
Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy

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1.0 Purpose

This policy's intention is to set out the way EIT will ensure a high quality management process for student complaints and grievances.

2.0 Scope:

This procedure applies to all the professional staff, students and academics currently attending or working for EIT or who have attended in the past. It relates to complaints that have arisen from a student's past or current involvement with Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses at EIT.

3.0 Introduction

During EIT's provision of VET courses to students, it is probable that students will raise suggestions, concerns, complaints or grievances about their experiences at EIT.

The policy describes the best practice approach to handling grievances from when they are initiated to dealing with them in a fair, prompt, confidential and objective manner with an appropriate resolution to (optimally) the satisfaction of all parties.

EIT recognises that effective communication is of paramount importance when attempting to resolve difficulties experienced by students. EIT is committed to a culture of openness, fairness and continuous improvement, which includes being open to criticism. All parties in the action will be treated fairly and with dignity.

2.0 Principles of Resolution

The resolution procedures of EIT are based on the following principles:

- All suggestions, concerns, complaints or grievances from students will be acknowledged and treated promptly and fairly.
- No student should suffer any discrimination or unfair action as a result of making a complaint.
- Informal resolution of complaints is always the best option and should be harnessed as often and as quickly (but professionally) as possible.
- Professional staff who are experienced in dealing with these issues are critical for achieving successful outcomes in this policy area. This includes the use of appropriate student advocates and mediators.
- All parties have to be considerate, cordial and treat each other with respect, and allow no tolerance of intimidatory or threatening activity.
- All parties want to achieve a win-win solution with good faith displayed throughout.
- If errors arise, these are to be acknowledged and then corrected so as to minimise losses to all parties affected.
- All procedures used to resolve complaints are conducted with the principles of natural justice being paramount and the need to always be objective, fair and respectful of all parties.
- It is crucial that both parties put significant effort into detailed communications and understanding of all the issues.
- Consideration should be given to applying lateral thinking and creative strategies in resolving complaints (as opposed to the “winner-takes-all” strategy).
- All parties to the complaint should be regularly notified as to the progress of the procedure.
- All exchanges of information should rely on the utmost level of confidentiality as often as possible.
- Once a decision has been reached, all parties should be informed as quickly as possible, in writing about the results of the complaint.

3.0 Reasons for complaint

Typical reasons for a complaint include the following:

- A student impacted in the inappropriate, irregular or incorrect application of EIT policies and procedures.
- A student impacted by bias, prejudice or perceived unfair treatment.
- A penalty that seems excessively harsh being applied to a student.
- A student impacted by negligent, unusual or inappropriate conduct by a person involved.
- A student impacted by a decision which didn’t take all the facts and issues into account.

4.0 Grounds for appeal

This is always an awkward stage, where the student may have minimal belief that the system will work adequately and fairly. The ethos of EIT is to emphasise that in many cases there are further stages for dealing with a complaint or grievance beyond the initial contact. Typical reasons for appeal include:

- An irregularity in the procedures followed.
- New evidence and facts that have emerged that would change the decision.
- The penalty imposed or decision reached could be considered unreasonable.

5.0 Categories of complaint

There are various categories of complaint and they include:

- Academic matters, such as academic decisions, content or structure of programs, teaching quality, research supervision, intellectual property, plagiarism and cheating.
- Administrative matters, such as policies, procedures, decisions and access to required resources.
- Intimidation by other students or staff members.
- Collective complaints by a number of students with a similar issue.

6.0 Review and history

It is vital that the Dean or the College Manager make available to the Academic Board a summary of incidents, concerns, complaints and grievances of both a formal and an informal nature, where required.

7.0 Further External Appeal(s)

The complainant may not be satisfied with EIT's internal processes and is entitled to proceed to an external mediator for resolution.

EIT is a member of the Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme and all external appeals will be referred to them.

7.1 Resolution Institute Dispute Resolution

7.1.1 Discussion / Negotiation

The parties agree that in the event of a dispute arising they shall first meet and attempt to resolve the issues of concern by means of discussion and personal negotiation. If this process does not resolve the issues, they shall refer the matter to mediation in accordance with clause 7.1.2.

7.1.2 Mediation – Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme

The parties must endeavour to settle any dispute in connection with the contract by mediation. Such mediation is to be conducted by a mediator who is independent of the parties and appointed by agreement of the parties or, failing agreement within seven (7) days of receiving any party's notice of dispute, by a person appointed by the Chair of Resolution Institute or the Chair's designated representative.

7.1.3 Rules

The Resolution Institute Mediation Rules shall apply to the mediation.

7.1.4 Arbitration or Litigation

It is a condition precedent to the right of either party to commence arbitration or litigation other than for interlocutory relief, that it has first offered to submit the dispute to mediation.

