

## TABOR COLLEGE (VICTORIA) INC.

### COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: (Higher Education Support Act 2003)

#### Non-Academic Matters

##### *Preamble:*

For the purposes of this protocol, a **non-academic matter** includes ANY matters, concerns or complaints which do not relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study and includes complaints in relation to personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student.

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.

There shall be no cost levied to the student with respect to the lodgement of an initial notice of grievance or a request for an internal review (Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the process). A request for an external review incurs a cost of \$200.00 to the student. The fee is levied by the External Reviewer, namely the Australian Council for Private Education and Training [ACPET].

Students and applicants who complain or lodge a grievance, and respondents shall not be victimised or discriminated against, irrespective of the nature or severity of the grievance.

Students or applicants who complain or lodge a grievance, and respondents shall have the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person if they so wish.

Students or applicants have access to a three (3) stage complaints and grievance process which relates to Non-academic matters.

Stage 1 Initial Lodgement and Investigation

Stage 2 Internal Review of decision(s)

Stage 3 External Review of decision(s)

Detailed procedures are described in the following document.

In these guidelines, the following lodgement guidelines apply:-

*A formal notice of grievance* shall be posted to The Academic Registrar, Tabor College Victoria, PO Box 2223, Ringwood North Vic 3134 or lodged in person with the Receptionist, Tabor College Victoria, 222 Oban Road, Ringwood North Vic 3134.

*A formal review of an investigation* shall be posted to *Review Officer, For Attention: Deputy Registrar (Advisory Services)*, Tabor College Victoria, PO Box 2223, Ringwood North Vic 3134 or lodged in person with the Receptionist, Tabor College Victoria, 222 Oban Road, Ringwood North Vic 3134.

A request for an external review of a decision shall be emailed to [Student.appeals@acpet.edu.au](mailto:Student.appeals@acpet.edu.au) and shall be accompanied by a completed *Application for External Review* and appropriate authorisations to pay the lodgement fee.

In these guidelines, the following definitions apply:-

**victimise** means to act or omit to act towards a person in a way which is intended to cause disadvantage to that person because they have made a complaint, or may make a complaint, or may be or are subject of a complaint.

**Academic Registrar** means the person usually occupying that position or, in his/her absence, the person nominated by the Principal to fulfil that role.

**Deputy Registrar (Advisory Services)** means the person usually occupying that position, or in his/her absence, the person nominated by the Academic Registrar to fulfil that role.

**Dean** means the person usually occupying that position or, in his/her absence, the person nominated by the Principal to fulfil that role.

**Confirmed Module Lecturer** means the lecturer who has primary responsibility for teaching the classes for a particular module of study.

**Publication of grievance procedures:**

*Students and Intending Students*

In order to adequately inform students and intending students, the College's Complaints and Grievance Procedures are published on the Tabor College WEB Page at [www.tabor.vic.edu.au](http://www.tabor.vic.edu.au). The WEB Page is reviewed and updated annually, for the commencement of each academic year.

**Training with respect to grievance procedures:**

*New Faculty or Staff Appointments*

All new appointments to the Faculty and administration team of the College shall be formally inducted into all relevant aspects of College life. The College's complaints and grievance procedures and policies shall be included as an induction item in the process for inducting new faculty and staff members. New appointees will be instructed in their operation and will be directed to the Tabor College WEB Page where a full copy of the policy and procedures is maintained.

*Faculty and Confirmed Module Lecturers*

In order to adequately inform Faculty and confirmed lecturers, the College's Grievance procedures shall be included in the Tabor College Victoria "Lecturer Handbook". This handbook is published on the Tabor College WEB Page at [www.tabor.vic.edu.au](http://www.tabor.vic.edu.au) and will be reviewed and updated annually for the commencement of each academic year. Faculty and confirmed lecturers shall also be required to attend a professional development day at the commencement of each semester to ensure that all academic procedural and policy matters are fully understood. Policy and procedural matters shall also be included as agenda items at the College's Faculty meetings, generally conducted fortnightly during semesters.

