

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy and procedure outline fair, transparent, and structured processes for handling complaints, grievances, and appeals raised by any individual associated with CAIT Hi-Ed.
- 1.2 It establishes internal mechanisms to respond to concerns about academic, administrative, interpersonal, or operational issues with procedural fairness and respect.
- 1.3 The policy supports a respectful, inclusive, and equitable environment by enabling individuals to:
  - Lodge complaints (expressing dissatisfaction or requesting a fix),
  - Escalate grievances (if complaints are unresolved), and
  - Appeal decisions (if outcomes are perceived as unfair or procedurally flawed).
- 1.4 The terms complaint, grievance, and appeal are intentionally distinguished:
  - Complaint: An initial expression of dissatisfaction that may be informal or formal.
  - Grievance: A more formal or unresolved complaint requiring institutional intervention.
  - Appeal: A request for a review of a formal decision previously made.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all individuals affiliated with CAIT Hi-Ed, including current and prospective students, academic staff, professional staff, researchers, administrative personnel, and third-party representatives.
- 2.2 The policy covers complaints, grievances and appeals relating to academic and non-academic matters, including but not limited to:
  - Academic decisions or processes (e.g., assessment outcomes, curriculum delivery)
  - Conduct of staff, students, or contractors
  - Bullying, discrimination, harassment, or misconduct of any kinds which constitute offence of a personal nature.
  - Access to services, enrolment, or privacy issues
  - Organisational decisions or breaches of policy

## 3. Policy

- 3.1 CAIT Hi-Ed commits to addressing all complaints, grievances and appeals promptly, respectfully, and impartially.
- 3.2 The institution ensures fair access to internal resolution processes and affirms that no person raising a complaint or grievance will be disadvantaged for doing so.
- 3.3 All complaints, grievances and appeals are handled in accordance with applicable laws and standards, including the Higher Education Standards Framework and the ESOS National Code.

## 4. Principles

- 4.1 All students and staff must have equal and unobstructed access to the complaints, grievance, and appeals processes at CAIT Hi-Ed. The institution will provide appropriate support, such as translated documents, designated staff, and digital platforms, to facilitate participation in these processes.

- 4.2 Complaints and grievances will be assessed objectively, without preconceived notions or favouritism. Decision-makers will be impartial and not personally involved in the matter, ensuring every case is judged on its merits, facts, and evidence.
- 4.3 The identity of the complainant and the details of the complaint, grievance, or appeal will be treated as confidential throughout the process. Information will only be disclosed to individuals directly involved in resolving the matter, and only when necessary for a fair investigation and outcome.
- 4.4 All parties involved in a complaint, grievance, or appeal will be treated professionally and courteously. The process will maintain a respectful environment where no one feels degraded, marginalised, or dismissed.
- 4.5 Complaints, grievances, and appeals will be addressed within defined timeframes to avoid undue delays. CAIT Hi-Ed is committed to responding promptly, keeping all parties informed of expected timelines, and resolving matters efficiently.
- 4.6 Any individual who raises a concern, lodges a complaint or grievance, or participates in the process will be protected from victimisation, harassment, or adverse treatment. Retaliation will be treated as a serious breach of conduct and may lead to separate disciplinary action.
- 4.7 Complainants and respondents have the right to bring a support person (e.g., friend, colleague, union representative, or student advocate) to any meeting related to the complaint, grievance, or appeal. CAIT Hi-Ed will also ensure that appropriate assistance and information are available throughout the process.
- 4.8 Each complaint, grievance, or appeal presents an opportunity to improve institutional processes, culture, and policies. CAIT Hi-Ed will regularly review complaint trends and outcomes to identify underlying issues and implement changes that enhance fairness, equity, and organisational effectiveness.

## 5. Complaint and Grievance handling

Complaints and Grievances may arise in both academic and non-academic contexts and from any person involved with CAIT Hi-Ed.

All complaints will be addressed constructively and, where possible, resolved informally in the first instance. If a complaint is not resolved, or is of a more serious or formal nature, it will be escalated and managed as a formal grievance.

All complaints and grievances will be handled with fairness, confidentiality, and in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy.