EIT notes that the advice of external mediation bodies is that, ordinarily, students should first attempt to resolve complaints and grievances using the prescribed internal procedures of EIT before seeking external assistance. To have external bodies approached with regard to complaints and grievances reflects poorly on EIT and staff members and members of EIT's boards should do all in their power to help resolve issues internally.



8.0 Definitions

Student Advocate: An independent person, who can provide a student with unbiased objective advice about a proposed complaint, the process to resolution and suggest possible outcomes.

Grievance: A defined issue to be investigated as described in this policy (and associated procedure). This is due to the failure of informal processes in resolving the issue. The result of resolving the grievance may be disciplinary action against a staff member or student or compensation for the student.

Mediator: A disinterested and skilled individual in mediating complaints in an academic environment who is considered impartial and objective by both student and staff member or complainant and subject of the complaint.

9.0 Essential Supporting Documents

- Resolution Institute Mediation Rules (see Appendix A)

10.0 Related Documents

- Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure.VET
- EIT06 Complaints and Appeals Policy

APPENDIX A



MEDIATION RULES

Authority for Rules

Resolution Institute is the membership body incorporating the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators (IAMA) and LEADR. Resolution Institute performs the functions previously offered by those organisations. On 8 September 2016 the Board of Resolution Institute resolved that from and including 8 September 2016 parties who have agreed that a dispute arising or having arisen between them shall be submitted to mediation in accordance with this 2016 Edition of the Rules.

The Council of IAMA resolved at a meeting on 5 April 2007 that, where any two or more parties have agreed between them that a dispute arising or having arisen between them shall be submitted:

- To mediation in accordance with the IAMA Mediation Rules;
- The Rules numbered 1 to 13 hereafter shall apply.

These Rules are identical in terms to the previous version of the IAMA Mediation Rules effective 5 April 2007, except for the additions to this introduction addressing the relevant name change and the insertion of a commencement date.

These Rules commence on 8 September 2016.

PART I PRELIMINARY

RULE 1 Definitions

In these Rules:

‘Agreement’ is any agreement between the parties embodying a submission of present or future disputes to mediation.

‘the costs of the reference’ includes the fees and expenses of a Mediator or Nominee, any Nomination Fee or other fee payable to Resolution Institute or other nominating body, and costs for such things as room hire.

‘days’ means normal working days and shall exclude Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

‘the Dispute’ means the disputed issues which are referred to mediation.

‘mediation’ is a process in which parties to a dispute with the assistance of a neutral third party (‘the Mediator’) identify the disputed issues, develop options, consider alternatives and

endeavour to reach an agreement. The mediator has no advisory or other determinative role in regard to the content of the dispute or the outcome of its resolution, but may advise on or determine the process of mediation whereby resolution is attempted.

'Nominee' means a Mediator who has been nominated by Resolution Institute or agreed by the parties but who has not entered on the reference to mediation.

'Preliminary Meeting' means a meeting appointed by the Mediator to deal with procedural or administrative matters in connection with the mediation.

RULE 2 Appointment of Mediator

1. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the parties, the mediation shall be conducted:
 - a. by a person or persons agreed between the parties; or
 - b. if the parties are unable to agree on the identity of the person or persons to be appointed, by a person or persons nominated by Resolution Institute, who accepts appointment as Mediator.
2. Subject to any written agreement of the parties to the contrary, the provisions of Schedule A shall apply.
3. The Nominee shall, within seven (7) days of receiving advice of his or her nomination or agreed appointment, give written notice to the parties of the time and place of a Preliminary Meeting to be held in accordance with Rule 7, which the parties or their duly authorised representatives shall attend.
4. Prior to or at that Preliminary Meeting, the Nominee may advise any conditions he or she wishes to impose (including provision of security for the fees and expenses of the Nominee) and request the agreement of the parties to such conditions.
5. On the parties agreeing to any such conditions, the Nominee shall accept appointment and shall then be deemed to have entered on the reference as Mediator as the case may be.

RULE 3 Application of Rules

1. These Rules are subject to any law which governs mediation in the place where the mediation is held, and to any agreement between the parties in relation to the mediation process.
2. Otherwise, where the parties to a dispute have agreed to mediation in accordance with these Rules, they are thereby bound to comply with these Rules unless any part thereof is held to be void or voidable, in which case that part shall be severed from the remainder of the agreement.

PART II THE PROCEDURE

RULE 4 Confidentiality

1. The Mediator, the parties and all advisers and representatives of the parties shall:
 - a. except as provided in paragraph 2 of this Rule, keep all information disclosed during the mediation process confidential;

- b. not use any information disclosed during the mediation process for any purpose other than the mediation;
 - c. if requested by the Mediator or a party to do so, sign Confidentiality Agreements in the terms of this Rule.
2. The obligation of confidentiality under sub-paragraph a. of paragraph 1 above shall apply except:
 - a. if disclosure is compelled by law;
 - b. to the extent necessary to give effect to the Agreement, or to enforce any agreement to settle or resolve the whole or any part of the Dispute;
 - c. where disclosure is only of the occurrence of the mediation (and not any communication during the conciliation), and the occurrence of the mediation is relevant to subsequent arbitral, adjudicative or judicial proceedings relating to the Dispute.

