



CHRISTIAN HERITAGE COLLEGE

POLICY: Grievance Policy and Procedures for Domestic Students – Non-Academic Grievances

Policy Group(s):	Group C: Administration – 3: Students (Ref: C3/0105.2-0313)		
Related Policy:	Grievance Policy and Procedures for Domestic Students –Academic Grievances Re-crediting of 'HELP' Debts and Review of Decisions		
Commencement Date:	January 2005	Review Date:	March 2018

POLICY STATEMENT

Intent:

In accordance with its foundation on Christian principles, Christian Heritage College (CHC) is concerned to maintain the highest levels of student confidence in the quality and integrity of CHC's courses and administrative practices.

Because people are important, people's grievances are especially important. Students are entitled to justice in all their interactions with CHC. In addition, unresolved grievances prevent students from gaining the full benefit from the course in their learning and growth.

In seeking to resolve people's grievances CHC commits to do so in a timely manner. A grievance is not a part of the regular feedback that is provided to CHC by its stakeholders as part of CHC's commitment to continuous improvement, but is rather a formal complaint requesting action or some form of formal response from CHC.

Scope:

Restrictions: All domestic students undertaking a course of study at CHC and those seeking to enrol in any accredited course at CHC.

Exclusions: Overseas Students (please refer to the *Grievance Policy and Procedures for Overseas Student*)

Objectives:

1. To provide clear guidelines concerning the pathway for processing non-academic grievances for domestic students.
2. To maintain compliance with any relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines or codes.

Policy Provisions:

1. General

- 1.1 The procedure for non-academic grievances provides a mechanism for addressing grievances on administrative matters such as application to enrol, institutional practices, financial issues, resources, marketing, physical access for students with disabilities to facilities and services, and other issues covered by CHC's Code of Practice.

- 1.2 All students of CHC or those seeking to enrol in a course of study at CHC are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy in relation to non-academic matters regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, their place of residence or the mode in which they study.
- 1.3 CHC will generally not respond to anonymous grievances, however, all complaints, either formal or informal, about the abuse of children or young people must be reported to the President, even when these complaints are made anonymously.
- 1.4 A student has 20 working days from the receipt of a decision to access the CHC *Grievance Policy and Procedure for Domestic Students – Non-Academic Grievances*.
- 1.5 A student is deemed to have accessed the policy whenever contact is made with a staff member concerning a decision with which they are aggrieved.
- 1.6 CHC will not victimise or discriminate against any complainant or respondent.
- 1.7 The complainant and/or the respondent are permitted to be accompanied and assisted by a third party at any stage throughout the process, provided that third party is not a lawyer. If they wish to do so the complainant or respondent may contact the Academic Registrar's office for support in preparing their case.
- 1.8 CHC will retain confidential records relating to grievances for at least five years, and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records. A register of grievances and any documentation pertaining to each grievance will be maintained and held in the Academic Registrar's office.
- 1.9 A student's enrolment will be maintained throughout the internal review process.
- 1.10 A student or person seeking to enrol in an accredited course at CHC has three stages at which a complaint may be addressed. Each stage is free of charge. CHC will provide reasons and full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedure if requested by the complainant and/or the respondent at each stage.
- 1.11 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.
- 1.12 This policy and procedures is publicly available on the CHC website: www.chc.edu.au and is set out in the Student Handbook also available on the CHC website.

2. Non-Academic Related Grievances

- 2.1 The resolution of non-academic related grievances at CHC involves a three-stage process. Each stage is free of charge. CHC will provide reasons and full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedure if requested by the complainant and/or the respondent at each stage of the process. The stages are:
 - 2.1 Stage 1: Informal Process;
 - 2.2 Stage 2: Formal Internal Process;
 - 2.3 Stage 3: External Process.
- 2.2 Stage 1: Informal Process
 - 2.2.1 If a student considers that an error has been made or an injustice exists in relation to a non-academic related decision, they have 20 working days from the receipt of a decision to discuss their concerns with the staff member responsible for the decision.
 - 2.2.2 The staff member has 10 working days to convene a meeting with the student to

allow both parties to discuss their points of view and attempt resolution.

2.2.3 Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of any such discussion or the time taken to resolve the matter, they may apply for a formal review of the decision concerned.

2.3 Stage 2: Formal Internal Process

2.3.1 To initiate a formal internal process a student should submit an application in writing to the Vice President-Advancement and Operations. This should be submitted within 10 working days of the outcome of Stage 1. Should the student wish to proceed directly to the formal process, they should make written application within 20 working days of the receipt of the original decision. The application should include all necessary information and documentation, and should state clearly the specific grounds upon which the request for a review of the decision is based.

2.3.2 Upon receipt of an application for a review, the Vice President-Advancement and Operations will convene a review panel to which both the student and staff member concerned may make such written and/or oral submissions as they consider appropriate. The review panel will meet within 20 working days of the Vice President-Advancement and Operations receiving the application for a review and its decision will be communicated to the student in writing within a further 10 working days.

2.3.3 Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of the review panel's decision, they may appeal to the CHC Executive within 10 working days of the receipt of the review panel's decision for further investigation of the grievance. This must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the CHC Executive.

