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## GRIEVANCE & APPEALS POLICY

### 1. Purpose

This policy establishes the framework by which Ikon Institute of Australia (Ikon) manages grievances and appeals confidentially in a fair and equitable manner, and using feedback to effect continuous improvement

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All current students
- All applicants who have formally applied to be enrolled at Ikon
- Parents or legal guardians of prospective students under the age of 18 years
- All staff members involved in the management of the student grievances and appeals process
- Any third-party acting for or on behalf of Ikon

The policy covers academic and non-academic matters including, but not limited to, admission, enrolment, assessment, progression, misconduct, support and supervision, tuition fees, fines and refunds, discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation, facilities and resources, access and equity, and interactions with staff, students, education agents or other third parties where an arrangement to deliver exists.

Formal staff grievances and appeals shall be dealt with in accordance with Ikon's HR policies and all applications should be directed to the Group HR Manager or the CEO.

### 3. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Formal Grievance Form
- Application for Appeal
- Grievance & Appeals Register
- Application for Special Consideration
- Assessment Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Student Academic Progress Policy
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy
- Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy

All policies and forms referenced in this policy can be downloaded from the [Policies & Procedures section](#) of Ikon's website, and student and staff policy libraries

Appendix A provides a flowchart of the resolution framework and timeframes.

#### 4. Definitions

**“Appeal”** means to dispute a formal grievance determination or reviewable decision made by Ikon. Dissatisfaction with the following matters is dealt with solely as an appeal:

- Decisions relating to assessment and progression
- Decisions relating to academic misconduct
- Decisions to report international students
- Decisions relating to deferring, suspending and cancelling international students.

**“Appeal Panel”** means individuals appointed to hear an appeal against a determination or decision.

**“Complainant”** means the individual who has made a grievance or lodged an appeal.

**“Grievance”** means a formal complaint where an individual believes they have received unfair treatment.

**“Grievance Officer”** means the Quality Assurance Manager designated as the contact point for the receipt and preliminary assessment of a grievance, and referral to an Investigating Officer, as required.

**“Investigating Officer”** means a person appointed to investigate and determine a grievance.

**“Student”** may include prospective students who have had some interactions with Ikon (e.g. via an agent), current students (irrespective of mode of participation) and past students.

**“Support person”** means a friend, family member, counsellor or other support person to support the complainant to any meetings during the resolution process. The support person cannot be a legal practitioner.

**“Unfair Treatment”** means any actions or decisions an individual feel has been biased against them and has resulted in an outcome that otherwise would have been different, had the treatment been unbiased.

**“Working days”** means Monday through Friday, excluding public holidays.

## POLICY

#### 5. Principles of Resolution

Grievances and appeals are to be considered on merit and to adhere to the following key principles:

- 5.1 Ikon expects all parties to a grievance or appeal to act in good faith and seek to achieve an amicable resolution. Ikon will not accept any form of intimidation, harassment, threats or offensive behaviour from any parties.
- 5.2 All parties can access the grievance and appeals process regardless of location or terms of engagement. The process is explained at orientation and staff induction programs.
- 5.3 Information about how to access the grievance and appeals process is published on the website for access by students, staff and all parties to the business of Ikon.
- 5.4 Grievances and appeals are to be resolved promptly within set timeframes and all parties to a proceeding are to be kept informed of progress, in writing.
- 5.5 The complainant and any respondent shall not be victimised or discriminated against in any

