Policy on Both Academic and Non-Academic Grievance

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Preamble

Asia Pacific International College (the College) is dedicated to advancement of education, research and community service. The College endeavours to:

- provide innovative and transformative cost effective educational opportunities at both undergraduate and graduate level. These include, but not limited to, formal award courses, professional development courses, open learning courses and seminars, conferences, workshops and other courses that are deemed appropriate;
- provide holistic solutions for organisational capability and performance development and enhancement;
- accelerate the acquisition and beneficial application of knowledge at both individual and corporate levels through research, teaching, training and consulting activities;
- contribute to the world of learning and the extension of knowledge;
- provide community service in core areas of expertise;
- co-operate with other Australian and overseas organisations with objectives that are shared with the College.

The College emphasises the acquisition of general and specialist knowledge together with the development of skills and professional behaviour. These attributes will be developed with values that the College subscribes to:

- The College is committed to academic freedom, high ethics and full respect of the law
- Academic values and ideals shall at all times take precedence over all other considerations
- The College respects individual privacy, rights and freedoms

The College shall endeavour to provide a stimulating environment for staff and students to engage in

- scholarly activity, enjoy collegial interactions, develop respect and serve the community
- The College is committed to customer value, efficiency and cordiality

To achieve the College’s mission, students and staff are required to display the utmost professionalism in their conduct. They need to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in their dealings with one another, with the College’s stakeholders and the public.

What is a grievance?

A grievance is a concern that is expressed in writing by a student on a decision taken by a College staff on the application of the relevant General Regulations, policies and processes to a matter that has affected that student. Grievances are either academic or non-academic. The College does not consider general feedback and comments from students about administration, academic programs and services as a grievance.

The College shall maintain a student’s enrolment while his or her grievance is being investigated through both internal and external process set out below.

The College will refer all unlawful conduct to the police for investigation and appropriate action. Unlawful conduct is not considered a grievance and the complainant should refer such matters to the police for proper investigation.
Warning: making false allegations (i.e. claims or information that are known to be untrue or deliberately fabricated or intentionally altered) or supplying fabricated or forged evidence is against the law and the offenders will be expelled from the College and referred to Police and to judicial authorities for appropriate action.

All staff members, associates and consultants acting on behalf of the College are required to comply with all College regulations, policies and procedures, copies of which are available at www.apicollege.edu.au.

Reporting a grievance

A person with a grievance is required to document their concerns with due reference to the relevant clause of the General Regulations and/or with reference to specific policies or procedures posted on the College website or otherwise specify grounds for the complaint. The person needs to submit their grievance confidentially and in accordance with the process defined below. It is important to follow Steps 1 to 5 in sequence otherwise delays may be experienced in dealing with the grievance. If for example the applicant skips Step 2 and goes directly to Step 3, the Registrar will refer the matter back to the Dean so as to allow Step 2 to be completed first and if necessary it can then continue to Step 3.

Procedure to resolve a grievance

Step 1:
A person with a grievance is required to raise his or her grievance together with any evidence, or information directly and in a confidential manner with the relevant staff member who has made the decision on the College's behalf. The staff member will review the matter confidentially within a reasonable period of time not exceeding 14 calendar days and respond to the appealing person directly with the results of his/her decision and any changes as well as the reason for the same in writing or via email. If the person is satisfied that their grievance has been resolved properly they do not need to take any further action but the student must indicate in writing or through an email that the matter has been resolved.

Step 2:

Academic Grievance
Should the person with a grievance feel that their grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily in line with the General Regulations, relevant policies and procedures in Step 1, he or she may appeal the grievance to the Dean to raise their concern in writing confidentially (if the Dean is the person who has made the decision in the first instance then go to Step 3). The Dean will review the matter confidentially within a reasonable period of time not exceeding 14 calendar days and will notify the student in writing or via email of any action taken by the College and provide reasons for any decision made in relation to the grievance. If the matter is resolved satisfactorily in this Step no further action is required but the student must indicate in writing or through an email that the matter has been resolved.

Non-Academic Grievance
Should the person with a grievance feel that their grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily in line with the General Regulations, relevant policies and procedures in Step 1, he or she may appeal the grievance to the Registrar or General Manager, where relevant, to raise their concern in writing confidentially (if the Registrar or General Manager is the person who has made the decision in the first instance then go to Step 3). The Registrar or General Manager will review the matter confidentially within a reasonable period of
time not exceeding 14 calendar days and will notify the student in writing or via email of any action taken by the College and provide reasons for any decision made in relation to the grievance. If the matter is resolved satisfactorily in this Step no further action is required but the student must indicate in writing or through an email that the matter has been resolved.

Step 3:

Academic Grievance
Should the person with a grievance feel that their grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily in line with the General Regulations, relevant policies and procedures in Step 2, he or she may appeal the grievance to the President to raise their concern in writing confidentially. The President shall refer the grievance to the Chair of the Academic Board or nominee who will convene a grievance review panel comprising the Chair, Dean and an external member from another higher education provider to review the matter in confidence within a reasonable period of time not exceeding 14 calendar days and will notify the student in writing or via email of any action taken and provide reasons for any decision made by them in relation to the grievance. If the matter is resolved satisfactorily in this Step no further action is required but the student must indicate in writing or through an email that the matter has been resolved.

Non-Academic Grievance
Should the person with a grievance feel that their grievance has not been resolved satisfactorily in line with the General Regulations, relevant policies and procedures in Step 2, he or she may appeal the grievance to the President to raise their concern in writing confidentially. The President will convene a grievance review panel comprising the Registrar or General Manager and or an external member, where appropriate to review the matter in confidence within a reasonable period of time not exceeding 14 calendar days and will notify the student in writing or via email of any action taken and provide reasons for any decision made by them in relation to the grievance. If the matter is resolved satisfactorily in this Step no further action is required but the student must indicate in writing or through an email that the matter has been resolved.

Step 4:
Should Steps 1 to 3 fail to resolve a grievance, the President will inform the complainant of his or her right to external arbitration of the grievance and the necessity to request in writing to the President if he or she seeks external arbitration of the grievance. The President shall appoint an independent (external) person as the arbiter to review the matter and make a determination based on all the available information as well as the decisions made or actions taken in previous Steps. The cost for arbitration shall be borne in equal share by the College and the Complainant.

Should the internal investigation or the external determination by the appointed independent arbiter result in a decision that supports the student, the College shall implement that decision forthwith including any corrective and/or preventative action required, and shall advise the complainant of the outcome. APIC will maintain the student’s enrolment whilst the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

The right to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws: the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws.
Figure 19: The Grievance Flowchart
Associated Documents

- APIC Policy on Student Grievance
- APIC – Complaint Form
- APIC – Appeal Form