

Student Appeals Complaints Grievances Policy

Last Modified:	1 November 2020
Review Date:	1 November 2022
Business Owner:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Approval Authority:	Academic Board

1. POLICY

Lincoln University affirms that students may confidently raise any concerns with the University which will ensure appeals, complaints and grievances are addressed and resolved in a fair, equitable, transparent, timely and confidential manner. The nature of an appeal, complaint or grievance may be Academic, Service Delivery or Personal. This policy applies to all Lincoln University students including students enrolled in programmes provided with delivery partners and students enrolled online.

2. DEFINITIONS

Appeal: a formal request for a review of a decision.

Complaint: an action taken by the complainant/s with the University.

Complainant: the person or persons making the appeal, complaint or grievance.

Formal: (in this context) a written appeal, complaint or grievance.

Grievance: a grievance occurs when a student is dissatisfied by the *outcome* of a University process.

Resolution: a formal expression of a decision, to the satisfaction of the all parties.

Respondent: the person/s who is appealed against or against whom the grievance has been raised.

Exclusions to this Policy:

1. Appeals to decisions from the Proctor or the Disciplinary Committee, which are dealt with under the Student Discipline Regulations (Lincoln University Calendar).
2. Appeals, complaints or grievances that fall under the Human Resources Policies (e.g. Prevention of Bullying Harassment Policy, Sexual Harm Policy, Code of Conduct, etc).
3. Any complaint or appeal against an assessment must be dealt with, in the first instance, through the Examinations Office for formal examinations or the relevant Faculty or Division for internal assessment.

3. PRINCIPLES

This policy supports the University's mission, values and goals related to academic quality and customer service as laid out in the [Investment Plan](#).

The consideration of student appeals, complaints and grievances are reinforced by these principles:

1. Informal resolution is the primary consideration. Before making an appeal or lodging a formal grievance, the complainant should make every effort to communicate with the respondent, or the relevant Head of Department, Dean or Director, in order to discuss and ascertain if the matter can be clarified or resolved without resorting to formal procedures. There is no requirement however to follow this pathway.
2. The respondent has the right to be informed in a timely manner about any appeal, complaint or grievance made against them, and be given a reasonable time to respond.
3. The relevant managers or delegation holders have the opportunity to resolve the appeal, complaint or grievance informally.
4. All appeals, complaints and grievances must be communicated in writing. Anonymous appeals, complaints and grievances will not be responded to.
5. The principles of natural justice, equity or due process will generally require that the complainant's identity be made known to the respondent, and the complainant must appreciate that this may happen at an early stage. In such a case, the complainant will be given notice of the intention of making their identity known, and at that time the individual should be informed of other possible options, for example, Human Rights Commission, Worksafe, legal remedies, etc., should they choose not to proceed.
6. Lincoln University will ensure there is adequate investigation of the issues relating to the appeal, complaint or grievance and allow opportunities for the complainant and the University to communicate their views to each other.
7. At all stages both the complainant and respondent may have support people present at meetings and document what is communicated in those meetings.
8. All correspondence and outcomes of appeals, complaints or grievances will be recorded.
9. At any time, the complainant has the right to withdraw an appeal, complaint or grievance without prejudice.
10. At any time, the complainant has the right to gain access to all documents or any other information held by the University regarding their action.
11. Contracted providers and delivery partners will clearly publicise the appeals, complaints and grievances policy and procedure to their staff and students, and ensure it is accessible.
12. Where the complainant and/or the respondent disagrees with the appeal, complaint or grievance decision, they may appeal that decision to the Vice-Chancellor.
13. The University will comply with all relevant legislation, including the [Consumer Guarantees Act 1993](#), [Education Act 1989](#), [Fair Trading Act 1986](#), [Official Information Act 1982](#) and [the Privacy Act 1993](#).
14. Vexatious appeals, complaints and grievances may result in disciplinary action by the University.



4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DELEGATIONS

1. The Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for seeking to ensure that when an appeal, complaint or grievance is made to, or registered with, the University, it is resolved in a fair and timely manner.
2. Deans, Directors, Managers and delegation holders are responsible for working with their staff and individuals to seek to resolve appeals, complaints or grievances within their delegated areas of authority.
3. Staff who have appeals, complaints or grievances relating to their delegated work responsibilities should enable the resolution of any issue raised by complainants.

5. RELATED RESOURCES Lincoln University Procedures

Student Appeals, Complaints and Grievances Procedure

Lincoln University Policies

[Prevention of Bullying Harassment Policy](#) [Code of Conduct](#)

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

Student Discipline Regulations

Regulations (Lincoln University Calendar)

Student Discipline Regulations

General Course and Examination Regulations: Regulation L Hardship

Internal

LUSA Student Rep Handbook

External

[Office of the Ombudsman](#)

[NZQA – Disputes Resolution Scheme](#)

The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) [Code of Practice 2016 \(including Amendments 2019\)](#)