manner

- 5.6 Staff shall act fairly at all times to assure there is no bias during the resolution process.
- 5.7 Grievances and appeals shall be treated with confidentiality at all times. Disclosure and access to records are to be provided on a 'need-to-know' basis and limited to individuals legitimately involved in the grievance and the resolution process, or as required by law.
- 5.8 The complainant and any respondent may bring one person (such as a friend, family member, counsellor or other support person) to represent/support them to any meetings during the resolution process. The support person cannot be a legal practitioner.
- 5.9 The complainant is entitled to ask for assistance in the form of a translator/ interpreter at any time during the process.
- 5.10 Grievances and appeals may be withdrawn at any time by the complainant. Ikon reserves the right to continue investigation to satisfy other requirements or protect its own interests.
- 5.11 Grievances considered frivolous, unreasonable, vexatious or lacking substance shall be dismissed.
- 5.12 If two or more grievances about the same matter are submitted independently, they may be considered jointly by agreement of all parties concerned
- 5.13 Upon resolution, all further investigation ceases.
- 5.14 There is no cost to access the internal resolution process. Any costs associated with external review shall be borne by the student but reimbursed by Ikon if found in the student's favour.
- 5.15 The resolution framework does not limit or remove the right to take action under Commonwealth or State consumer protection laws or to pursue legal remedies.
- 5.16 The outcomes of each grievance and appeal and the feedback on the process, shall be analysed and recommendations for improvement of processes and services shall be recorded in the Quality Assurance Continuous Improvement Plan.

## PROCEDURE

### 6. Resolution Framework

- 6.1 The resolution framework comprises four stages:
  - Stage 1 Informal Resolution
  - Stage 2 Formal Grievance
  - Stage 3 Appeal a Decision
  - Stage 4 External Independent Review
- 6.2 During the resolution process, students are required to continue their studies except where their health or safety is potentially at risk or is a risk to others.

### 7. Roles & Responsibilities

- 7.1 The Grievance Officer is responsible for determining whether the matter should be handled as a grievance or pursued through another process and has the authority to refer a grievance to an Investigating Officer for investigation and determination. The Grievance Officer may

also act as the Investigating Officer, if required.

- 7.2 The Investigating Officer is responsible for investigating the matter to reach a determination. The Investigating Officer has the authority to notify all parties to the grievance of the findings, determination and outcomes.
- 7.3 Grievances lodged by other stakeholders, such as education agents and other third parties, shall be reviewed and determined by the CEO.
- 7.4 The Appeal Panel is responsible for hearing and determining academic appeals. The Appeal Panel Chair is responsible for the preliminary assessment to determine the grounds for appeal have been met, setting the appeals hearing date and advising of the decision in writing.
- 7.5 The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for hearing and determining all non-academic appeals by students and prospective students.
- 7.6 Staff involved in a grievance or appeal hearing are required to have the necessary authority, and management support to carry out the process effectively and, where specific skills are required, the access to appropriate training and resources to fulfil their role.
- 7.7 All parties are entitled to be treated with respect and courtesy at all times. Where a complainant behaves in a rude, threatening or harassing manner towards others, the Dean and the Appeal Panel Chair have the authority to decline further consideration of the grievance or appeal and to commence misconduct proceedings under Ikon's Student Code of Conduct.
- 7.8 Individuals must not participate in a grievance or appeal where there is a conflict of interest.
- 7.9 This policy is to be included in the induction procedures for all new staff.

## 8. Lodgement & Timeframes

- 8.1 Formal grievances must be lodged using the *Formal Grievance Form* no later than 10 working days after the incident.
- 8.2 Appeals must be lodged using the *Application for Appeal* within ten working days of the written notification of the reviewable decision, including the outcome of a grievance during the formal resolution process. International students have twenty working days to lodge an appeal against a decision relating to the deferral, suspension or cancellation of their enrolment, including the intention to report for unsatisfactory academic progression.
- 8.3 Ikon shall only investigate a grievance/appeal lodged after the deadline if:
  - a) it relates to a serious matter
  - b) there are circumstances beyond the control of the individual which prevented timely lodgement
  - c) there is reasonable justification for late lodgement
  - d) it is still practical for Ikon to conduct an investigation.
- 8.4 Grievances and appeals are to be investigated to achieve a resolution in a timely manner in accordance with the timeframes in the [Procedures](#) section below.
- 8.5 Anonymous grievances shall only be investigated if they are considered serious or high risk.
- 8.6 Grievances made on behalf of another individual shall not be considered.
- 8.7 Making a grievance is a serious matter that can have potentially serious consequences for

others. Individuals who make frivolous, vexatious or false or deliberately misleading claims in connection with a grievance or an appeal may be subject to internal disciplinary proceedings and/or external avenues for legal remedy.

