

Complaints, Appeals and Opportunities for Improvement Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy provides a framework for the complaints, appeals and other feedback processes of Perth Bible College.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all staff, students, and residents of Perth Bible College. Students enrolled for an SCD award should refer to the *Student Grievance Policy and Procedure* on the SCD website.

3. Responsibility

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement of this policy.

3.2 The staff member receiving a complaint/ opportunity for improvement is responsible to accurately record and report the complaint. The Principal, Dean of Students, College Administrator and/or Dean of Studies are responsible for the assessment of formal complaints and appeals.

4. Definitions

<i>Appeal</i>	A request for a decision to be reviewed. Appeals can be lodged about academic and non-academic decisions made, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student misconduct; • academic misconduct; • refused transfer requests; • course progress; and • student enrolment cancellation.
<i>Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances</i>	Circumstances generally out of the student’s control which will have an impact upon the student's wellbeing or course progress.
<i>Complainant</i>	The person who lodges a complaint.
<i>Complaint</i>	A complaint which requires a process of review by Perth Bible College and a response to the Complainant within a required timeframe.
<i>Domestic Students</i>	A student who is an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, the holder of an Australian Permanent Resident visa or the holder of an Australian humanitarian visa.

<i>International Student</i>	A student studying in Australia on a student visa issued by DoHA.
<i>Intervention Strategy</i>	Action taken by Perth Bible College to assist a student who is making unsatisfactory progress in their programme.
<i>Natural Justice</i>	Natural justice is the right afforded to a person to ensure they receive adequate notice, a fair hearing, and no bias.
<i>Opportunity for Improvement</i>	An opportunity for improvement includes all types of feedback from Perth Bible College stakeholders. This includes minor complaints that are not formal complaints, innovative ideas, and other forms of feedback.

5. Policy Provisions

Principles

- 5.1 Perth Bible College provides a complaints and appeals process that is transparent, fair and equitable and refers students to an independent external body, if necessary.
- 5.2 Perth Bible College's complaints and appeals processes are:
 - 5.2.1 available to all applicants for study, students, residents and staff;
 - 5.2.2 confidential; and
 - 5.2.3 free of cost.
- 5.3 The principles set out in this document do not replace or modify principles or any other responsibilities which may arise under other Higher Education Provider Policies or under statute or any other law. All reports of alleged unlawful conduct, whether reported formally or informally, must be referred to the Principal as soon as practicable.
- 5.4 In alignment with the Quality Assurance Framework, Perth Bible College is dedicated to the continuous improvement of its services. For this reason, the College aims to capture any opportunities for improvement in its *Opportunities for Improvement Register*.
- 5.5 These policies are communicated to all staff through the staff induction process and the College Principal is responsible for the training of all staff in the application of the policy.
- 5.6 Students are notified of the College's complaints and appeals processes through the Student Handbook, at Orientation and through the College's website.
- 5.7 Residents are notified of the College's complaints and appeals processes through the accommodation processes and via the website.

- 5.8 Perth Bible College will respond to any complaint or appeal a student makes regarding his or her dealings with the College. This includes any third-party providers that deliver services.
- 5.9 The College provides complaints and appeals handling processes that adhere to the following principles. The College will:
- 5.9.1 respond to complaints and appeals in writing;
 - 5.9.2 commence the assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of lodgement and finalise the outcome as soon as possible;
 - 5.9.3 aim to develop a culture where complaints and appeals are viewed as an opportunity for improvement at the College;
 - 5.9.4 provide an environment in which applicants, students, residents and staff may make complaints without fear of discrimination;
 - 5.9.5 ensure that staff are aware of complaints and appeals processes and are trained appropriately to ensure that processes are consistently applied;
 - 5.9.6 require respectful behaviour amongst all parties when handling complaints and appeals;
 - 5.9.7 communicate effectively in a timely manner to keep all parties up to date with the progress of the complaint or appeal;
 - 5.9.8 ensure that the complainant will not be victimised or discriminated against at any time;
 - 5.9.9 take measures to hold information in the utmost confidence;
 - 5.9.10 apply the principles of natural justice;
 - 5.9.11 aim to resolve complaints and appeals to the satisfaction of all parties; and
 - 5.9.12 where more than 20 working days are required to finalise the complaint, the complainant receives formal notification in writing detailing the reason why additional time is required within the 20 working-day time period.
- 5.10 If a student, resident or staff member lodges a formal complaint or appeal, once an outcome has been reached, Perth Bible College will advise the complainant within 10 working days of their right to access an external complaints or appeals process. Perth Bible College will provide the contact details of the appropriate external body within the notification sent to the complainant.
- 5.11 If a student, resident or staff member lodges a complaint or appeal and it is in favour of the complainant, Perth Bible College will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and take the relevant preventive or corrective action. Perth Bible College will also advise the complainant of that action within the notification of the complaints or appeals outcome sent.
- 5.12 The process for handling complaints and appeals is separated into two streams: academic and non-academic.

