

COMPLAINTS, AND ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Version 2016:2
Date 14 March 2016
Accountability Chief Executive Officer

Page 1 of 3

1 PREAMBLE

The Life Coaching Academy seeks to establish and maintain a safe and harmonious environment in which staff and students can work and study effectively. However, it recognises that from time to time staff/students/clients may feel aggrieved by some action, or omission, on the part of the organisation or an individual staff member or student.

2 DEFINITIONS

Formal complaint: is a written and signed complaint, sent to the responsible officer.

Informal complaint: is when a complaint is made orally.

Natural justice: is the duty to act fairly, meaning that all parties must be given a fair opportunity to present their case, be fully informed about the issue and the decision-maker must act, at all times, in an unbiased manner.

Academic Appeals: are the final point of resolution pertaining to matters within the academic scope of the Life Coaching Academy and relate to dissatisfaction with the outcome(s) of the academic assessment process.

3 THE POLICY

The Life Coaching Academy will provide procedures and mechanisms, and advice about using those procedures and mechanisms, that will facilitate the presentation and impartial resolution of complaints and academic appeals in an expeditious and equitable manner.

In dealing with, complaints and academic appeals the Life Coaching Academy will have due regard for:

- access and equity principles;
- natural justice, and the
- needs and beliefs of all parties.

4 PROCEDURES FOR RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS, OR ACADEMIC APPEALS

Complaints and academic appeals could arise from a variety of contexts. Academic appeals relate specifically to training delivery or assessment issues, for example:

- training program content, structure, resources;
- actual delivery of training;
- assessment methods;
- assessment results;
- administrative actions/inaction, procedures or decisions;

- fees and charges.

Complaints could arise in respect of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour by staff or other students, for example:

- inappropriate gestures/language/behaviours;
- verbal abuse, sexual harassment, victimisation, vilification, bullying, etc.

4.1 Complaints Procedures

Where a student has a complaint related to any aspect of the Life Coaching Academy, its staff or any other student they may choose to lodge either an informal or formal complaint.

Informal complaints procedures

Where the complainant chooses to make an *informal complaint* then the following procedures is to be applied.

- (i) Depending on the nature of the complaint the complainant may informally (orally) raise their complaint either directly with the party concerned or the Support Services Manager. Where resolution is achieved to the satisfaction of the complainant then the matter is considered closed and final.

Formal complaints procedures

Where no satisfactory resolution is forthcoming from an *informal complaints process* identified in 4. (i) above OR when the complainant chooses to proceed straight to a formal hearing process then the following procedures are to be applied.

- (ii) The complainant submits a written request to the Student Support Manager for a formal hearing of their complaint. This written request should provide a broad outline of the complaint and indicate the complainant's availability to formally present their case. Such written requests are to be provided to the Student Support Manager within 21 days of the occurrence of the event/issue upon which the complaint in question is based.
- (iii) Within 5 working days of receipt of such a written complaint the Student Support Services Manager will review the complaint, notify all parties involved allowing representation by all affected parties to ensure the decision made is fair and unbiased. Once all information has been gathered and assessed the Student Support Services Manager will make a decision and advise all parties of this decision in writing. This decision will be recorded in the Complaints Register.

Except for decisions arising from an academic appeals process, any complainant not satisfied with the decision arising from their complaints process may appeal

that decision through formal written notification to the Chief Executive Officer who will immediately investigate the relevant complaint. The Chief Executive Officer will review all information and make a decision which will be communicated to all parties within 10 days of the appeal being lodged

Should the complainant remain unsatisfied with the decision made by the Chief Executive Officer a further appeal may be made and an external party independent of the LCA will be appointed to hear the complaint.

All affected parties will be given an opportunity to attend this hearing and voice their side of the matter.

The decision made by the external party will be final and binding on all parties. This decision will be communicated in writing within 7 days of the hearing being completed.

The matter will be consider closed and the Complaints register will be updated accordingly.

Academic Appeals procedures

Where a party to a formal assessment process disputes the decision of that process they may appeal that decision via the following procedures

- (i) Where a *decision* arising from the academic process is disputed or not acceptable to either party then that party may appeal the *decision* in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. Academic Appeals must be received within 21 days from the date of the occurrence of the issue/event.
- (ii) The Chief Executive Officer will, within 5 working days of receipt of such an appeal, establish an independent external reviewer/review panel to consider the appeal, and provide all relevant available documentation to the independent reviewer/review process.
- (iii) The Chief Executive Officer will also ensure that all parties to the appeals process are kept fully informed of the process and are allowed to personally present their case to the reviewer/review process.
- (iv) Decisions arising from this process are final and binding on all parties and are to be communicated to all parties in writing within 3 days of a decision being made by the reviewer/review panel.

It should be noted that if at any stage of the complaints and academic appeals process, a matter is perceived as being more properly dealt with through the State/Territories justice system then all appropriate steps will be taken to involve the relevant authorities.

4.2 Record keeping for complaints, and academic appeals.

A Complaints and Academic Appeals Register will be established and maintained by the Student Support Services Manager.

When an *informal complaint* is made and subsequently resolved through informal discussion [see 4.1 (i) above] no record entry is required to be kept in the Complaints and Appeals Register. However, appropriate file notes should be maintained during the resolution process and which may be included in the Complaints and Appeals Register if desired, following completion of the processes.

Where a formal or informal complaint is made and it is taken through the appeals process then full and appropriate written records are required to be kept and included in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

5. RELATED POLICIES

This policy is related to other policies in that it provides the common policy and process for dealing with complaints, and appeals regardless of source and/or issue.

6. REQUIRED FORMS

There are no specific Form for this policy.