

Academic Complaints & Grievances Policy & Procedure

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School Pty Limited ABN 91 004 004 317 (BMIHMS) (incorporating Australian International Hotel School and Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School – to be known collectively as “the School”) is committed to ensuring that all academic policies and procedures used throughout the School are not only compliant with current Australian legislation but are also deemed to be ‘best practice’.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure:

- that the School will treat complaints/grievances seriously and will ensure that all processes are confidential.
- that the principles of natural justice will be followed to achieve an acceptable resolution;
- that the School is committed to dealing with complaints/grievances at the local level. Most difficulties can be resolved at an early stage by talking with the individual/s most concerned with the issue. Complaints/grievances which are resolved quickly and locally have the greatest chance of removing any barriers to good working/teaching/learning relationships;
- that all students can use these procedures to submit a complaint/grievance about an academic matter;
- that no complainant or respondent will be victimised or discriminated against in any of the three stages set out in this policy

3 PROCEDURE

Academic Complaints and Grievances Procedures are for grievances which relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study.

Handling and Resolution of Examination/Assessment Appeals

This policy is available on SharePoint under Academic Compendium, Documents, and Academic Policies & Procedures.

Complaints/Grievances Procedure

Students enrolled at the School have access to a three stage academic process which is set out below.

The complainant and/or respondent has the right to be accompanied and assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if they so desire at any relevant meeting.

Stage 1

In the first instance, complaints/grievances should be discussed with the person/s involved. However, if this is impracticable, complaints/grievances should be communicated with the Dean.

Every effort will be made to make a decision about the complaints/grievances and will be made within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the complaint/grievance. A written record of the complaint or appeal will be maintained on the School’s Complaints Register, which is currently maintained by the CEO’s Executive Assistant.

Students then have three (3) options for proceeding:

- Take no further action; or

- Make comments or suggestions; or
- Make a written complaint/grievance using the Grievance Form

Stage 2

If unsatisfied with the response to the complaints/grievances or the time taken to resolve the matter under Stage 1, the student may submit the complaint/grievance in writing to the Dean and/or explicitly seek the involvement of the Director of Academic Affairs, who may seek advice from the Teaching & Learning Committee. The Director of Academic Affairs will deal with the complaint/grievance. The written complaint/grievance must be dealt with within a reasonable time, normally within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the complaint/grievance. The complainant or appellant will be given a written statement of the outcome, including reasons for the outcome.

Staff handling the complaint will ensure that they:

- listen and understand the nature of the complaints/grievances;
- explore all the options and possible implications for resolving the issue with the student;
- avoid any behaviour which might reasonably be interpreted as interrogative or judgemental; and
- record and minute all meetings.

Stage 3

If not satisfied with the decision of the Dean and/or Director of Academic Affairs, the student may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process by an independent panel appointed by the School and accessed via the Australian Council for Private Education & Training (ACPET) for this purpose. This panel is totally independent of ACPET and all members are appropriately qualified legal practitioners. ACPET only acts as a clearinghouse and administrative centre for the purpose of this process. This process only considers paper based appeals.

The process is as follows:

1. Students must lodge their complaint/grievance via email to ACPET and are required to complete the revised appeals form which includes payment details. This form is available from http://www.acpet.edu.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4947&Itemid=348.
2. Once the student has lodged their complaint/grievance, the School will be contacted via email by ACPET and a request made for all documentation to be forwarded.
3. There is a \$400 fee to lodge an appeal. The School pays \$200 and the Student pays \$200.
4. The School will maintain the student's enrolment whilst the appeals process is ongoing.

Stages 1 – 3: If either the internal or external complaint/grievance process results in a decision that supports the student, the School will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome.

All Stages of the process will commence within ten (10) working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint/grievance and supporting material and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

4 CONCLUSION

The appropriate Dean is responsible for the training of academic and support staff in the application of this policy.

At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be given.

Records of all complaints/grievances, applications for review of decisions and outcomes of the complaints/grievances process will be kept for a period of five (5) years. These records will be strictly confidential and filed in a separate file (not kept on the student or staff file) and stored in the office of the Executive Assistant for a period of five (5) years. Parties to the complaints/grievances will be allowed supervised access to these records.

5 DOCUMENTATION

Grievance Form