### 5.1 Academic Matters

Academic complaints and grievances may include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment outcomes and grading disputes
- Academic misconduct or procedural errors
- Course delivery, learning resources, or curriculum issues
- Unfair or inconsistent academic treatment
- Delays or errors in issuing qualifications, certificates, or results
- Breaches of academic freedom or intellectual inquiry

- 5.1.1 Academic complaints should initially be raised informally with the relevant staff member (e.g. lecturer, course coordinator, or Head of School). An informal resolution will be sought where appropriate.
- 5.1.2 If the issue is not resolved informally, or is deemed significant, it should be escalated as a formal academic grievance using the designated process.

5.1.3 Formal academic grievances will be reviewed by a Grievance Handling Committee chaired by the Academic Dean or Chief Executive Officer (CEO), depending on the nature and severity of the matter.

5.1.4 Appeals relating to academic complaints or grievances (e.g. unresolved concerns or disputed decisions) will be heard by the Grievance Handling Committee in accordance with the appeals procedure.

## 5.2 Non-Academic Matters

Non-academic complaints and grievances may include, but are not limited to:

- Enrolment processes or administrative decisions
- Discrimination, bullying, harassment, or misconduct
- Fee disputes, refund matters, or financial interactions
- Data privacy and access to personal information
- Conduct of staff, students, or contractors
- Use of facilities or access to institutional services
- Workplace or supervisory grievances from staff or contractors

5.2.1 Initial non-academic complaints should be raised with the relevant operational staff member or referred to the Administration Manager. Informal resolution will be pursued where appropriate.

5.2.2 Where the complaint is unresolved, sensitive, or serious, it must be escalated and formally lodged as a grievance. A Non-Academic Grievance Committee, convened by the Administration Manager, will review the matter.

5.2.3 If the matter remains unresolved or involves systemic or serious allegations, it will be escalated to the Grievance Handling Committee, chaired by the Academic Dean or CEO, for further investigation and final resolution.

# 6. Procedure

## 6.1 Informal Complaint Resolution (Encouraged as First Step)

6.1.1 Individuals are encouraged to first raise a complaint informally, where appropriate. This may lead to early resolution and avoid the need for a formal grievance.

Informal complaints can be addressed by:

- Speaking directly to the person involved, where safe and appropriate.
- Discussing the concern with a relevant staff member such as a lecturer, supervisor, student support officer, or head of department.
- Seeking assistance from the Administration Office for guidance on resolving minor disputes.

6.1.2 Informal discussions should be respectful, solution-focused, and aim to resolve the issue promptly and amicably.

6.1.3 If informal resolution is not successful, is inappropriate due to the nature of the complaint, or the individual is dissatisfied with the response, the issue may be escalated as a formal complaint or grievance.

## 6.2 Lodging a Formal Complaint or Grievance

6.2.1 If an issue cannot be resolved informally, individuals may submit a formal complaint or grievance in writing using the Complaints, grievance and Appeals Form. The form is available on the CAIT Hi-Ed website or from the Administration Office.

6.2.2 The form must include:

- A clear and detailed description of the complaint or grievance.
- The date(s) the issue occurred.
- Names of individuals involved.
- Any actions already taken to address the issue.
- Supporting evidence or documentation (if applicable).

6.2.3 Complaints or grievances should be submitted within twenty (20) working days of the incident or decision, unless extenuating circumstances apply.

6.2.4 Forms are to be submitted to the Administration Manager, who will:

- Register the complaint or grievance in the Grievance and Appeals Register.
- Send written acknowledgement of receipt within five (5) working days.
- Notify relevant personnel (e.g, Head of School or Department Manager).

### 6.3 Complaint/Grievance Assessment and Initial Review

6.3.1 The Administration Manager and relevant Head of School or manager will:

- Determine whether the issue is best categorised as a complaint or a grievance
- Assess whether it is academic or non-academic in nature.
- Prioritise based on severity, urgency, and impact.
- Determine whether the matter can be resolved through direct resolution or requires formal investigation.

6.3.2 If the matter warrants formal review, a Grievance Handling Committee will be appointed. The committee will consist of at least three impartial members, not involved in the original incident.

### 6.4 Investigation and Decision-Making

6.4.1 The formal investigation will commence within ten (10) working days of the formal lodgement. It will involve:

- A review of submitted documentation.
- Confidential interviews with the complainant, respondent(s), and witnesses (if applicable).
- Examination of institutional policies, procedures, or records relevant to the matter.
- Consultation with legal or compliance staff where necessary.

6.4.2 The committee will make an objective decision based on all available evidence, institutional policy, and procedural fairness.

