ACADEMIC COMPLAINTS

1. Policy Statement
The Academy of Music and Performing Arts (AMPA) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective complaints and complaint handling system. AMPA views receipt of a complaint as an opportunity to improve its ability to meet the needs of students and potential students. All students and staff of AMPA, or those seeking to enroll in a course of study with AMPA, are entitled to access the complaint procedures set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus at which the complaint has arisen, the staff member’s/student’s place of residence or the mode in which they teach/study.

The Academic Complaints Policy is for complaints or appeals which relate to academic matters such as student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Where the issue is non-academic in nature, the procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Complaints Policy should be followed.

AMPA aims to:
• develop a culture that views student complaints as an opportunity to improve the operations of the organisation;
• ensure that any complaints are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
• set in place a complaints handling system that is staff/student focused and helps to prevent complaints from recurring;
• ensure there is consistency in the response to complaints; and
• ensure that the complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.

2. Definition of a Complaint
A complaint can be defined as a staff/student expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of AMPA’s services and activities.

A complaint may arise when a student or staff member expresses dissatisfaction with
• the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
• the quality of course delivery provided;
• access to personal records; and/or
• the way they were treated.

It is the policy of AMPA to ensure that it responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

3. Procedure
This procedure can be utilised by students, potential students and staff regardless of the campus on which the incident allegedly took place, the student’s place of residence or the mode in which they study. AMPA does not charge any fee for the processing of complaints. 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, counselor or other professional support person if they so desire at any stage of the complaint process. At all
stages of the process, if so requested by the complainant and/or respondent, reasons and a full explanation in writing must be given for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures. There are three stages at which a complaint may be addressed.

3.1 Stage One
In the first instance, complaints should be discussed with the lecturer involved. To facilitate this meeting, students may take the complaint to any of the following: the Executive Dean, or the 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 Executive Dean, or nominee, will liaise with the complainant and their advisor to clarify the outcome the complainant hopes to achieve. This process of clarification and resulting meeting (formal or informal) will take place within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview with the complainant, they and/or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them. The Executive Dean, or nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the complaint, providing, if requested, a written report (within 10 working days) to the complainant on the steps taken to address the complaint. 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 complaint to Stage Two.

3.2 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 the Executive Dean, and/or explicitly seek the involvement of the Complaints Committee.

AMPA’s Complaints Committee will consist of:
- External member of Academic Board (Chair)
- Executive Dean
- Three external members with strong academic and professional backgrounds and experience in complaints resolution.

The Complaints Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. The Executive Dean, or nominee, will provide a written report to the aggrieved person on the further steps taken to address the complaint within 10 working days of receiving a report of the consultation procedure. If the Complaints Committee makes recommendations in relation to a complaint they have reviewed, the Complaints Committee will forward those recommendations to the Executive Dean, within 20 working days who will ensure recommendations are implemented within the next 20 working days.
3.3 Stage Three
External Review
If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of AMPA’s procedures, mediation is available through:
Resolution Institute.
13-15 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: 61 2 9251 3366 Freecall: 1800 651 650
www.resolution.institute

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
GPO Box 1672, Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: 1300 739 585; www.teqsa.gov.au

AMPA will endeavour to achieve a resolution within 20 working days.
If complaints remain unresolved, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to another external agency, such as:
- Anti-Discrimination Board
- NSW Office of Fair Trading
- NSW Ombudsman
- Australian Human Rights Commission

4. Records
Records of all complaints 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 complaints and their outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and filed in a separate file (not kept on the student or staff file) and kept in the office of the Executive Dean. Only the Executive Dean has access to AMPA locked files. Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records at any time by making a written request to the Executive Dean.

5. 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 AMPA website in order to be readily accessible.

6. Authority and Implementation
The original policy and procedure was adopted by the AMPA Board of Directors. 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 Executive Dean are responsible for training 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 the 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 Complaint 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 students’ rights to pursue other legal remedies.
7. Reporting of Outcomes
All reviews undertaken and their outcomes must be reported annually by the Academic Board.

Related Policies
ACD034 Admissions Procedure
ACD017 Disability Policy
ADM109 Student Request for Access to Own Personal Information
Code of Conduct

Policy Details

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