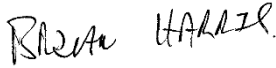
	Title: <h1>Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students</h1>	
	Version: V2.00	Date: 17/4/2014
	Policy Area: Student	Next Review: 17/4/2015
	Approval: Academic Board	Signature: 

Vose Seminary has adopted this policy in compliance with ACT's [Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students](#).

Responsibility and Authority

The Principal of Vose Seminary shall define the Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students. The Principal shall ensure the policy is developed, distributed, reviewed, maintained, understood, and implemented in Vose Seminary.

Publication

This Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students will be made available to students and potential students through publication on our website www.vose.edu.au, in hardcopy by request, as well as in the International Student Handbook.

Information contained in this policy statement must be given to students before an agreement is entered into or before any fees are paid, whichever occurs first.

Policy Statement

The Seminary provides processes for handling grievances brought by enrolled International Students regarding academic and non-academic matters.

General feedback and comment from students about administration, academic programs and services will not be treated by Vose Seminary as a grievance unless action or a response is required under the policies or regulations of Vose Seminary.

Whenever possible, grievances will be handled within the Seminary. However, should these internal processes not resolve the matter, provision is made for external independent grievance handling/dispute resolution.

International Students lodging formal grievances, whether against Academic or non-Academic decisions, will have the grievance heard according to the following general principles:

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- 1) Actions within the process will be undertaken in a timely manner and timelines for responses will be specified at each stage of the process;
- 2) The process will be as simple as possible and easily accessible to students;
- 3) The process will not victimise or discriminate against any student or respondent;
- 4) As part of the process, reasons and full explanations will be given for decisions and actions taken;
- 5) Appropriate records of the handling of a grievance/complaint will be kept for a minimum of five (5) years and for the length of the enrolment. All records will be treated as confidential, with appropriate access available to involved parties;
- 6) Components of the process within Vose Seminary shall be at no cost to the student, apart from travelling expenses. Any costs associated with external independent grievance handling/dispute resolution will be negotiated between the student and the Seminary.
- 7) All staff involved in a complaint or appeal have a duty to observe the principles of procedural fairness (natural justice);
- 8) Students accessing the appeal process will have their enrolment maintained while the process is ongoing;
- 9) Students may use the procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which the student studies;
- 10) The complainant may withdraw a grievance at any stage in the process. If the grievance is withdrawn, the matter will be deemed to be closed;
- 11) If the appeal results in a decision that supports the student, Vose Seminary will immediately implement that decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and will advise the student of the outcome.
- 12) If the appeal results in a decision that does not support the student, the original decision made by Vose Seminary will apply.

In addition to these conditions, International Students lodging formal grievances have the right:

- 1) For the grievance process to commence within five (5) working days of lodgement of the documents and to have it concluded as soon as practicable;
- 2) To present their case at minimal or no cost.
- 3) To be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
- 4) To receive a written statement of the outcome of the grievance process, including the detail of the reasons for the outcome.

Furthermore, nothing in the Seminary's policies and procedures negates the right of any student (Australian or overseas resident) to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws. This Dispute Resolution Policy does not circumscribe the student's right to pursue other legal remedies.

Principles of Natural Justice (Procedural Fairness)

All staff involved in resolving a complaint have a duty to observe the principles of natural justice, which include the following elements:

- 1) The right of the student (complainant) to a fair hearing;
- 2) The right of the student (complainant) or any respondent to attend hearings with a friend or support person, if desired, provided the person is not a practicing solicitor or barrister;
- 3) The opportunity for all parties involved to be heard, including any person having full knowledge of the nature and substance of the grievance.
- 4) The right to an independent, unbiased decision-maker;
- 5) A final decision that is based solely on the relevant evidence with all submissions considered.

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Appeals against Academic Decisions

Students concerned about an academic decision related to curriculum and/or assessment in a unit of study or the final grade awarded in a unit of study should initially discuss the issue informally with the lecturer concerned. This should be done within twenty five (25) working days of the release of results by Vose Seminary. The lecturer concerned should deal with the issue promptly, giving a full explanation to the student of the reasons for the grade awarded.

If the student's concerns were not resolved to the student's satisfaction, or if the student alleges failure to follow procedure, the student may approach the Academic Dean on an informal basis within fifteen (15) working days of the outcome of discussions with the lecturer concerned. The Academic Dean shall respond to informal complaints about the final grade for a unit promptly, giving a full explanation to the student of the reasons for the academic decision. If the student chooses to approach the Academic Dean informally, this does not preclude later lodgement of a formal appeal in writing to the Academic Dean or to the Principal.

Students have the right to lodge a formal appeal and, while not limited to the following, a student may normally appeal formally against the award of a grade only where:

- 1) The lecturer did not provide a unit outline as required; or
- 2) The assessment requirements as specified in the unit outline were varied in an unreasonable way; or
- 3) The examiner's judgment was not objectively applied because of prejudice against the individual candidate; or
- 4) A student is of the view that a clerical error has occurred in the computation of the grade; or
- 5) Due regard has not been paid to the evidence of illness or misadventure if submitted by the specified date; or
- 6) A student is of the view that they have been disadvantaged in some way due to the conduct of their final examination.

The Academic Dean must acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt and ensure that all documentation relevant to the complaint is maintained within the student's file.

The Academic Dean must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint. The Academic Dean may discuss the matter with both the student and the relevant lecturer in attendance. The Academic Dean may arrange for the assessment script(s) completed in the unit to be marked by another lecturer in the student's Seminary of enrolment.