RULE 5 Role of the Mediator

1. The Mediator shall be independent of, and act fairly and impartially as between the parties.
2. The Mediator shall assist the parties to negotiate between themselves a mutually acceptable resolution of the Dispute, by:
 - a. helping the parties to identify and define the issues in dispute;
 - b. implementing a procedure which is aimed at achieving resolution of the Dispute quickly, fairly and cost-effectively;
 - c. where appropriate, suggesting particular dispute resolution techniques for individual issues aimed at narrowing the issues in dispute quickly, fairly and cost-effectively;
 - d. acting as the facilitator of direct negotiations between the parties.
3. During the mediation process, the Mediator may convene such meetings between the parties (hereafter respectively called Mediation Meetings) as the Mediator considers appropriate, for the purpose of:
 - a. identifying and defining the issues in dispute,
 - b. resolving or narrowing the issues in dispute,on terms acceptable to the parties.
4. During the mediation process, the Mediator may, in his or her unfettered discretion, communicate and discuss the Dispute privately with any of the parties or their representatives or advisers. The Mediator shall preserve absolute secrecy of the content of any such communication, and shall not expressly or impliedly convey the content of such communication (or part thereof) unless specifically authorised to do so.

RULE 6 Role of the Parties

1. The parties shall do all things reasonably necessary for the proper, expeditious and cost-effective conduct of the mediation.

2. Without limiting the generality of paragraph 1, each party shall:
 - a. be expected to participate bona fide in the Mediation process;
 - b. comply without delay with any direction made on procedural matters;
 - c. if not appearing in person:
 - (i) be represented at any Preliminary Meeting by a person or persons with authority to agree on procedural matters;
 - (ii) be represented at any Mediation Meeting by a person or persons with full and unfettered authority to settle the Dispute unless, prior to the Mediation Meeting, it has disclosed to the Mediator and each other party the nature of any limitation on that authority and the procedure required to obtain that party's approval to settle the Dispute.

RULE 7 Preliminary Meeting

1. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the Mediator shall convene a Preliminary Meeting with the parties, in person or by teleconference, to be held as soon as practicable after reference of the Dispute to mediation.
2. The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is for the parties, with the assistance of the Mediator, to:
 - a. discuss and agree on the issues in dispute, or formulate a process by which those issues can be clarified and agreed;
 - b. plan and agree on how a negotiated resolution of the Dispute is to proceed including, where appropriate, a timetable for exchange of position papers and other documents and provision of copies to the Mediator;
 - c. make arrangements, if required, for Confidentiality Agreements to be signed by all persons taking part in the mediation process, in accordance with Rule 4;
 - d. make such other planning and administrative arrangements as may be required for the mediation to proceed, including in respect of the terms of appointment of the Mediator.

RULE 8 Termination of the Mediation

1. Any party may terminate the mediation, by written notice to each other party and the Mediator.
2. The Mediator may terminate the mediation, by written notice to each of the parties, if the Mediator forms the opinion that the further conduct of the process will not be productive in achieving a resolution of the Dispute.

PART III GENERAL

RULE 9 Costs

1. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, each party shall pay its own costs of or incidental to the mediation.

2. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the parties shall be jointly and severally liable for the costs of the reference, and shall pay those costs in equal shares.

RULE 10 Extension of Limitation Period

1. If, during the mediation, a limitation period for bringing any proceedings in relation to the Dispute expires, the parties agree that:
 - a. the limitation period will be extended by the number of days from the date of reference of the Dispute to mediation to the date of termination in accordance with these Rules;
 - b. they will not rely, in any arbitral or judicial proceedings, on expiry of the limitation period other than as calculated in accordance with this Rule.

RULE 11 Subsequent Proceedings

1. The parties agree that the following will be privileged and will not be disclosed or relied upon or be the subject of a subpoena to give evidence or produce documents in any subsequent arbitral or judicial proceedings arising out of or in connection with the Dispute:
 - a. any view expressed, or admission or concession made, by or on behalf of a party;
 - b. any view expressed, or suggestion made by the Mediator;
 - c. any document created for the purpose of the Mediation.