- 8.8 Grievance proceedings may not run concurrently. Where a grievance is made with the intention of delaying another proceeding or other matter under investigation, it shall be dismissed on the grounds it is frivolous, vexatious and lacking substance.

## 9. Withdrawing a Grievance or Appeal

- 9.1 A grievance/appeal may be withdrawn at any time by giving written notice to the Grievance Officer. In such a case, the matter shall be concluded and deemed to be resolved. Ikon reserves the right of Ikon to continue investigation where the grievance identifies potential areas of risk or improvement.
- 9.2 A withdrawn application cannot be raised again unless there is new information or a separate incident.

## 10. Victimization

- 10.1 It is a breach of this policy to victimise anyone for making a grievance or lodging an appeal.
- 10.2 Where a party to a grievance or an appeal is victimised, assistance and support should be sought immediately by advising the Investigating Officer (or in their absence the Dean). In the case of an emergency, such as a threat to health and safety, students and staff are encouraged to seek police assistance.
- 10.3 Individuals who participate in victimisation are considered to have committed misconduct and may be subject to internal disciplinary proceedings and/or external avenues for legal remedy. Incidents of victimisation that involve threats to health and safety shall be reported to the police.

## 11. Record Keeping

- 11.1 All matters arising during the resolution process are to be documented and recorded. Records are to be kept confidentially and maintained by the Quality Assurance Manager, separate to the usual student or staff files. Each file is to be held for a period of five years.
- 11.2 Records shall only be disclosed to individuals who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the grievance and appeals process, or as required by law.

## 12. Reporting and Feedback

- 12.1 Grievances provide valuable information to the continuous improvement process. Regardless of the outcome, all formal grievances and appeals are to be recorded in the *Grievance & Appeals Register*. The *Grievance & Appeals Register* is maintained by the Grievance Officer and monitored for areas of improvement and patterns of issues, concerns or behaviours.
- 12.2 The Quality Assurance Manager is required to present a quarterly report to the governing bodies highlighting actions taken to address any endemic issues and any other statistic of relevance and shall include the *Grievance and Appeals Register*.
- 12.3 All recommendations from external reviews are to be reported to the governing bodies, and are to be implemented as soon as practical.

## PROCEDURE

### Stage 1: Informal Resolution

#### 13. Direct Approach

- 13.1 In the first instance, where the student feels comfortable with making a direct approach, Ikon encourages students to discuss their concerns with the persons involved in the incident, concern or behaviour in an attempt to settle the matter directly.
- 13.2 Informal resolution allows the persons involved to explore options to make their own decisions about how to best resolve the matter. Direct strategies may include talking with the person, writing to them, asking a member of staff to raise the matter with the person on their behalf, and using feedback mechanisms such as student surveys.
- 13.3 When seeking informal resolution:
- Detail the event, concern or behaviour
  - Suggest a process to resolve the matter
  - Propose an outcome to settle the matter.
- 13.4 Grievances dealt with informally do not become part of the formal resolution process and shall not be documented, recorded or reported unless the matter is relevant to the wider operations of Ikon or identifies potential areas for improvement.
- 13.5 Where the complainant feels uncomfortable with making a direct approach, or where the concern relates to a serious matter such as allegations of misconduct or unlawful behaviour, or if a direct approach has not reached a resolution, they may lodge a formal grievance under Stage 2 of the resolution process.