If the student's concerns cannot be resolved by the Academic Dean, or because of failure to follow procedures, the student may lodge a formal grievance with the Principal of Vose Seminary within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the written response by the Academic Dean. Again the nature of the complaint and the grounds for appeal should be detailed.

The Principal must acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt. The Principal must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint and ensure that all documentation relevant to the complaint is maintained within the student's file.

Following investigation of the matter, the Principal will advise the student in writing of his or her decision:

- 1) Setting out the reasons;
- 2) If the complaint relates to the mark on an intra-semester assessment, advising that his/her decision is final; on other academic matters, advising that if the student does not agree with the

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- decision, then the student has the right of formal appeal to an independent external agency;
and
- 3) Giving the student a copy of this policy, if the student does not already have a copy.

Appeals Regarding non-Academic/Administrative and Other Issues

Non-academic/administrative decisions include, but are not limited to, matters related to fees, withdrawals, cancelling a student's enrolment status and other decisions that students may consider are interfering with the progress of their studies or with issuing of an award of the Seminary. Such appeals may also include complaints made against Seminary staff or about Seminary services.

In the first instance, a student who is concerned about a non-academic decision made or action taken by the Seminary should discuss their grievance with the International Liaison Officer/Academic Dean at the Seminary. The International Liaison Officer/Academic Dean will provide the student with a copy of this policy and will promptly notify the student of any action taken or any decision made by them in relation to the grievance.

If the student's concerns relate to Vose Seminary policy or regulations and have not been resolved by the International Liaison Officer/Academic Dean, or if the student alleges failure to follow procedures, the student may choose to submit a formal appeal to the Principal of Vose Seminary. The student should put the complaint in writing to the Principal within twenty (20) working days of the outcome of discussions with the International Liaison Officer/Academic Dean, specifying the nature of the complaint and the grounds for their appeal.

The Principal must acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt and ensure that all documentation relevant to the complaint is maintained within the student's file. The Principal must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint.

Following investigation of the matter, the Principal will advise the student in writing of his or her decision:

- 1) Setting out the reasons;
- 2) Advising that if the student does not agree with the decision, then the student has the right of formal appeal to the Chair of Vose Seminary; and
- 3) Giving the student a copy of this policy, if the student does not already have a copy.

Where the Principal is absent or unavailable during the time of the lodgement, his nominated representative will conduct proceedings.

If the student's concerns cannot be resolved by the Principal or his nominated representative, or if the student alleges failure to follow procedures, the student may formally approach the Chair of Vose Seminary by putting the complaint in writing and lodging it within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the written response by the Vose Seminary Principal. Again the nature of the complaint and the grounds for appeal should be detailed.

The Chair must acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within five (5) working days of receipt and ensure that all documentation relevant to the complaint is maintained within the student's file. The Chair must try to resolve the complaint within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the complaint. Following investigation of the matter, the Chair will advise the student in writing of his or her decision:

- 1) Setting out the reasons;
- 2) Advising that if the student does not agree with the decision, then the student has the right of formal appeal to an independent external agency; and
- 3) Giving the student a copy of this policy, if the student does not already have a copy.

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External Dispute Resolution

International students have the right to address any complaints, appeals, or grievances to the Overseas Students Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's services are free, independent and impartial. More information about the services provided by the Ombudsman is available on the internet at www.oso.gov.au or by telephone on 1300 362 072.

In matters of dispute resolution International Students may exercise their rights to other legal remedies and may contact the International Education Conciliation Service for Western Australia. The International Student Conciliation Service is a free and independent service for international students.

Please refer to the link below:

<http://studywest.des.wa.gov.au/studyinwa/Helpsolveproblems/Pages/default.aspx>

Students can include a nominee to represent them in this process if they so choose. Legal Services

The Western Australian Government and Vose Seminary are committed to providing the necessary legal support to international students facing legal issues. Where required, Vose Seminary will endeavour to assist students source appropriate and affordable legal representation whilst they are studying in Australia.

International Student Liaison Officer

Vose Seminary provides a range of support services to international students and has a formal dispute resolution policy for international students. Students are encouraged to contact the International Student Liaison Officer or the Academic Dean when such an occurrence arises. Whenever possible, grievances will be handled within the Seminary. However, should these internal processes not resolve the matter, provision is made for external independent grievance handling/dispute resolution.

Australian College of Theology policy on Dispute Resolution

Students enrolled in our Higher Education courses are encouraged to read the Australian College of Theology policy on Dispute Resolution found on their website:

www.actheology.edu.au/policies

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Appendix: Document History and Version Control Record

Document Title: Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students
Source Documents: ACT Dispute Resolution for International Students
Associated Internal Documents:
Associated External Documents: ACT Dispute Resolution for International Students
Authorised Officer: Compliance Officer
Approved by: Academic Board
Date of Approval: 17/4/2014
Assigned Review Period: 2 years
Date of Next Review: 17/4/2016

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details
1.00			Document included in the General Policy Handbook
D1.01	05/12/2012	KS	"Principles of Natural Justice (Procedural Fairness)" included
D1.02	1/7/2013	JV	Policy separated from the General Policy Handbook Policy draft adjusted to merge duplicated policy Document modified to include current history and version controls
V 2.00	17/4/2014	Academic Board	Outdated information pertaining to External Dispute Resolution removed.