



# Sydney College of Divinity

A federation of leaders in theological education

## STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Purpose and Scope

The Sydney College of Divinity is committed to living out its vision and values in establishing and maintaining a harmonious and supportive environment conducive to study and personal development. The Sydney College of Divinity has a responsibility under legislation to ensure students are not subjected to discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. We recognise that students may sometimes feel they have experienced disadvantage or distress, and will ensure that grievances are responded to promptly, with minimum stress and maximum protection for all concerned.

This grievance policy and set of procedures apply to all currently enrolled students or persons seeking to enrol in Sydney College of Divinity approved courses of study at Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. It provides a mechanism for addressing grievances arising out of any kind of situation or process affecting the student, both academic and non-academic. Fairness demands that these and other concerns be responded to promptly and handled in a consistent and transparent manner. Note that some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

The modifications to the general process are set out below.

This policy details the way in which student grievances, academic and non-academic, are processed. The *Guidelines for Students Raising a Grievance* is a shorter text aimed at giving students an overview of the information needed to lodge a grievance. The 'Student Grievance Policy and Procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity' document is communicated to all students, and to both academic and support staff. Besides this *Handbook*, it is also to be found

- on the Sydney College of Divinity website [www.scd.edu.au](http://www.scd.edu.au);

- on each Member Institution website;
- in each Member Institution *Handbook*.

Staff training in the procedures takes place in the Member Institutions at the induction of new staff, while there is an annual review of procedures at a staff meeting. This training is overseen by the Principal of the Member Institution.

These procedures do not replace any other responsibilities which may arise under other Higher Education Provider Policies or under statute law.

## **2 Responsibilities**

The Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

Staff at the level of Director and above of the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

The External Grievance Officer

Staff of the Member Institutions of Sydney College of Divinity's Member Institutions including:

- The Principal
- Senior Staff
- Department Heads
- Registrar
- Dean of Students
- Academic Dean
- Students

## **3 Grievance Procedure**

### **3.1 Before an Issue Becomes a Formal Grievance**

We encourage students, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. Within each Member Institution the Dean of Students and the Student Counsellors are available to assist students at this level.

### **3.2 What is a Grievance?**

A grievance is a statement of concern reported to a person in authority at Sydney College of Divinity that requires action or response from the Sydney College of Divinity. A grievance can be about any kind of situation or process affecting the student, academic and non-academic, and can be against a person or people at the SCD and its Member Institutions.

A grievance is not part of the regular student feedback the Sydney College of Divinity encourages in its continuing commitment to quality improvement, but rather a formal complaint requesting action or response. Generally the Sydney College of Divinity will not act on anonymous complaints. However, staff must refer all complaints, anonymous or otherwise, about abuse of children or young people to the Dean.

### 3.3 Principles in Grievance Handling

- a) Staff handling grievances should do everything in their power to ensure the following principles are upheld:
- b) **Confidentiality** – All parties have an obligation to maintain confidentiality of both process and records. Generally fairness requires that the respondent knows who has lodged the grievance.

**Impartiality/Procedural Fairness** – Grievance handlers must implement the policies and procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity, and employ principles of openness, honesty and fair dealing throughout their communications, investigations, reporting and record keeping. Both the student complainant and the respondent (person against whom the grievance is made) must receive appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance.

**Freedom from Unfair Repercussions or Victimisation** – Fear of victimisation prevents many students from lodging a grievance. The Sydney College of Divinity will take all necessary steps to ensure that victimisation does not occur. Any staff member who victimises a student may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Sensitivity** – All grievances must be dealt sensitively, and with care for all involved.

- c) **Timeliness** – Grievances must be dealt with quickly, since undue delay in responding to a grievance may provide ground for further complaint. The aim must be to achieve resolution of a complaint within four weeks of the complaint being lodged. It is important that the complainant and the respondent are kept informed about the progress of the complaint at regular intervals, and advised if resolution of the matter is likely to extend beyond four weeks.