*Administration staff*

Administration staff shall be required to attend an administration briefing seminar at the commencement of each semester at which aspects of the College's administration procedures and policies shall be discussed. The interface between academic and administration procedures and policies shall also be discussed and particular instruction shall be given with respect to the requirements of the College's grievance procedures. Action shall be taken to ensure that each staff member has access to a copy of the grievance procedures and understands them.

**Access to Grievance Procedures:**

Tabor College offers subjects in several locations, presently at Ringwood Campus, CityLife Church, Urban Neighbours of Hope [UNOH] and the Northern Annex at Hadfield. Students attending classes, undertaking subjects externally or intending students have a right to access the complaints and grievance procedures for academic and non-academic matters without disadvantage, regardless of the location of the campus or location at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study.

The College acknowledges it has an obligation to ensure such students are not disadvantaged by the procedures required in the grievance investigation and resolution process. Therefore, students or intending students may request any, or all, of the following additional services:-

- provision of a complete copy of the grievance procedures, posted by regular mail services or emailed to them, if they are not already in possession of a copy and the WEB address at which the procedures are published;
- reply paid envelope(s) to minimise the cost of lodging notices of grievance, requests for a formal review of an investigation or the submission of information to be considered in the context of the review;
- a personal meeting arranged at either Ringwood or the south east annexe, Berwick, as nominated by the student or intending student, or at another mutually agreed location; or
- telephone calls or conference arrangements initiated by the College to facilitate information gathering, in lieu of a personal attendance at a meeting.
- a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person to accompany and/or assist the student if he/she so wishes, except in the case of a request for an external review, which is a paper based process that excludes face-to-face mediation.

The respondent(s) to a complaint or grievance shall also have the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person in the grievance investigation and resolution process, except in the case of a request for an external review, which is a paper based process that excludes face-to-face mediation.

**Records of Grievances- keeping and access:**

Records of grievances will be treated as confidential. Therefore:-

- (1) Records of grievances **under investigation** shall be compiled in individual, specially endorsed "Confidential Folders", held in the custody of the Deputy Registrar (Advisory Services) and accessed by him/her only, or issued to the Internal or External Review Officer(s) as required for the purpose of conducting the internal or external review investigation.
- (2) Records of grievances **notified in writing, investigated and finalised** will be placed in a sealed envelope, endorsed "CONFIDENTIAL" and "TO BE OPENED BY ACADEMIC REGISTRAR ONLY". Such sealed records shall be kept for at least five years.

Students who wish to access any records relating to personal grievances, are required to notify the Academic Registrar and arrange an appointment to view them. Students will be provided with access to any records relating to personal grievances, but the following limitations would apply:-

- students' access to their records would be supervised, that is, the Academic Administrator or his/her delegate would generally be present while the record is being viewed;
- students may request, and be supplied with, photocopies of any documents in their personal grievance records;
- students would not be permitted to remove any documents from their personal grievance records; however,
- students may request that incorrect or out of date information in their personal grievance records be removed or updated. The Academic Registrar shall be responsible for taking this action;
- students who are in dispute with the Academic Registrar over a request to remove or update a personal grievance record shall have the right to request an internal review, and shall also have the right to request an external review, if desired.

**Explanation of the three stage complaints and grievance procedures**

**Dispute notification: Stage One**

A student or applicant to become a student who is aggrieved about a non-academic matter is required to raise the issue verbally in the first instance with the Academic Registrar. If the issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the student or applicant immediately, he/she is required to lodge a

formal notice of grievance **in writing**, addressed to the Academic Registrar, and specifying the reasons for making the request.