RULE 12 Counting of Days

1. For the purpose of counting days under these Rules, such period shall begin to run on the day following the day when notice, notification, communication or proposal is actually received or deemed to be received under paragraph 2 of this Rule, whichever is earlier. If the last day of such period is a public or official holiday or a non-business day at the residence or place of business of the addressee, then the period is extended until the first business day which follows.
2. Any such notice, notification, communication or proposal which is posted is deemed to have been received on the second day following the day of posting. Any such notice, notification, communication or proposal which is sent by facsimile or other means of Telecommunication or electronic transmission is deemed to have been received on the day of transmission.

RULE 13 Liability for Acts or Omissions

1. The parties agree that the Mediator, Resolution Institute and its officers and employees are not liable to any party for or in respect of any act or omission in the discharge or purported discharge of their respective functions under these Rules unless such act or omission is shown to have been fraudulent.



SCHEDULE A

RULE A1 Inability to Agree on Person to be Appointed

1. This Rule applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with the Agreement.
2. Any party may, by notice in writing (hereafter called the Notice of Dispute), give notice that it requires a dispute to be referred to mediation, and call on the other parties to the dispute to agree on the identity of the person to be appointed as the Mediator, as the case may be.
3. The Notice of Dispute shall be served at the address for such party or parties specified in the Agreement. Unless otherwise provided in the Agreement, service may be effected personally, by mail, or by facsimile or other means of telecommunication or electronic transmission.
4. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, if no agreement has been reached on the identity of the person to be appointed as Mediator within ten (10) days after service of the Notice of Dispute or deemed receipt of same, then the dispute, unless settled, shall be and is hereby referred to mediation, as the case may be by a mediator nominated by the Institute in accordance with this Schedule.
5. If the parties agree in writing that the giving of notice under this Rule shall not be required, then the parties may jointly call for nomination of a mediator by Resolution Institute in accordance with this Schedule.

RULE A2 Exercise of Power of Nomination by Resolution Institute

1. Where the Institute is to exercise powers to nominate persons to act as mediators, those powers shall be exercised by:
 - a. the Chair of Resolution Institute; or
 - b. the Deputy-Chair of Resolution Institute, to whom the power of appointment is delegated in any particular case or cases.
2. Where Resolution Institute is to nominate a mediator:
 - a. the party giving a Notice of Dispute shall also provide evidence that it has deposited with Resolution Institute the prescribed Nomination Fee; or
 - b. if the parties agree in writing that the giving of notice under Rule A1 shall not be required then, unless the parties otherwise agree, they shall jointly deposit with Resolution Institute the prescribed Nomination Fee.
3. The Nomination Fee shall be the sum of \$330.00 or such other sum as prescribed by Resolution Institute from time to time.
4. Lodgement of the prescribed Nomination Fee shall be a pre-requisite to the nomination of a mediator by Resolution Institute.

RULE A3 Call for Nomination

1. This Rule applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with the Agreement.
2. Where a Notice of Dispute has been given pursuant to the Agreement or pursuant to Rule A1, and such dispute has not been settled within the time provided, any party



may thereafter request Resolution Institute in writing to nominate a mediator and, in so doing, shall submit the following to Resolution Institute:

- a. a copy of the Notice of Dispute;
 - b. a copy of the Agreement containing the submission to mediate;
 - c. the names and addresses of the parties to the dispute;
 - d. a brief description of the nature of the dispute containing such particulars of the dispute as will permit Resolution Institute to nominate an appropriate mediator.
3. If the parties agree in writing that the giving of notice under Rule A1 shall not be required then, in addition to the material referred to in paragraph 2 of this Rule, they shall provide to Resolution Institute a copy of their written agreement to that effect.
4. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the material submitted pursuant to paragraphs 2 or 3 of this Rule, or such further information as to the nature of the dispute as Resolution Institute may reasonably require for the purposes of nomination, Resolution Institute shall nominate a mediator, and shall advise the parties and the Nominee accordingly.

RULE A4 Further Nomination

1. Where any party does not agree with the conditions advised by the Nominee, then the Nominee shall notify the parties in writing within two (2) days as to whether he or she accepts appointment as Mediator notwithstanding that disagreement. On acceptance of appointment, the Nominee shall be deemed to have entered on the reference as Mediator, as the case may be.
2. Unless the parties otherwise agree in writing, Resolution Institute shall nominate a replacement Mediator, within ten (10) days of being called on to do so by a party, if:
 - a. appointment is declined by a Nominee pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Rule;
 - b. a Nominee nominated by Resolution Institute does not enter upon the reference as Mediator, as the case may be, within one (1) month of the date of his or her nomination;
 - c. after entering on the reference, a Mediator shall die or shall otherwise become incapable by reason of ill health or otherwise, or be debarred in law, from continuing on the reference.
3. Where Resolution Institute nominates a replacement Mediator pursuant to paragraph 2a of this Rule, then any dispute as to the reasonableness of the conditions notified by the replacement Mediator shall be determined by the Chair of Resolution Institute or his or her nominee, which determination shall be final and binding.