



Academic Grievance Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process that applies when:

- a) a Student wishes to raise an Academic Grievance at Unitec because they believe they have suffered an academic disadvantage; and
- b) Unitec is investigating and coming to a decision in relation to the subject matter of that Grievance (**Unitec's Decision**)

This procedure does not apply where the subject matter is:

- (a) an appeal against Unitec decisions
- (b) relating to Student Complaints or Student Discipline

These procedures are set out in the Student Complaints Resolution Procedure and the Student Disciplinary Statute.

2 Principles

The Academic Grievances Procedure will follow the principles of natural justice, namely:

- (a) Notice of any Grievance shall be given to the party/parties as soon as reasonably practicable (subject to consistency with any "Time Limits" indicated below)
- (b) Any persons directly adversely affected by a Grievance shall be adequately informed of the Grievance arising and be given an opportunity to respond
- (c) The process for resolving the Grievance will be conducted fairly
- (d) The avoidance of bias or conflict of interest

Parties to an Academic Grievance have the right and responsibility to:

- a) Seek support and advice
- b) Bring a support person to any meetings
- c) Be treated with courtesy and respect
- d) A fair and timely investigation
- e) Express their points of view without fear of recrimination
- f) Receive full information at all stages of the Grievance process
- g) Be advised in writing of all decisions made in relation to the Grievance subject to any Privacy Act and/or any confidentiality agreements
- h) Appeal the outcome within the scope of the Appeals Procedure
- i) Respect the points of view of others
- j) Respect the rights of all parties to the Grievance with respect to confidentiality
- k) In the case of the Student, ensure that the Grievance is made in good faith
- l) Provide full and accurate information to the person investigating the Grievance

- m) Not take any action that may prejudice the situation or be regarded as an act of recrimination against any other party.

3 Scope

This procedure applies to any student who Grievances:

1. The final grade awarded for any Course
2. The outcome of a Special Assessment Circumstance (SAC) decision
3. The award of a Qualification
4. A decision about enrolment in or admission to a Programme or Course
5. Progression in a programme
6. Exclusion from any coursework or assessment

4 Resolving a Grievance Informally

In many circumstances using informal channels may lead to an early satisfactory outcome.

4.1 Informal Process

Unitec recommend that students take the following steps to resolve academic Grievances informally before proceeding to a formal process:

- a) Speak directly to the Lecturer, Programme Leader or Head of School (HoS), as many issues can be resolved this way
- b) Speak to one or more of the Support/Advocacy options listed in section 4.2 below, to discuss options and seek advice on what to do

Any staff member with whom a concern is raised, is expected to deal with the matter in an open and professional manner and take reasonable and prompt action to resolve the concern informally. The aim should be to resolve the concern at the earliest possible stage.

4.2 Support and Advocacy available to students

- a) Student Class Representative – Email: representation@unitec.ac.nz; Building 111, Level 1, Mt Albert Campus
- b) Student Council/Te Kaunihera Akonga o Wairaka – Email: studentpresident@unitec.ac.nz; Building 111, Level 1, Mt Albert Campus
- c) Student Support Advisors - Email: studentsupport@unitec.ac.nz, Level 2, Building 180, Te Puna; 09 892 7390 or 0800 10 75 10
- d) Student Central – Building 180 (Te Puna) Mt Albert campus, Building 510 Waitakere Campus
- e) International Student Support Services - Email: internationalsupport@unitec.ac.nz, Phone No.+64 9 892 7402 Ext. No. 8856
- f) Maia Maori Centre – Building 180 (Te Puna) Mt Albert Campus
- g) Pacific Centre – Email: askpacific@unitec.ac.nz, Building 180 (Te Puna) Mt Albert Campus, Level 3 Waitakere Library Waitakere Campus
- h) Student Advocate – See <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/current-students/student-life/student-advocates> for support with the formal Grievances and Appeals process

5 Formal Grievance Procedure

Where a concern has been addressed informally and is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may wish to proceed to a formal Grievance process.

5.1 Grounds for a formal Grievance

Academic Grievances must meet one of the following grounds for a Grievance to proceed to the formal process:

- i. additional information has become available, which had not been, and could not reasonably have been, available at the time the original decision was made; or
- ii. there has been a material irregularity in the summative assessment of the Course or in the procedures adopted by the relevant Academic Authority or relevant Programme Academic Quality Committee

Note: Material irregularity is defined as is an error made by Unitec, or some other issue, with the conduct of an assessment, that has affected their result. Students must clearly explain what **material irregularity** occurred and how it affected their assessment.

5.2 How to Lodge a Notice of Grievance

A Notice of Grievance form is available from the Unitec website – Forms: <https://www.unitec.ac.nz/current-students/study-support/student-forms>

Students must:

- i. Download and complete the Notice of Grievance Form, citing the grounds for the Grievance
- ii. Email the completed form to resolutions@unitec.ac.nz
- iii. A Notice of Grievance must be received in the Resolutions inbox within 15 working days of the student being notified of the decision which is being Grievanced e.g. in the case of final grade Grievance, the Notice of Grievance must be received within 15 working days of publication of final grade

Note: in exceptional circumstances Unitec may extend the time frame for notification of a Grievance. Students must contact Student Support/Student Advocate for advice if they have experienced a time delay beyond the 15 working day period.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Severe Illness that incapacitates the student for a period of more than 7 days
- Severe injury requiring hospitalisation for more than 7 days
- Bereavement of an immediate family member
- Severe anxiety or other mental health issue
- The birth of a child during the 15 working day period

5.2 Receiving Notice of a Formal Academic Grievance

The Resolutions email inbox is managed by Te Korowai Kahurangi.