2.3.4 Within 10 working days of the receipt of the application for a further investigation of the grievance, the CHC Executive will nominate an independent and impartial senior officer(s) to investigate the grievance and all parties to the grievance will be invited to make further written and/or oral representation to the review officer(s). A further extension of time may be mutually agreed by the student and the appointed senior officer(s).

2.3.5 The result of the investigation will be communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days of the decision of the appointed senior officer(s).

2.3.6 Where a student continues to be aggrieved with the outcome of the formal internal process they may apply for a formal external review.

2.4 Stage 3: External Process

2.4.1 If not satisfied with the outcome of the formal internal process, a student may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process. Such a request should be made in writing to the President.

2.4.2 CHC has arranged for an external reviewer to be appointed by the Council of Private Higher Education Inc. (COPHE). Website details www.cophe.edu.au contact details are phone (02) 8021 0841. There is no fee for the use of this service.

2.4.3 Upon receipt of a written request for an external review, the President will make application in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of COPHE, detailing the complaint, the process applied thus far, the decision to be reviewed and grounds for an external review of the decision. The President must provide contact details for COPHE to the complainant.

- 2.4.4 The cost, if any, for utilising the external grievance appeals process will be borne by CHC.
- 2.4.5 The COPHE appointed reviewer must have appropriate experience in the area of the grievance and be acceptable to both the complainant and CHC.
- 2.4.6 The COPHE appointed reviewer must make a determination and advise the President, the complainant and COPHE within 20 working days, providing in writing the reasons and rationale for any decisions and/or actions to be taken.
- 2.4.7 CHC will ensure that the decisions are implemented within a reasonable timeframe commensurate with the nature of any change required by CHC to its processes and/or policies.
- 2.4.8 COPHE will retain all documentation pertaining to the grievance on file for a period of five years.
- 2.4.9 Where the grievance cannot be resolved by these means, the student will be advised of the appropriate legal body from which they can seek further assistance or advice.

3. Further Avenues of Appeal

- 3.1 This policy does not negate the right of any student to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws in the case of financial dispute, or to pursue other legal remedies.
- 3.2 If a student is concerned about the actions of CHC they have the right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the decision. CHC will inform the student of the closest tribunal to their location and will inform them at that time, of the approximate cost of lodging a submission.

Supporting Procedures and Guidelines:

1. Staff Training

- 1.1 Training concerning the *Grievance Policy and Procedures for Domestic Students – Non-Academic* is provided to CHC staff through staff meetings with the Director of Quality and Standards responsible for training both academic and administrative staff in the application of this policy.
- 1.2 Whenever the policy is updated or revised staff are alerted via the CHC the staff meeting.
- 1.3 New staff receive training through staff induction processes. The policy is readily available on the CHC website and in the Student Handbooks.

2. Notification of a Grievance

- 2.1 When a student makes contact with a staff member concerning a decision with which they are aggrieved, that staff member will notify the Academic Registrar.
- 2.2 The Academic Registrar will record the grievance on the Grievance Register. This is a confidential file and is kept by the Academic Registrar's Office.
- 2.3 The staff member will notify the Academic Registrar of the outcome of each stage of the process. This will be recorded on the Grievance Register.

3. Storing of Files

- 3.1 The Academic Registrar will store records of all grievances which will remain accessible to all interested parties for a period of five years.
- 3.2 Records of grievances and their outcomes will be strictly confidential and kept in a separate

file (not kept on the student or staff file) and stored in the office of the Academic Registrar for a period of five years.

4. Access to the Files

4.1 Access to files pertaining to grievances is made available to parties to a grievance upon written application to the Academic Registrar.

4.2 Parties to a grievance will be provided with supervised access to the files within 48 hours of providing the Academic Registrar with written notification of such a request.

POLICY FURTHER INFORMATION

Relevant Commonwealth/State Legislation HESA Section 19-45 (1)
HEP Guidelines

ACCOUNTABILITIES

Implementation: Academic Registrar
Compliance: Academic Registrar
Monitoring and Evaluation: Academic Registrar
Development/Review: Academic Registrar
Approval Authority: CHC CEO
Interpretation and Advice: Academic Registrar's Office

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY?

All CHC students and staff.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

Performance Indicators:

- Number of grievances which are lodged
- The most number of grievances resolved at Stage 1 or 2.

Other Nil

Definitions and Acronyms: CHC – Christian Heritage College
Grievance – a grievance is any formal statement of concern reported to a staff member at CHC that requires a response from CHC. It is not a part of the regular feedback that is provided to CHC by its stakeholders as part of CHC's commitment to continuous improvement, but is rather a formal complaint requesting action or some form of formal response.
HESA – Higher Education Support Act 2003
HEP Guidelines – Higher Education Provider Guidelines

APPROVAL – section maintained by the Director of Quality and Standards

Reference No.	Approved	Date	Committee/Board	Resolution No. / Minute Ref.
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C3/0105.2

Yes

05/05/2004

Council

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REVISION HISTORY – section maintained by the Director of Quality and Standards

Revision Reference No.	Approved / Rescinded	Date	Committee/Board	Resolution No. / Minute Ref.
0407	Approved	16/04/2007	Council	16
0907	Approved	24/09/2007	Council	16
1107	Approved	15/11/2007	Council	Flying Minute
0313	Approved	26/03/2013	Council	Flying Minute