

VDIP&P20315 Student Grievance Handling Policy And Procedure (Academic And Non-Academic Grievances)

Virtu Design Institute Pty Limited trading as Virtu Institute – ACN 154 273 757 – RTO ID 40530



1. Overview

Virtu Design Institute Pty Ltd trading as Virtu Institute (“Virtu”) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible to all complainants.

Virtu aims to:

- Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works,
- Align its grievance handling system with its Vision, Values and Mission,
- Maintain a grievance handling system that is client focused and helps Virtu to prevent grievances from recurring,
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality,
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised; and
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

General principles

These principles, which will be adhered to by Virtu, apply to all stages of this grievance procedure:

- The Complainant and any respondent will have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure.
- The Complainant and any respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.
- The Complainant and any respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.
- At all stages of the process, discussions relating to grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or any respondent if requested.
- Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored at Virtu, Level 21 / 233 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.
- A Complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost.

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A grievance can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of Virtu's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:

- The enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- Suspension or cancellation of enrolment;
- The quality of education provided;
- Academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- Handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- Loan debts incurred through VET FEE-HELP, VET Student Loans;
- The consideration and granting of Virtu scholarships; and
- The way someone has been treated.

These grievance procedures are designed to ensure that Virtu responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction and provides a constructive source of feedback to the organisation to facilitate improvement of its operations. Grievances arising out of the activities of third parties providing services on behalf of Virtu will also be handled by Virtu.

2. Policy coverage

In relation to non-academic grievances, the term "complainant" applies to both current students of Virtu and persons seeking to enrol with Virtu.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus of Virtu at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

3. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level. Complainants may raise an informal grievance directly with their trainer, lecturer or assessor, Student Services Manager and Assistant Registrar, or they may contact the Administration Manager and Registrar by phoning (04) 7904 7908 or by email: registrar@virtuinstitute.edu.au Please note that it is not mandatory for complainants to raise a grievance informally.

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4. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that Virtu holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure Virtu will take all steps to ensure that:

- The complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against,
- The complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings,
- A full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent,
- Where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, Virtu will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome, and
- A complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for grievances heard by the Resolution Institute will be borne by Virtu.

4.1 Stage one – formal grievance:

Formal grievances should be submitted in writing to the Administration Manager & Registrar by completing the Complaint Form (VDIF20800 Student Grievance/Appeal Form) provided on the Virtu website or campus portal and emailed to: registrar@virtuinstitute.edu.au or by mail to: The Administration Manager and Registrar, Virtu Institute, Level 21 / 233 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

The complainant is invited to include suggestions about how the grievance might be resolved. The Administration Manager and Registrar will notify the complainant in writing of receipt of the grievance within two (2) business days.

The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

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The Administration Manager and Registrar, or nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Administration Manager and Registrar, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of the right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal grievance.

4.2 Stage two – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal grievance an appeal may be lodged on the VDIF20800 Student Grievance/Appeal Form to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (who is senior to the original decision maker) within twenty (20) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the formal grievance. The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to join these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or nominee will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of the right to access the external appeals process if unsatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal.

4.3 Stage three – external appeal (domestic students):

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal and they are a domestic student, then an independent mediator can be requested through the Resolution Institute. Complainants can contact the Resolution Institute directly as follows:

Address: Level 1, 13-15 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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Phone: 02 9251 3366 Free call: 1800 651 650

Fax: 02 9251 3733 Email: infoaus@resolution.institute

Costs of such mediation will be borne by Virtu.

Virtu agrees to be bound by any recommendations arising from the external appeal and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of such recommendations.

4.3.1 Stage three – external appeal (international students):

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal and they are an international student, then they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their training provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 or +61 2 6276 0111 from outside Australia for more information.

Virtu agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman and the CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of such recommendations.

4.3.2 Stage three – additional external appeal (domestic students)

If the Complainant is a domestic VET student and remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the mediator's decision, then they may contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

For contact details and information: Email: complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au Telephone: 1300 701 801 or +61 3 8613 3910 from outside Australia <http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints.html>

Virtu will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review of the grievance within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations.

Virtu will attempt to deal with all complaints in under 60 days and commits to inform complainants / appellants when a complaint or appeal will take

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longer than 60 days to finalise. Virtu will at all times regularly update the complainant or appellant of the progress of the grievance.

5. Further action

If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as The Anti-Discrimination Board, The Office of Fair Trading, The Administrative Appeals Tribunal or in the case of disputes regarding FEE-HELP loans to the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, Virtu will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

7. Record keeping & confidentiality

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar. These records will be maintained at Virtu Institute, Level 21 / 233 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by Virtu's VIP&P10109 Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedures.

8. Approval, publication and training

This Policy and Procedure is approved by the Board of Directors.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with Virtu through publication in the Student Handbook and on Virtu's website (www.virtuinstitute.edu.au).

For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this

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Policy and Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the Administration Manager & Registrar.

9. Responsibility

The CEO is responsible for implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation and Students and Complainants are made aware of its availability. The CEO will provide the BoD a summary annual report of all Grievances notified under this Policy and Procedure and will inform the BoD of any Grievance that can't be resolved within "Internal" processes.

10. Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following applies:

The Acts refers to the Higher Education Support Act 2003, the VET Students Loan Act 2016 and the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

Student/s refers to all persons enrolled or seeking to enrol in a Unit of Study and/or Course that meets the course requirements under the Act/s.

Complainant refers to Students (as defined above) who have lodged a grievance with Virtu Design Institute Pty Ltd trading as Virtu Institute ("Virtu").

11. Relevant Documents

- *VDIF20800 Student Grievance/Appeal Form*

12. Version history

VERSION	APPROVED BY	APPROVAL DATE	DETAILS
1.0	Board of Directors	Scheduled for 18.04.2016	Document creation
1.3	Board of Directors	Approved in Principle 18.04.2016	Minor edits for consistency
1.4			Copy edits 25.04.2016
1.5			Copy edits 17Aug16
2.0	Board of Directors	8.09.16	Approved
2.3		4.01.17	VSL and other changes

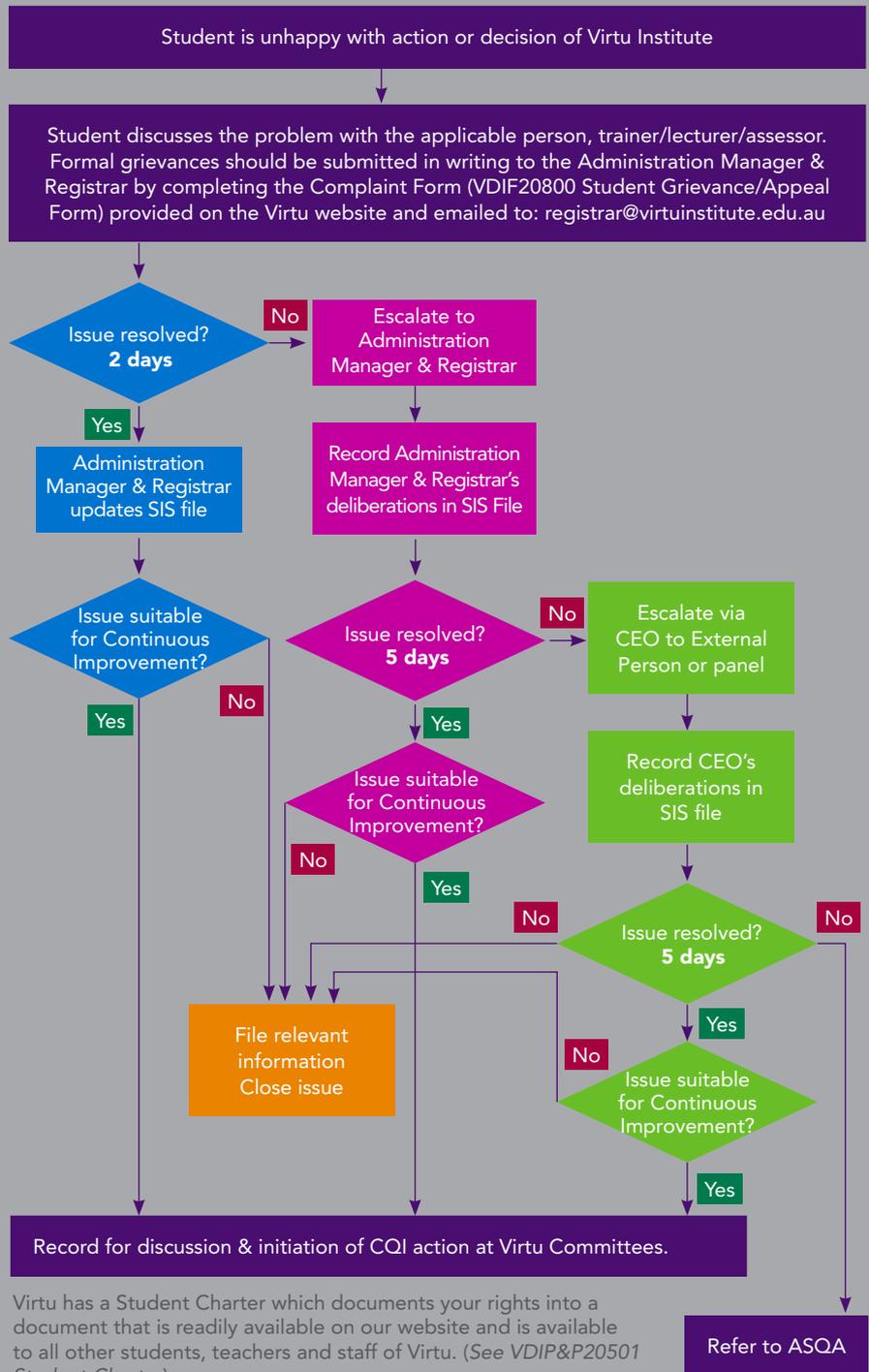
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Flow Chart – Student Appeals

NB: The Administration Manager & Registrar is responsible for tracking all complaints and appeals, and ensuring that all documents are uploaded to the SIS on all parties' records.



Virtu has a Student Charter which documents your rights into a document that is readily available on our website and is available to all other students, teachers and staff of Virtu. (See VDIP&P20501 Student Charter)