- a) Acknowledgement of receipt of the Grievance will be received by the Appeals Administrator within Te Korowai Kahurangi and sent from the Resolutions inbox to the person lodging the Grievance, and any support person(s), within 1 working days of receipt
- b) An Investigator, who is a Senior Academic or Executive Member from outside of the school the student is enrolled in, will be sought to investigate the issue, and the Notice of Grievance, along with any other documents submitted by the student, will be forwarded within 2 working days of receipt

- d) The Investigator receiving the Grievance must consider if they are sufficiently independent and without bias to investigate it. If they are not, they must delegate the responsibility to another suitable person. They may also choose to delegate the responsibility for other reasons.
- e) Delegation must be decided within 3 working days of receipt and notice of delegation must be emailed to resolutions@unitec.ac.nz. The Unitec Summer shutdown between X and X
- c) The Grievance will be registered on the central Student Academic Grievances Register by the Appeals Administrator within TKK

5.3 Investigating an Academic Grievance

The Investigator must within 2 working days of receiving the Notice of Grievance, introduce themselves via email, to all parties as the investigator for the Grievance, and begin the investigation. From then on, they will provide weekly email updates to all parties.

5.3.1 Investigation process

- a) At the time of introduction, the Investigator must provide a copy of the Notice of Grievance to any other staff member or Student named in the Notice of Grievance
- b) The Investigator must act in accordance with other relevant policies and liaise with the appropriate people as required
- c) The Investigator should separately interview all parties involved, advising them that they may bring a support person with them to any meetings, and review any relevant documentation. Any person making a statement needs to verify the accuracy of their statement. This may be done by signing and dating the statement in front of a witness
- d) In reaching a decision the investigator will refer to Academic Grievance Resolution - Decision Tree document
- e) The investigator will document each step of their investigation, including dates, who was present, what was discussed and what resolution, if any, was reached. They will provide a written report to all parties, including a copy to resolutions@unitec.ac.nz
- f) The investigator will endeavor to resolve Grievances within 10 working days of receipt of the Notice of Grievance, and will notify all parties if a longer timeframe is required
- g) Where no response is received from a student lodging a Grievance within 30 calendar days of Unitec sending them any correspondence requiring a response, the Investigator may decide not to proceed with the Grievance process

5.4 Resolving an Academic Grievance

The Investigator must make a decision to uphold or deny the Grievance and notify that decision to all the parties, in writing (via email or letter), outlining the reasons for the decision, upon completion of the investigation.

If the Grievance is upheld, then the Investigator will notify all parties as above and escalate to reolutions@unitec.ac.nz so that the matter can formally proceed to a hearing conducted by the Appeals Resolution Committee.

If denied, the student may appeal the investigator's decision. This process is outlined in [Unitec's Appeal Procedure](#).

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek informal resolution of their Grievance in the first instance To seek independent advice from Unitec Support/Advocacy to ensure their Grievance meets the ground for an Academic Grievance before escalating to the formal process
TKK Resolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge receipt of Notice of Grievance Facilitate the allocation of an Investigator Update Grievances Register Maintain records
Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge receipt of the Grievance Investigate the matter fully by interviewing all parties Keep all parties informed of progress Reach a decision and notify all parties of the outcome
Academic Staff/ APM/ Head of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with student and investigator to resolve the Grievance Provide copies of any documents or evidence requested by the investigator
Student Support/Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to the student Provide accurate advice based on Unitec policy and procedure Upon request by the student, act as liaison between the student and the academic staff or other staff members involved in the process

Definitions

Term	Means
Appeal Hearing	A formal meeting with the student, lecturer(s), student advocate, support persons and the Academic Resolutions Committee, where evidence is presented in relation to a formal appeal.
Appeal Investigator	A senior academic who conducts an investigation, and presents an opinion on whether the Appeal should proceed to a formal Appeal Hearing. The investigator should be independent of the school for which the Appeal is made.
Academic Resolution Committee	The Committee who considers evidence presented for the purpose of determining whether an Appeal has been sustained and, if so, what remedies and/or actions are to be taken.
APM	Unitec Academic Programme Manager.
Informal Process	The process whereby a student attempts to resolve an academic concern directly with staff within the School.
Formal Process	The process by which a Notice of Grievance is investigated and a decision is made about the concern raised and any subsequent actions needed.
Material Irregularity	

Term	Means
Working days	<p>For the purposes of this Procedure working days will mean:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday to Friday (unless one of these days is a public holiday) The exclusion of the days that fall between 25 December and the first Friday in January in the following year, being the summer break/closedown period for Unitec

Reference Documents

- Academic Grievance Resolution - Decision Tree
- Notice of Grievance Form
- Appeal Procedure

Approval Details

Version number	1	Issue Date	July 2019
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Approval authority:	Academic Board	Date of Approval	
Procedure Sponsor (Has authority to approve minor amendments)	Academic Board	Procedure Owner:	Te Korowai Kahurangi
Contact Person	Manager TTK	Date of Next Review	July 2020

Appendix A: Academic Grievances Process Flowchart