The Academic Registrar will undertake a full investigation of the matter and will prepare a formal report within twenty eight (28) days which:-

- describes the grievance and the nature and extent of the investigation undertaken; and
- records a recommendation to resolve the grievance

The Academic Registrar will also, within the same twenty eight (28) day period, place a signed copy of the report in the individual confidential folder of the student or applicant to become a student (held in the custody of the Academic Registrar) and write a formal letter to him/her advising:-

- the outcome of the investigations;
- a recommendation to resolve the grievance;
- the review process available; and
- that the actions taken to investigate the matter, and the reason(s) and an explanation of the decision taken as part of the procedures will be provided, in writing, if requested.

Respondents will also be provided with an explanation of the actions taken, reason(s) and the decision taken, in writing, if it is requested.

Internal review process (Stage Two):

If, after a formal investigation by the Academic Registrar, a student or applicant to become a student desires a further review, a formal internal review of the investigation and recommendation to resolve the grievance may be requested by the student or applicant, **in writing**, within twenty eight (28) days of the receipt of the formal recommendation. The request for a review must be addressed to the *Review Officer, For Attention: Deputy Registrar (advisory Services)* and must specify the reasons for making the request.

A student or applicant to become a student may also request an internal review if he/she is concerned about the time taken to complete the stage one process.

Upon receipt of a request for an internal investigation of a complaint which remains unresolved, the Review Officer of Deputy Registrar (Advisory Services) shall acknowledge in writing, receipt of the request for an internal investigation and inform the student or applicant to become a student of the following information:-

- who will be responsible for conducting the investigation;
- that he/she has the right to a personal meeting to present his/her case (verbally and/or in writing) and the name, address and telephone number of the person to contact if a personal meeting is required;
- that he/she has the right to submit additional information in writing, should a personal meeting not be desired; and the name and address of the person to whom the additional information should be submitted;
- that he/she has the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person; and
- the timeframe during which the internal investigation will be conducted, generally within twenty eight (28) days of receiving the request for an investigation.

The respondent(s) to a complaint or grievance shall also have the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person in the grievance investigation and resolution process.

The Review Officer may conduct the investigation personally, or nominate an officer or officers of the College not previously involved in the matter to conduct the investigation. When the Review Officer or

his/her nominee(s) makes a decision, a formal letter shall be sent to the student or applicant to become a student advising:-

- the outcome of the investigations;
- a recommendation to resolve the grievance;
- the external review process available; and
- that the actions taken to investigate the matter, and the reason(s) and an explanation of the decision taken as part of the procedures will be provided in writing, if requested.

Respondents will also be provided with an explanation of the actions taken, reason(s) and the decision taken, in writing, if it is requested.

The reviewing officer(s) may confirm the decision of the Academic Registrar, vary the decision, or set aside the decision and substitute a new recommendation.

External review process (Stage Three):

If the Review Officer or review officer(s) advises the applicant that the original decision has been upheld, varied, or set aside in favour of a new decision, the student or applicant to become a student shall be advised that a further external review may be requested from the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). This appeals process is paper-based only and no face-to-face mediation is conducted.

Students who seek an External Review must lodge appeals via email at [Student.appeals@acpet.edu.au](mailto:Student.appeals@acpet.edu.au) and must also complete and provide an *Application for External Review*. The student who seeks an External Review is also required to pay a fee of \$200.00 up front, inclusive of GST to the external reviewer. The College is required to pay the balance of the fee (\$200.00 inclusive of GST).

The external review agency (ACPET) will generally undertake the external review within 28 days.

A request for an external review must also contain the following sentence:-

*Please forward a copy of the review result and/or recommendations to the Academic Registrar, Tabor College (Victoria) Inc. at PO Box 2223, Ringwood North, Victoria 3134 within twenty eight (28) days of the completion of the review.*

Implementation of recommendations arising from external review

If the Executive Officer, Australian Council for Private Education and Training, or the delegate of the Executive Officer makes recommendations in relation to a grievance that has been reviewed, *the Academic Registrar will ensure that the recommendations are addressed within twenty eight (28) days.*

Respondents will also be provided with an explanation of the actions taken, the reasons(s) and the decision taken, in writing, if it is requested.