6.4.3 Possible outcomes may include:

- Dismissal of the complaint or grievance (no breach found).
- Implementation of remedial or corrective actions (e.g., policy clarification, staff training).
- Referral for disciplinary action if a breach of conduct or serious misconduct is identified.
- Referral to an independent mediator appointed by the Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria.

6.4.4 A written outcome statement will be issued within five (5) working days of a final decision, outlining:

- The findings of the investigation.
- Actions taken or recommended.
- The rationale for the decision.
- Information about appeal rights (if applicable).

## 6.5 Appeals Process

6.5.1 If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or grievance, they may submit a formal appeal in writing to the Administration Manager, who will coordinate the appeals process and refer the matter to an Appeals Panel.

6.5.2 Appeals must be lodged in writing within fifteen (15) working days of the outcome notification and include:

- The reason for the appeal (e.g., new evidence, procedural errors, unfair decision).
- Any additional documentation supporting the appeal.

6.5.3 Appeals will be reviewed by a separate Appeals Panel, consisting of senior staff not involved in the original grievance process.

6.5.4 The appeal process will begin within ten (10) working days of submission. The outcome will be communicated in writing and will represent the final internal decision.

## 6.6 External Review

6.6.1 If internal processes are exhausted and the issue remains unresolved, the complainant may refer the matter to an external body such as:

- **Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO)** – for international students

### Overseas students Ombudsman ([www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au))

Web: [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au)

Email: [overseas.students@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:overseas.students@ombudsman.gov.au)

Call 1300 362 072 (Local call charge)

Enquiries 9 am–5 pm Monday to Friday

Fax 02 6276 0123

Postal GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601

Calls from mobile phones are charged at mobile phone rates

If you want to make a grievance in your language you can.

Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

Ombudsman will pay for the interpreter.

- **Ombudsman Victoria** – for domestic individuals

### Ombudsman Victoria

Web: [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)

Email: [ombudvic@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudvic@ombudsman.gov.au)

Call: 039613 6222

Hours: 9 am–5 pm Monday to Friday  
 Fax 03 9614 0246

#### Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria

Dispute Assessment Officer  
 Web: <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>  
 Call: (03) 9603 8370  
 Address: Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000

- **TEQSA** – for unresolved higher education governance or compliance matters

#### TEQSA

Web: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/raising-complaint-or-concern>  
 Email: [enquiries@teqsa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@teqsa.gov.au)  
 Call: TEQSA info line on 1300 739 585

6.6.2 CAIT Hi-Ed will provide assistance and comply with all external investigation requirements.

6.6.3 Any recommendations from an external review will be implemented as soon as practicable.

#### 6.7 Confidentiality

All information relating to a complaint, grievance, or appeal will be handled confidentially and stored securely. Only those directly involved in managing the process will have access to the information.

#### 6.8 Anti-Retaliation

No person will be penalised or treated unfairly for submitting a complaint or grievance, or for participating in the resolution process. Retaliation is a serious breach of policy and may result in disciplinary action.

#### 6.9 Record Keeping and Reporting

- All formal complaints, grievances, and outcomes will be documented in the Grievance and Appeals Register.
- Records will be retained in line with CAIT Hi-Ed's Information Management Policy.
- Trends and outcomes will be reviewed annually to identify areas for continuous improvement.