### Stage 2: Formal Grievance

#### 14. Lodging a Formal Grievance

- 14.1 If an informal approach was unable to resolve the matter, a formal grievance can be initiated by completing and lodging a *Formal Grievance Form* with the Grievance Officer via the mailbox [grievances@ikon.edu.au](mailto:grievances@ikon.edu.au). A *Formal Grievance Form* can be downloaded from the Policies & Procedures section of Ikon's website at [ikon.edu.au/policies-procedures/](http://ikon.edu.au/policies-procedures/) or from the Student Hub in Canvas.
- 14.2 The completed form submitted should provide clear and sufficient information about the grievance to assist with the assessment, investigation and determination process, including:
- Description of the grievance incident, including date, location, persons involved
  - Outline of the steps taken to resolve informally (or reasons for not making a direct approach)
  - Proposed outcomes to settle the grievance
  - Documentation in support of the grievance or the proposed outcomes for resolution.
- 14.3 Formal grievances should be lodged within ten working days after the the grievance incident, concern or behaviour occurred. Applications received later than the prescribed time shall be considered by the Grievance Officer in accordance with Section 8.3 above.

- 14.4 A complainant may withdraw a grievance at any time during the resolution process by giving written notice to the Grievance Officer via mailbox [grievances@ikon.edu.au](mailto:grievances@ikon.edu.au).

## 15. Preliminary Assessment

- 15.1 Where a grievance is being lodged against the Grievance Officer, or the Grievance Officer has a conflict of interest, the grievance is to be referred to the Registrar. In this event, the Registrar is to act as the Grievance Officer.
- 15.2 The Grievance Officer is required to acknowledge receipt of the grievance in writing within five working days of the date the completed *Formal Grievance Form* is received in the Grievances mailbox (Lodgement Date). If the form is not complete or insufficient information has been provided to make an initial assessment, the acknowledgement is to outline the information required to complete the preliminary assessment. The date the additional information is received shall be considered the Lodgement Date.
- 15.3 Where a grievance is eligible for investigation and determination, the Grievance Officer shall refer the grievance to an Investigating Officer.
- 15.4 Where the grievance is from a stakeholder who is not a student or a prospective student, the Grievance Officer shall refer the grievance to the CEO.
- 15.5 All grievances shall be recorded by the Grievance Officer in the *Grievance and Appeals Register* and reported each quarter to the relevant governance board.

## 16. Investigation

- 16.1 In conducting the investigation, the Investigating Officer shall engage in a range of activities to gather and test information relevant to the grievance. The investigation is to be conducted with consideration for procedural fairness with each party being provided the opportunity to present their case. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.
- 16.2 During the investigation process, allegations may be varied as a result of new evidence. The Grievance Officer is to advise the parties of any changes, providing the parties the opportunity to respond to the new allegations (see Section 18 below).
- 16.3 The Investigating Officer may refer the student to the appropriate support services during the formal resolution process. All relevant parties to the grievance may nominate a support person to accompany them during interviews or discussions.
- 16.4 If the Investigating Officer is unable to investigate the grievance due to insufficient information or clarity of information, the student is to be advised in writing of the additional information required for the investigation to continue. The date the additional information is received shall be considered the Lodgement Date.
- 16.1 The Investigating Officer is to conclude their investigation within fifteen working days of the Lodgement Date. If it is not possible to complete the investigation within the prescribed timeframe, the Investigating Officer shall advise the complainant in writing explaining the reasons for the delay and the anticipated timelines for resolution.
- 16.2 The Grievance Officer is to maintain a file of all correspondence and communication during investigation and determination proceedings

## 17. Determination

- 17.1 When making their determination, the Investigating Officer is to consider the following

elements in relation to the grievance and the information gathered during the investigation:

- Were there issues of bias or pre-existing attitudes?
- Was policy and/or procedure followed?
- Was one party at an unreasonable disadvantage?
- Was one party given an unreasonable advantage?
- Is there sufficient evidence to reach a determination?