### 3.4 The Process

Under normal circumstances, it would be expected that a student or person enrolling at a particular Member Institution would lodge their grievance within that Member Institution. For reasons of perceived victimisation or otherwise within that Member Institution, the student may choose to lodge the grievance direct with the Sydney College of Divinity. Accordingly, there are two processes specified in this Policy. The place of lodgement of the grievance will determine which of the two processes will be followed. In either process, the complainant or respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any of the three stages of the procedure.

The student remains enrolled in her or his program whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

#### 3.4.1 Lodgement of Grievance at the Member Institution

Students or people seeking to enrol in any accredited course of Sydney College of Divinity have three stages at which a complaint may be addressed. Each stage is free of charge to the complainant..

- Stage 1            Students may approach any member of staff of their Member Institution with a grievance. The staff member approached advises the student regarding:

- the grievance procedure, referring them to the *Guidelines For Students Raising a Grievance*;
- the person with whom the grievance should be raised;
- the student's right to be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the process;
- the expected time frame for resolution, normally no more than four weeks.

Unless the staff member and the student agree that the grievance should be handled by another person, the staff member approached becomes the grievance handler.

On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler shall:

- advise any respondent(s) of their right to be accompanied and assisted by a third party, if so desired.
- acknowledge its receipt within seven days;
- facilitate resolution in a timely manner, which would normally be no more than four weeks;
- where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;
- give the student comprehensive written advice about the outcome;
- complete the *Grievance Response Form* with the student;
- forward records to the Registrar's Office for confidential storage for at least five years: parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.

Stage 2 If a grievance remains unresolved by the process outlined above, the grievance handler should refer it to the Principal for investigation. The Principal may appoint a Grievance Committee of three members of senior staff of the Member Institution, none of whom has been involved in the handling of the grievance. The Grievance Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within four weeks of receiving the complaint from the Principal.

Stage 3 If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred to the Sydney College of Divinity for external resolution. The Dean of Sydney College of Divinity may appoint a Grievance Committee of three members, none of whom will be from the Member Institution involved and at least one of whom will be external to the Sydney College of Divinity. The complaint will be addressed within four weeks. If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance.. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

### 3.4.2 Lodgement of Grievance at Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

- Stage 1 Students may approach staff at the level of Director or above in the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity with a grievance. That staff member becomes the grievance handler, and advises the student regarding:
- the grievance procedure, referring them to the *Guidelines For Students Raising a Grievance*;
  - the person with whom the grievance should be raised;
  - the student's and respondent's right to each be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the process if desired;
  - the expected time frame for resolution, normally no more than four weeks.
- On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler shall:
- acknowledge its receipt within seven days;
  - facilitate resolution in a timely manner, which would normally be no more than four weeks;
  - where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;
  - give the student comprehensive written advice about the outcome;
  - complete the *Grievance Response Form* with the student;
  - forward records to the Registrar's Office for confidential storage for at least five years. Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.

- Stage 2 If the grievance remains unresolved by the process outlined above, the grievance handler should refer it to the Dean of Sydney College of Divinity for investigation. The Dean may appoint a Grievance Committee of three senior persons drawn from throughout the Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, none of whom will come from the Member Institution involved. The Grievance Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within four weeks.

Stage 3 If not satisfied with the decision of the Grievance Committee or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance.. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures must be given if so requested by the complainant and/or respondent.

### 3.5 Guidelines for Handling a Grievance

If staff members are consulted by a student with a grievance they should:

- Ensure that there is a quiet place to meet and have enough time to listen sensitively. They should try to let the student present issues without prejudging or commenting. If the student is distressed, referral to a relevant person such as the Dean of Students or a Student Counsellor may be appropriate.
- Advise the student that he/she may be accompanied and assisted by a friend throughout the grievance process.
- If the grievance does not relate to the grievance handler's area of responsibility, advise the student where the grievance might preferably be directed. If the grievance is lodged at an appropriate level of authority, refer the student to the right person. For example, within the Member Institution, a Dean may refer a grievance in the first instance to the student's Head of Department.
- Ask the student what avenues he/she has already explored towards resolution. Clarify whether the student is requesting any action, and what that action might be. If appropriate, encourage the student to raise the matter directly with the person or persons concerned, providing support and assistance if necessary.
- If resolution cannot be achieved at this level ask the student to submit the grievance in writing, using the *Student Grievance Notification Form* in the *Guidelines for Students Raising a Grievance*.
- If the grievance relates to alleged unlawful behaviour, refer it to the Principal if the grievance has been lodged within the Member Institution, or to the Dean of Sydney College of Divinity if the grievance has been lodged within the Sydney College of Divinity.
- If the grievance handler can facilitate a resolution of the grievance without investigation, undertake the appropriate resolution process. The grievance handler and the student should complete the *Grievance Response Form*. The grievance handler will then forward a record of the proceedings to the Registrar for confidential storage.
- If the student wishes to seek further resolution, the grievance handler should try to facilitate effective communication between all parties involved while undertaking investigation of the allegations.
- If the grievance remains unresolved in a timely manner within a Member Institution, the grievance handler should refer it to the Principal for investigation. The Principal may appoint a Grievance Committee of three senior members of staff of that Member Institution, none of whom have been involved in the handling of the grievance. Tell the student what you are doing and how long you expect a resolution to take.

On the other hand, if the original grievance had been lodged with the Sydney College of Divinity, and it remains unresolved in a timely manner, the grievance handler should refer it to the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity. The Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity may appoint a Grievance Committee consisting of three senior members drawn from throughout the Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, none of whom will come from the Member Institution involved.

- Take all possible steps to ensure that no victimisation occurs as a result of the grievance being raised.
- Steps in the investigation process should include:
  - clarifying and documenting details of the complaint;
  - interviewing witnesses and asking for an account of incidents where appropriate;
  - interviewing the respondent, outlining specific allegations made, and giving them the opportunity to make a full response;
  - considering the relevant evidence;
  - making judgments on such issues as probability, reasonableness, appropriateness;
  - making referrals as appropriate;
  - carefully documenting the process and all decisions made or actions taken.
- Possible outcomes might be:
  - the student, having received advice and support, addresses the matter directly with the respondent;
  - the student receives an apology, or the issue that was the basis of the complaint is modified;
  - a mutually acceptable resolution is reached through mediation, whether internally within the Member Institution or within Sydney College of Divinity.
- Be sure to monitor the outcome and give the student comprehensive written advice. It is not always possible to achieve a satisfactory outcome from the student's perspective, but the response should make it clear that all aspects of the complaint have been investigated and responded to.
- Inform the student of avenues of appeal available to review the grievance handling. This will depend upon where the initial grievance was lodged.

***If the initial grievance was lodged with the Member Institution, advise the student as follows:***

1. For general grievances relating to the Member Institution's practices:

INTERNAL

- Grievance Committee appointed by Principal

EXTERNAL

- Grievance Committee appointed by the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity
- The External Grievance Officer, external to the SCD and Member Institutions, appointed by the Dean

2. For grievances related to unlawful behaviour:

EXTERNAL

- Principal to refer to appropriate organisation for advice and action

3. For grievances related to the abuse of children or young people:

**EXTERNAL**

- Principal to refer to appropriate organisation for advice and action.

Forward full documentation to the Registrar for confidential storage for a minimum of five years, during which time parties to the complaint have appropriate access to these records.

***If the initial grievance was lodged with the Sydney College of Divinity, advise the student as follows:***

1. For general grievances relating to the a Member Institution's or Sydney College of Divinity's practices;

**INTERNAL**

Grievance Committee appointed by the Dean

**EXTERNAL**

The External Grievance Officer, external to SCD and Member Institutions, appointed by the Dean

2. For grievances related to unlawful behaviour

**EXTERNAL**

Dean to refer to Principal of Member Institution involved

3. For grievances related to the abuse of children or young people

**EXTERNAL**

Dean to refer to Principal of Member Institution involved

Forward full documentation to the Registrar for confidential storage for a minimum of five years, during which time parties to the complaint have appropriate access to these records.