### 7. Roles and Responsibilities

| Role   | Responsibilities  |
|--|---|
| Complainant (Individual lodging a grievance or appeal) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise concerns respectfully and truthfully</li> <li>• Provide clear details, evidence, and documentation where applicable</li> <li>• Engage in the process in good faith and comply with timelines</li> <li>• Cooperate with investigations and discussions</li> <li>• Respect confidentiality throughout the process</li> </ul> |
| Respondent (Individual or group named in a grievance)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate fully and truthfully with the investigation</li> <li>• Provide relevant information or clarification when requested</li> <li>• Treat all participants respectfully</li> <li>• Avoid retaliation, intimidation, or interference</li> </ul>  |
| Administration Manager                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive and register all formal grievances and appeals</li> <li>• Acknowledge receipt within designated timeframes</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure documentation is securely recorded and stored</li> <li>• Coordinate the formation of the relevant review or grievance committee</li> <li>• Liaise with relevant departments or staff to ensure fair resolution</li> <li>• Maintain the Grievance and Appeals Register</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Head of School / Department / Manager</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in the preliminary assessment of the grievance</li> <li>• Provide initial informal resolution support when appropriate</li> <li>• Participate in or support formal investigations and resolutions</li> <li>• Ensure matters are handled with sensitivity and compliance</li> <li>• Communicate outcomes where delegated</li> </ul>              |
| <b>Grievance Handling Committee</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct impartial and thorough investigations</li> <li>• Review evidence and interview involved parties</li> <li>• Make decisions based on facts, institutional policy, and procedural fairness</li> <li>• Recommend corrective, disciplinary, or systemic actions as required</li> <li>• Prepare written reports and outcome notifications</li> </ul> |
| <b>Appeals Panel</b>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently assess appeal submissions</li> <li>• Ensure appeal decisions are based on valid grounds (e.g., procedural error, new evidence, or unfairness)</li> <li>• Review the original process to confirm procedural integrity</li> <li>• Issue final internal decision and rationale to all relevant parties</li> </ul>                           |
| <b>Support Person (Optional for both parties)</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide emotional, procedural, or moral support to the complainant or respondent</li> <li>• Attend meetings if invited by the party they are supporting</li> <li>• May not speak or intervene unless permitted during proceedings</li> </ul>   |
| <b>CEO / Academic Dean (as Chair or Senior Oversight)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the impartial functioning of grievance processes</li> <li>• Serve as chair of the Grievance Handling Committee where required</li> <li>• Authorise final decisions where policy requires senior-level input</li> <li>• Ensure institutional compliance with legislative and policy obligations</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>All Staff and Students</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a respectful and inclusive environment that prevents grievances</li> <li>• Cooperate respectfully with investigations or conflict resolution</li> <li>• Refrain from any form of victimisation or retaliation</li> <li>• Engage in training related to grievance procedures and conduct expectations</li> </ul>                               |
| <b>External Review Body (OSO, TEQSA, Ombudsman)</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide impartial review and resolution where internal mechanisms are exhausted</li> <li>• Offer recommendations for further action or correction</li> <li>• Communicate findings to CAIT Hi-Ed and ensure implementation where necessary</li> </ul>   |

## 8. Authority and Compliance

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>File Number</b>        | HEP42             |
| <b>Status</b>             | Current           |
| <b>Approval Authority</b> | Governance Board. |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Legislative Compliance</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021;</li> <li>• National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018;</li> <li>• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act)</li> <li>• Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)</li> <li>• Australian Consumer Law (Schedule 2 of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010)</li> <li>• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</li> <li>• Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)</li> <li>• Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Supporting Documents</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Complaint, Grievance and Appeals form</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Complaint, Grievance and Appeals Register</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Acknowledgement of Receipt Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Outcome Notification Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Appeals Submission Form</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Referral to External Body Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Investigation Plan Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Confidentiality Agreement Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Annual Report Template</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Student Handbook</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Staff PD on Grievance Resolution</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Staff PD on Grievance Resolution Guide</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Staff PD on Grievance Resolution Power Point</li> </ul> |
| <b>Related Documents</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Assessment Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Student Code of Conduct</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Academic Freedom and Intellectual Inquiry Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Student Support Services Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Risk Management Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Privacy Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed Information Management Policy</li> <li>• CAIT Hi-Ed ESOS Compliance Policy</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard 2.3; ss 1 - 3</li> <li>• Standard 6.1; ss 3 - 5</li> <li>• Standard 6.2; ss 1 – 2</li> <li>• Standard 7.2; ss 2</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS Act) and</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard 6; ss 1 – 5</li> <li>• Standard 7; ss 5</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard 8; ss 1 – 7</li> <li>Standard 10; ss 4</li> </ul> |
| <b>Responsible Officer</b>   | Academic Dean.  |
| <b>Responsible Executive</b>   | CEO.  |
| <b>Enquiries Contact</b>   | Academic Dean.  |
| <b>Effective Date</b>  |   |
| <b>Expiry Date</b>   | Not applicable  |
| <b>Next Review</b>   | 3 Years from the effective date   |

## 9. Review Schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the Governance Board every three years.

| Version History |                  |               |                |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Version No      | Approved by      | Approval Date | Revision Notes |
| 1.0             | Governance Board | 9/5/2025      |                |
|                 |                  |               |                |
|                 |                  |               |                |
|                 |                  |               |                |

## 10. Appendix 1: Grievance and Appeals Procedure Flow Chart