17.2 The Investigating Officer may call a mediation meeting with relevant parties to the grievance to discuss the findings and agree a resolution:

- a) When a conciliation meeting reaches a mutually agreeable resolution, these outcomes are to be communicated in writing to all parties and the matter shall be considered closed.
- b) When a mediation meeting is held but no resolution is reached, the Investigating Officer shall exercise independent judgement to make a decision. The parties are to be advised in writing of the decision and the right to appeal.

17.3 Where the Investigating Officer concludes there is insufficient evidence to make a determination, the complainant shall be advised in writing and the matter closed until further evidence can be provided, at which time the grievance shall be re-opened.

17.4 Where the Investigating Officer determines the grievance is frivolous, vexatious or lacking substance, the grievance shall be dismissed. The complainant is to be advised in writing and the matter closed. In such an event, the complainant may choose to lodge an internal appeal against the decision.

## 18. Notification

18.1 In all cases, the Investigating Officer shall provide a written notification of the outcome of the investigation to the complainant within twenty working days of the Lodgement Date, advising; the findings, reasons for the decision, and the right to appeal.

18.2 If the complainant rejects the outcome of the investigation, they have the right to appeal the decision if they believe their grievance has not been adequately resolved. An *Application for Appeal* form should be lodged within ten working days from the date of notification of the outcome of the grievance application.

18.3 Where the complainant is an international student and the decision may affect their ability to complete their course in the duration recorded in their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), Ikon shall not report any changes to the Department of Home Affairs until the closure of the appeals process.

18.4 The Investigating Officer is to be forward any records, including a copy of the outcome sent to the complainant to the Grievance Officer to be maintained as part of the formal record of the grievance.

## Stage 3: Appealing a Decision

## 19. Grounds for Lodging an Internal Appeal

19.1 An appeal may be made where there is dissatisfaction with a decision made by Ikon in relation to:

- the determination or outcome of a grievance during the formal grievance process



- an assessment, grade, recognition of prior learning, or academic misconduct
- cancellation or suspension of the enrolment of a domestic student due to unsatisfactory academic progression
- deferral, suspension or cancellation of the enrolment of an international student including release to another provider and the intention to report to the Department of Home Affairs for unsatisfactory academic progression

19.2 An appeal can **only** be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- new evidence becomes available that could change the original outcome or decision
- determination was made without consideration of the evidence or procedural fairness
- evidence of bias, prejudice or a conflict of interest
- compassionate or compelling circumstances
- significant irregularity in the application of a policy, procedure or calculation

19.3 Students may **not** appeal against academic results based on:

- the subject structure and assessment methods
- student workload or the amount of work the student has completed
- financial implications of not passing the subject
- grades received by the student in other subjects
- the need for additional marks to enable a pass/better grade
- incorrectly or incompletely submitting assessments in Canvas. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure, and to check, that all assessments have been correctly uploaded into Canvas before the submission due date
- penalties for late submission.

## 20. Lodging an Internal Appeal

20.1 An internal appeal can be initiated by lodging an 'Application for Appeal' with the Grievance Officer via mailbox [appeals@ikon.edu.au](mailto:appeals@ikon.edu.au). An 'Application for Appeal' can be downloaded from the Policies & Procedures section of the institutional website at [ikon.edu.au/policies-procedures/](http://ikon.edu.au/policies-procedures/).

20.2 The application should provide sufficient information about the decision to assist with the investigation and hearing process, including:

- description of the matter/decision, including date, location and persons involved
- grounds for appeal and reasons why the decision and/or penalty was unfair
- details of the outcomes sought to settle the matter.

20.3 The application should include references to policy, guides and subject outlines (as applicable), and attach the new evidence or evidence confirming compassionate and compelling circumstances etc.

20.4 Appeals must be lodged within ten working days of the decision. Under the ESOS Act, international students have twenty working days to lodge an appeal against a decision relating to the deferral, suspension or cancellation of their enrolment including the intention to report for unsatisfactory academic progression.