- 5.13 The complainant has the right to be represented by a third-party representative (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person, other than a legal representative) if they require a support person. This is applicable for all types of complaints and appeals and at all stages during the process.
- 5.14 The College will maintain a register of all complaints and appeals.

Grounds for a complaint or appeal

- 5.15 Complaints or appeals may be lodged against decisions made under Perth Bible College policies or procedures.
- 5.16 Complaints may be lodged due to, but not limited to, the following:
 - 5.16.1 a Perth Bible College third-party provider or staff member's actions;
 - 5.16.2 another student's behaviour;
 - 5.16.3 bullying;
 - 5.16.4 discrimination;
 - 5.16.5 harassment;
 - 5.16.6 privacy; and
 - 5.16.7 conduct that has an unreasonable negative impact on the complainant.
- 5.17 Appeals may be lodged by a complainant due to a decision made by Perth Bible College including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 5.17.1 an assessment outcome or result;
 - 5.17.2 a complaint outcome;
 - 5.17.3 admission;
 - 5.17.4 enrolment;
 - 5.17.5 unsatisfactory course progress;
 - 5.17.6 transfer request;
 - 5.17.7 withdrawal;
 - 5.17.8 credit;
 - 5.17.9 exclusion;
 - 5.17.10 disciplinary matters (including misconduct, cheating, unfair advantage and plagiarism);
 - 5.17.11 special consideration;
 - 5.17.12 fees and charges; or
 - 5.17.13 refunds.

External Avenues for Complaints and Appeals

- 5.18 All applicants, students, residents and staff have the right to lodge an external appeal within 10 working days from the written notification sent by the College of the internal complaint or appeal finding. External avenues are only available to

complainants who have submitted an internal complaint or appeal with Perth Bible College in the first instance.

5.19 External avenues include:

- 5.19.1 Ombudsman WA;
- 5.19.2 Independent Higher Education Australia (IHEA); and
- 5.19.3 Overseas Student Ombudsman (for international students only).

Record Keeping

5.20 Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept and be accessible to all interested parties for a period of five years, with a minimum period of two years after a student, resident or staff member leaves the College.

6. Policy Information

Date first approved: 18/10/2010	Date of effect: 18/10/2010	Date last amended: 23/09/2021	Date of next review: 23/09/2021
Approved by		Principal	
Authorised Officer		Dean of Students	
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy		<i>Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure</i> <i>Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy</i> <i>Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure</i> <i>Critical Incident Management Policy</i> <i>Critical Incident Management Procedure</i> <i>Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan</i>	
Related Legislation and Codes of Practice		<u>Higher Education Standards Framework 2015, Part A: Standard 2.4</u> <u>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</u> <u>National Code 2018, Standard 10</u>	
Audience		Public	

7. Version History

Review Table			
Date	Review Type	Summary of Changes	Review person/group
18/10/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled • Policy amendment • Admin update 		
18/10/10	Initial Issue		Adam Niven David Smith
27/10/10	Policy Amendment	Policy reworked to operate as stand-alone as part of CRICOS re-accrediting	Adam Niven David Smith

07/03/14	Scheduled	Academic Dean replaced with Dean of Academics and Research	Adam Niven
18/12/14	Admin Update	Minor grammatical corrections	Adam Niven
01/09/17	Scheduled	15.2.1 Dean of Studies; minor grammatical; addition of 13.2.5	T&L, Academic Council
15/08/2019	Policy amendment	New template and amendments made.	Natalie Tierney Capital Review Group consultant
17/08/2021	Admin update	Grammatical fixes and general clean up. Added 'Natural Justice' to definitions.	Chris Burton
23/09/2021	Policy amendment	Amendments made to ensure policy covers staff and residents, not just students. In alignment with BoM's acceptance of recommendations in report regarding the effectiveness of processes.	Chris Burton