

Student Ombudsman - Operational Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy provides guidance on the role of the Student Ombudsman at the University.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 The policy applies to all students and staff of the University particularly in relation to administrative actions and/or decisions as they affect students.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

4. Policy statement

4.1 The Student Ombudsman strengthens accountability within the University and contributes to a consistent and transparent approach, ensuring students receive fair and equitable treatment across all aspects of the student experience, particularly with regard to the resolution of grievances and complaints.

4.2 The Student Ombudsman may be appointed to investigate a student grievance, or to provide oversight of investigations by academic or administrative staff. The Student Ombudsman also receives and responds to student matters raised by the Queensland Ombudsman.

5. Principles

5.1 The Student Ombudsman provides an independent and balanced view of matters to students and staff and must maintain neutrality, impartiality and confidentiality.

5.2 The Student Ombudsman is not an advocate for any individual nor for the University, but rather, an advocate for fairness.

5.3 The principles of procedural fairness will be followed in any matter considered by the Student Ombudsman.

5.4 The Student Ombudsman has direct access to all levels of the University, including Executive, Senior Staff, academic and administrative staff as, and when, required for the fulfilment of the performance of their duties.

5.5 The Student Ombudsman will be given access to all University records and documents relating to their consideration of any matter within the scope of the policy.

5.6 Role of the Student Ombudsman

5.6.1 The Student Ombudsman can:

(b) refer students to additional support services such as counselling, academic skills development or advocacy services; and

(c) provide procedural advice to staff members involved in handling grievances and complaints, ensuring compliance with policies and procedures.

5.6.2 The Student Ombudsman cannot:

(a) provide advice to students as to the merits of their case;

(b) advocate on behalf of students to decision makers;

(c) investigate matters in which the complainant is not a student or a former student of the University;

(d) investigate any matter where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest (an Assistant Student Ombudsman may be appointed to investigate the matter); and

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice-Chancellor and President

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Student Ombudsman

FIRST APPROVED

30 June 2011

LAST AMENDED

4 July 2024

REVIEW DATE

15 February 2027

STATUS

Active

(e) review any decision of the Student Academic Appeals Committee or Student General Misconduct Appeals Committee.

5.6.3 The Student Ombudsman also provides advice to the Academic Registrar and Director, Student Services on the development of good practice in student grievance resolution and has an educative role to ensure complaint-handling by staff is undertaken to the highest standard.

5.7 Investigations

5.7.1 The Vice-Chancellor and President, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Academic Registrar and Director, Student Services may appoint the Student Ombudsman to investigate a student grievance, or to provide oversight of investigations by academic or administrative staff.

5.7.2 The report of an investigation would usually include recommendation/s on any measures to be taken to resolve the matter and any other findings or recommendations required by any University policy or procedure or that the Student Ombudsman considers appropriate.

5.8 Annual Report

5.8.1 The Student Ombudsman will collect data on all matters of enquiry received and each year submit by 31 March a detailed report with comments/recommendations about the previous year's activity to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The report will then be shared with Academic Board.

6. Authorities/Responsibilities

6.1 The following authorities/responsibilities are delegated under this policy:

| ACTIVITY | UNIVERSITY OFFICER/COMMITTEE |
|--|---|
| Appoint the Student Ombudsman to investigate a student grievance, or to provide oversight of investigations by academic or administrative staff. | Vice-Chancellor and President, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Academic Registrar and Director, Student Services |
| Receives and responds to student matters raised by the Queensland Ombudsman. | Student Ombudsman |
| Each year submit by 31 March a detailed report with comments/recommendations about the previous years activity to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). | Student Ombudsman |

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Student Complaints Resolution - Academic Policy
- Student Complaints Resolution - Procedures