20.5 A complainant may withdraw an appeal application at any time during the resolution process by giving written notice to the Grievance Officer via mailbox [appeals@ikon.edu.au](mailto:appeals@ikon.edu.au).

## **21. Preliminary Assessment**

- 21.1 The Grievance Officer shall acknowledge receipt via email and record the appeal in the *Grievance & Appeals Register*.
- 21.2 If the appeal is for an academic matter, the Grievance Officer shall convene an Appeal Panel within five working days of the completed appeal application being lodged.
- 21.3 If the appeal is for a non-academic matter, the application shall be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Manager for determination.

## **22. Non-Academic Appeals**

- 22.1 On receiving an appeal application relating to a non-academic matter, the Quality Assurance Manager shall review the application and determine whether to grant or dismiss the application.
- 22.2 The determination made by the Quality Assurance Manager, including the reasons for the decision, shall be communicated in writing (the Appeal Outcome Letter) to the complainant within 5 days of the appeal being lodged.
- 22.3 Where the appeal application is dismissed, the complainant shall be informed of any further external avenues for appeal.
- 22.4 The Quality Assurance Manager shall forward the appeal records, including a copy of the Appeal Outcome Letter and any correspondence, to the Grievance Officer to maintain as part of the formal record of the appeal. The Grievance Officer is to record the outcome in the *Grievance & Appeals Register*.
- 22.5 Where a conflict of interest exists, the CEO shall nominate an alternate member of senior management to review the application and to determine whether to grant or dismiss the application.
- 22.6 Where the Quality Assurance Manager is unable to make a determination, the application shall be forwarded to the CEO for review and determination.

## **23. Academic Appeals**

- 23.1 Appeals for all academic matters shall be dealt with by an Appeal Panel.
- 23.2 The Appeal Panel shall comprise of three persons, each of whom has had no prior involvement in the matter being heard, for example, the Dean, a Head of School, a senior academic staff member, or the Quality Assurance Manager. Other members may be invited as required. The Panel shall appoint a Panel Chair.
- 23.3 All members of the Appeal Panel are required to declare any perceived conflicts of interest. Where a conflict of interest exists, the member shall be required to withdraw from hearing the matter and the Appeals Panel Chair shall nominate an alternate.
- 23.4 The Appeal Panel Chair shall review the application within ten working days of lodgement and make one of the following determinations:
  - a) Where the application meets the grounds for appeal under this policy, the Appeal Panel Chair shall accept the appeal for hearing and determination and the Panel shall hear the appeal within ten working days of the appeal being lodged.
  - b) Where the application does not meet the grounds for appeal or the nature of the appeal is outside the scope of this policy, or the application was lodged outside the

prescribed timeframe, the appeal shall be denied and the acknowledgement to the student shall explain why the matter cannot be heard.

- 23.5 If the Appeal Panel Chair is unable to complete the assessment due to insufficient information, the acknowledgement shall outline the information required to complete the preliminary assessment. The date the additional information is received shall then be considered the Lodgement Date.
- 23.6 The Appeal Panel Chair is responsible for conducting the appeal proceedings with consideration for the circumstances of the matter and the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 23.7 In the course of the hearing, the Appeal Panel has the authority to consult with staff, students and other third parties on matters pertaining to the case. Confidentiality is to be maintained at all times.
- 23.8 All parties to the appeal shall be provided the opportunity to address the Appeal Panel, with a support person if required.
- 23.9 Any party to the appeal may request an adjournment. The Appeal Panel shall consider any such request, considering the circumstances of the request, and the requirements of natural justice.
- 23.10 The Appeal Panel may determine the appeal on the same day as the hearing or it may reserve its decision to a later date.
- 23.11 In making a determination, the Appeal Panel is to review the facts and consider the evidence presented at the hearing. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.
- 23.12 The Appeal Panel is required to make its decision within five working days of the hearing. The Panel may:
- Confirm the original decision
  - Vary the original decision
  - Set aside the original decision and make a substitute decision.
- 23.13 The Appeal Panel Chair shall work with the Grievance Officer to provide the Appeal Outcome Letter to all parties, with the reasons for the decision and the right to an external appeal if the appeal is found to be unsuccessful.
- 23.14 The Grievance Officer shall ensure that actions arising from the decision of the Appeal Panel are taken within the timescale identified in the written determination and shall report any failure to complete actions to the Academic Board.
- 23.15 The Appeal Panel Chair shall forward the hearing file, including a copy of the Appeal Outcome Letter and any correspondence, to the Grievance Officer to maintain as part of the formal record of the appeal. The Grievance Officer is to record the outcome in the *Grievance & Appeals Register*.

