

MASTERSTART INSTITUTE (PTY) LTD

Private Higher Education Institution

COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

MSI Institution (Pty) Ltd. (hereafter referred to as MSI) is dedicated to offering a top-tier supportive teaching and learning environment, ensuring that students enjoy a rich and personalised educational experience. MSI places human connection at the heart of our flexible, online-supported, distance-accredited learning programmes. Our programmes are built around unlocking the potential of people as we empower students to grow, adapt and develop their careers in a fast-changing world.

At MSI, we are passionate about what we do. The institution operates a flexible approach, and we are genuine in our actions. We believe that education is the key to unlocking individuals' potential to not only survive but thrive.

The policy on handling students' complaints forms part of MSI's policies and practices and is a key element in maintaining mutual and healthy relationships among students, the institution, its stakeholders, partners, and clients. The policy ensures students' right to submit a complaint pertaining to any aspect of their learning journey at MSI.

2. Purpose

The Complaints and Grievance Policy aims to provide a fair, transparent, and accessible process for students and staff to raise concerns related to violations of any policies or any issues arising within the institution. This policy ensures that complaints are handled promptly, respectfully, and equitably, fostering a positive environment of trust and accountability.

3. Organisational Scope

This policy outlines the expectations, responsibilities and processes regarding complaints and grievances and applies to all students, academics, professional partners, and staff contracted to provide, promote and maintain the high standards of teaching, learning, and administration at MSI.

4. Policy Statement and Application

By providing clear procedures for addressing grievances, this policy ensures that all members of the institution and learning community can express their concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

The institution is committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and fair environment for all students and staff. This Grievance Policy provides a structured process for addressing complaints or concerns related to the conduct, policies, or actions that affect individuals' rights and well-being. The policy ensures that grievances are handled impartially, confidentially, and promptly in a manner that respects the dignity of all parties involved. Individuals are encouraged to raise issues without fear of retaliation, with the assurance that all complaints will be taken seriously and resolved through a transparent and equitable process.

5. Glossary

- 5.1 **Complaint:** An action or a statement that expresses dissatisfaction about any behaviour that someone perceives to be unfair, discriminatory, provocative, unwelcome, prejudicial, or unjustified and which requires prompt action or response.
- 5.2 **Grievance:** An official statement of a complaint over something believed to be wrong or unfair. An acknowledged disagreement expressed by the student or any staff within the institution over an alleged deficiency in conduct, provision or process. Grievances should only arise once all avenues for resolving complaints have been exhausted.

6. Policy Principles

The following principles form the foundation of the complaints and grievance Policy:

- **Confidentiality:** All complaints will be handled confidentially, and personal information will be protected throughout the process.
- **Fairness and Impartiality:** Every complaint will be treated with respect and fairness, ensuring no bias in the process.
- **Timeliness:** The institution is committed to resolving complaints in a timely manner to prevent escalation and ensure a smooth resolution.
- **Non-Retaliation:** Individuals who raise complaints in good faith will be protected from retaliation or negative consequences.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies and must always be considered as guiding principles to enhance the entire student learning experience:

- Student Support Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Student Manual
- Language Policy
- Admission Policy
- Academic Regulations/ Code of Conduct
- Assessment Policy
- Student Registration Contract
- Terms and Conditions

7. Types of Student Complaints and Associated Departments

7.1 Administrative Complaints

Any complaints relating to the following:

- Enquiries about the institution and programmes
- Admission
- Registration
- Finances and fees
- Administrative, sales and registration staff

Students are encouraged to contact the salesperson, admissions officer or financial department.

7.2 Academic Complaints

Any complaints relating to the following:

- Onboarding and orientation
- Online campus
- Student support
- Academic programmes, content and learning materials
- Assessments
- Results
- Faculty and academic staff
- Certification and graduation
- Alumni matters

Students are encouraged to make contact with the student success coordinators, coaches, lecturers, programme coordinator or Academic manager.

8. Contact Details

Department	Email address:	Contact number
General Enquiries	*information to be added once institution opens	
Sales		
Admissions Office		
Finance		
Student Success Coordinator		
Student Success Coach		
Academic Manager		

9. Complaints and Grievance Processes

Below is a general outline of the complaints and grievance processes to be followed:

1. Informal Resolution:

- Before filing a formal complaint, individuals are encouraged to seek an informal resolution by addressing the issue directly with the person or department involved, if possible.
- If the matter remains unresolved, they may proceed with a formal complaint.

2. Formal Complaint Submission:

- Complaints should be submitted in writing using a formal complaint form available online or through the administrative office.
- The complainant must include a clear description of the issue, relevant facts, any attempts at informal resolution, and the desired outcome.

3. Acknowledgement of Complaint:

- The institution will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five business days and outline the next steps in the investigation process.

4. Investigation Procedure

- An impartial person will be assigned to review the complaint.
- Data will be gathered to retrieve relevant information, including interviews with the complainant, respondent, and witnesses.
- The investigation process will typically be completed within five business days, though complex cases may require more time.

5. Resolution and Outcome

- The outcome — including any actions to be taken — will be communicated in writing to the complainant and respondent.

6. Appeal Process

- If the complainant or respondent is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision within two days of receiving the resolution.
- An appeals committee, independent of the original investigation, will review the case and provide a final decision within five business days.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

- A record of all complaints and resolutions will be maintained for monitoring purposes.

8. Support and Resources

- The institution will provide access to support services, such as counselling or mediation, for individuals involved in the grievance process.
- Information about the policy and how to file complaints will be made available to all students and members of the institution.

10. Policy Life Cycle

This policy should be reviewed by the Academic Board every two years.