

Guidelines may provide for matters relating to reviews

- (4) The Higher Education Provider Guidelines may provide for matters relating to reviews of decisions made by higher education providers:
 - (a) under section 36-20; or
 - (b) relating to assistance under Chapter 3;including procedures that are to be followed by review officers when reviewing those decisions.

Provider to comply with procedures

- (5) The provider must comply with its grievance and review procedures.

Civil penalty: 60 penalty units.

Provider to provide information about procedures

- (6) The provider must publish, and make publicly available, up to date information setting out the procedures.

Provider to provide information about other complaint mechanisms

- (7) The provider must publish information about any other complaint mechanisms available to complain about the provider's decisions.

19-50 Higher education providers to appoint review officers

- (1) A higher education provider must appoint a review officer to undertake reviews of decisions made by the provider:
 - (a) under section 36-20; or
 - (b) relating to assistance under Chapter 3.

Note: The Secretary may delegate to a review officer of a higher education provider the power to reconsider decisions of the provider under Division 209: see subsection 238-1(2).



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

- (2) A **review officer** of a higher education provider is a person, or a person included in a class of persons, whom:
- (a) the chief executive officer of the provider; or
 - (b) a delegate of the chief executive officer of the provider;
- has appointed to be a review officer of the provider for the purposes of reviewing decisions made by the provider:
- (c) under section 36-20; or
 - (d) relating to assistance under Chapter 3.

19-55 Review officers not to review own decisions

A higher education provider must ensure that a review officer of the provider:

- (a) does not review a decision that the review officer was involved in making; and
- (b) in reviewing a decision of the provider, occupies a position that is senior to that occupied by any person involved in making the original decision.

7 FEEDBACK

PIA staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@pia.edu.au

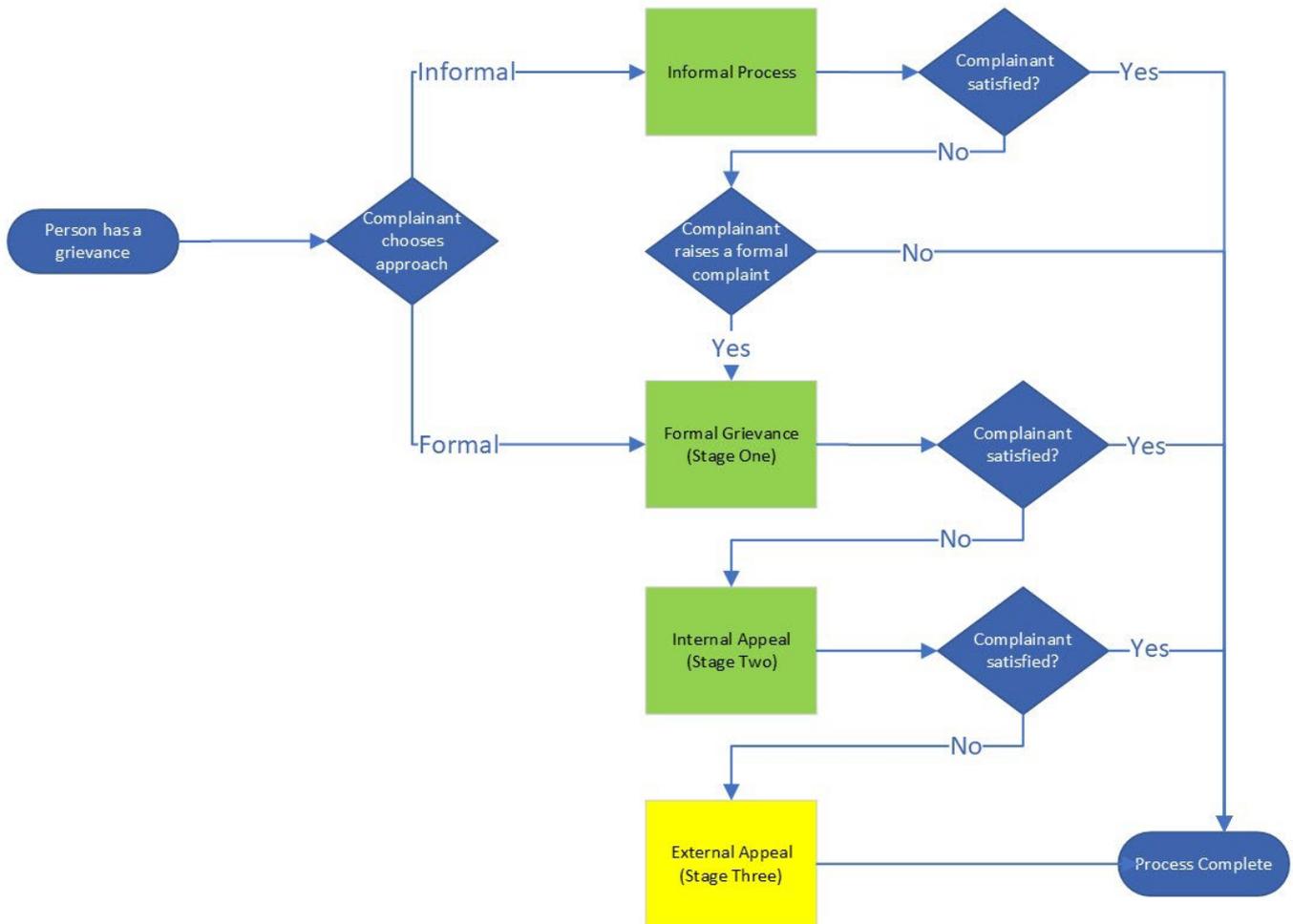
8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Board of Directors
Administrator	Registrar
Approval Date	27 April 2022

Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

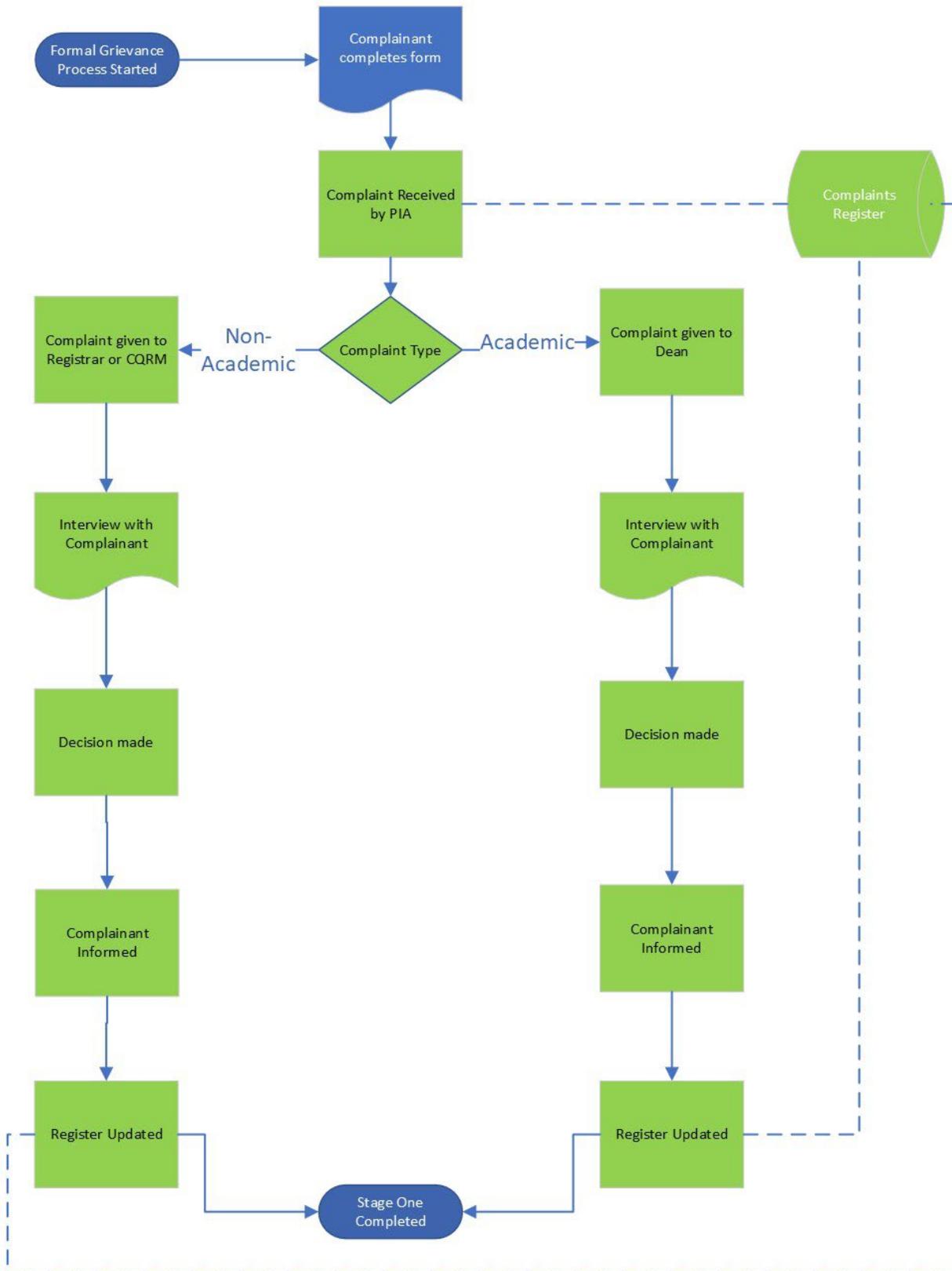
9 APPENDIX – PROCESS FLOW CHARTS

Overall Grievance Process - All Stages



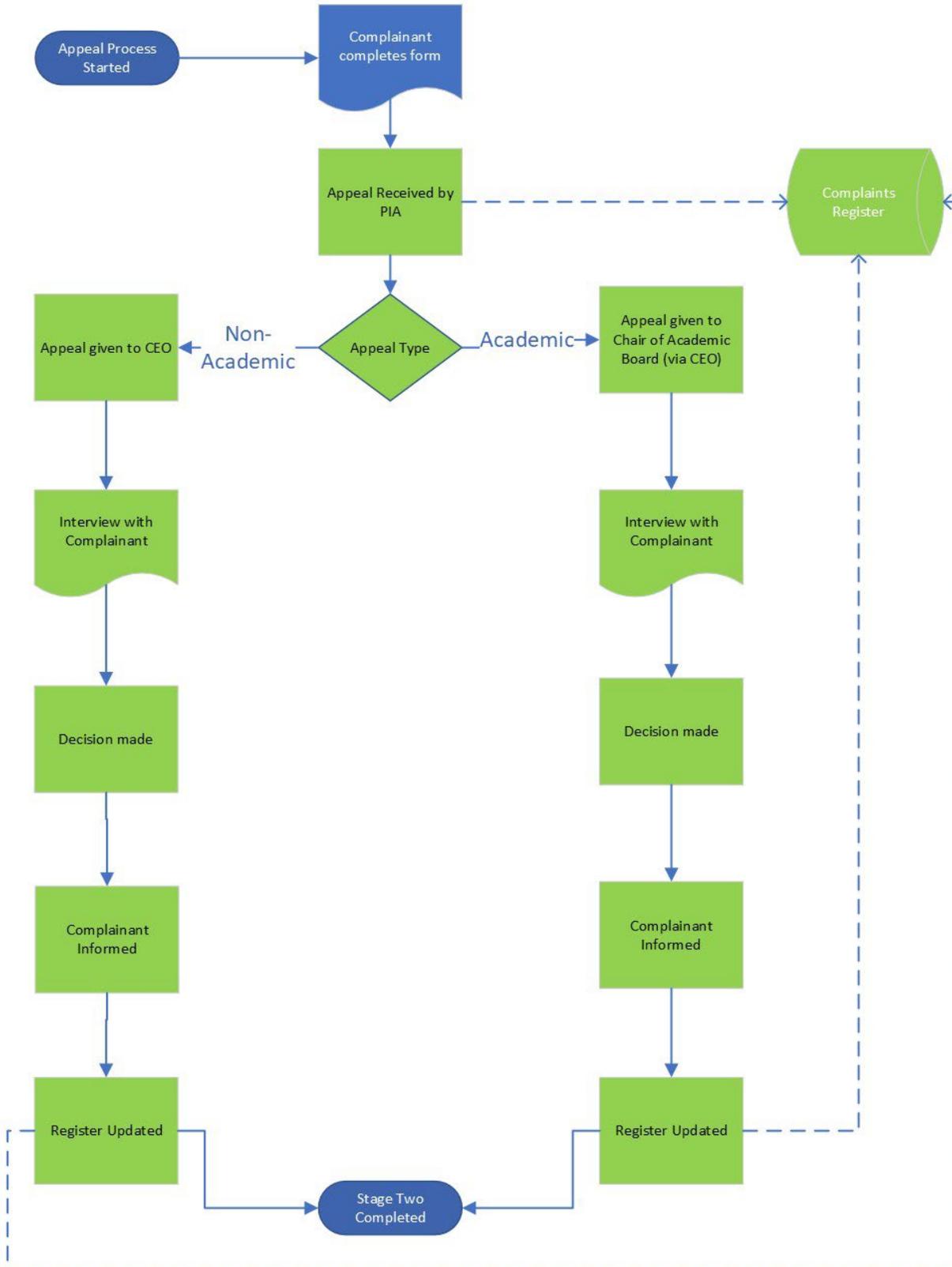
Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

Grievance Process - Stage 1 (Formal Grievance/Complaint)



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

Grievance Process - Stage 2 (Internal Appeal)



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

Grievance Process - Stage 3 (External Appeal)