## Stage 4: External Independent Review

### 24. Domestic Students

- 24.1 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, or the internal appeal process, they may elect for the matter to be resolved through external mediation. The external mediation and dispute process shall be facilitated by the Resolution Institute, the national association of dispute resolvers. Ikon is a member of the Student Mediation Scheme.

24.2 Students who wish to seek an external review should contact the Resolution Institute directly within 20 working days of the receipt of the Appeal Outcome Letter:

Resolution Institute  
Student Remediation Scheme  
Level 2, 13-15 Bridge Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

☎ (02) 9251 3366

🌐 [www.resolution.institute/resolving-disputes/tertiary-student-au](http://www.resolution.institute/resolving-disputes/tertiary-student-au)

24.3 Applying for an external review with the *Resolution Institute* shall incur a fee that shall have to be paid by the person seeking the review. For details on the fees, students should contact the *Resolution Institute*. Ikon shall reimburse these costs if the recommendations of the external mediator are found in the student's favour.

24.4 The student may ask another person to accompany them to external mediation meetings. The support person cannot be a legal practitioner and may only speak at the mediator's discretion.

24.5 Ikon agrees to participate in the mediation process and be bound by the recommendations of the external mediator. The Dean and CEO shall ensure recommendations are actioned in a timely manner.

24.6 If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external mediation and dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency, such as the Consumer Protection Agency.

## 25. International Students

25.1 International students who wish to lodge an external appeal against a decision by the Appeals Panel may contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman within 28 days of the receipt of the Appeal Outcome Letter. The Commonwealth Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who wish to lodge an external appeal against a decision made by their higher education provider.

25.2 Refer to the Commonwealth Ombudsman website <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students> or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

## 26. Complaints About Ikon

26.1 Complainants may also lodge a complaint or concern about Ikon at any time by contacting the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#).

## 27. Publication

27.1 This policy shall be published in the [Policies & Procedures](#) section of the Ikon website and the student and staff policy libraries.

## Policy Information & History

Policy Category	Academic, Quality Assurance
Policy ID	QU009A
Approved by	Board of Directors
Date of Approval	15 September 2022
Endorsed by	Academic Board
Date of Endorsement	12 April 2022
Previous Versions	1 February 2022, 27 May 2020, 20 February 2017, 3 June 2016, 8 October 2014
Next Review Date	January 2025
Government Legislation	<a href="#">Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</a> <a href="#">National Code 2018</a> <a href="#">Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</a> <a href="#">Higher Education Support Act 2003</a>
Responsible Officers	Dean
Sources:	In developing this policy, Ikon considered the following documents:  <a href="#">Commonwealth Ombudsman, <i>Complaints Handling at Universities: Australasian Best Practice Guide</i>. April 2016</a>  TEQSA Guidance Note: <a href="#">Grievance and Complaint Handling</a> , Version 1.1 (22 February 2019)
Benchmarking:	External referencing activities were conducted against comparable providers and best practice using publicly available information, including Western Sydney University, Victoria University, Griffith University, Kaplan Business School, and Canberra University.

**APPENDIX A**