**Grievance Handling Checklist**

- When talking to the student staff should :
  - Set up a quiet meeting place.
  - Assess the level of stress, and recommend additional support if necessary e.g. Student Counsellor.
  - Explain your role, the Policy and Procedures.
  - Explain the concepts of natural justice and confidentiality.
  - Listen as the student explains the issues.
  - Ask for supporting evidence.
  - Ask what the student thinks will fix the problem.
  - Give the student advice about the range of options that might be available, e.g. the student handles it, you handle it, you refer it on.
  - Explain what will happen next. If you are not sure, make another appointment to see the student.
  - Tell the student who you need to talk to.

- Remind the student about the need for confidentiality, and that he/she should not talk to others while you are looking into the matter.
  - Take notes about the important details of the meeting.
  - Check that you are the appropriate person to deal with the matter. Discuss with your Principal, Registrar or Dean, as appropriate if in doubt. If you are not the right person, refer the student to the appropriate person as soon as possible.
- When talking to the Respondent staff should:
    - Prepare for this interview.
    - Explain the purpose of the meeting and how the grievance procedure works.
    - Tell the respondent the details of the grievance, and explain why his/her actions may be seen as inappropriate.
    - Reassure the respondent that you will act impartially, that you have not prejudged , and that you are looking for a resolution.
    - Listen to the respondent's side of the story, and check you have understood.
    - Ask what the respondent thinks will fix the problem.
    - Remind the respondent about the need for confidentiality, and that he/she must not victimise or hassle the complainant or others involved.
    - Provide information on support available.
    - Explain what you will do next and when you will next contact the respondent.
    - Note down the important details of the meeting.
  - Gather any additional information, and seek advice you need.
  - Decide how the complaint could be resolved, e.g. conciliation, management decision, referral.
  - Inform the complainant and respondent separately giving clear reasons for your decision and discussing your expectations about standards of professional behaviour now required.
  - Inform the complainant and respondent of the avenues of appeal available.
  - Monitor the situation to ensure there is no repeat of the problem.
  - Complete the paperwork and forward to the Registrar's office for confidential storage.

The following also form part of the Policy and Procedures:

- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at Member Institution
- Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart for a Grievance Lodged at the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity
- Student Grievance Notification Form
- Student Grievance Response Form

### **3.6 Special Cases within the Grievance Regulations**

Some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

The modifications to the general process are set out below.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the final decision under these special cases or the time taken to deal with the grievance, the complainant may request that the matter be referred beyond the SCD for external resolution. The Dean has appointed an External Grievance Officer, who may co-opt up to two other persons, also external to the College, to deal with the grievance. The External Grievance Officer will forward any recommendations to the Dean within four weeks. The Dean will implement upon the recommendations within four weeks, and report at the next meeting the Council and Academic Board.

#### **3.6.1 Grievances regarding assessment**

In the first instance a student may appeal to the lecturer concerned against the result given in any item of assessment when:

- (a) the student believes that some error in grading has been made;
- (b) there are concerns about the grade awarded.

After this informal dialogue, if the student still believes there are grounds for appeal, the student may formally appeal to the board of studies of his/her Member Institution.

Where a student believes that the review procedures in the Member Institute have not been followed with regard to an appeal against a failed final grade, the student may appeal to the Academic Board of the College. This is the only ground on which an appeal can be made to the Academic Board.

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity within ten working days of receipt of the determinative outcome of the appeal to the Member Institution.

The student must provide the Dean with documented evidence that the regulations on Review and Appeals have not been complied with by the Member Institution.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

#### **3.6.2 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature**

This set of regulations applies to matters arising during candidature in a research award and prior to the submission of a thesis and may include:

- unsatisfactory supervision;

- disputes relating to student progress;
- academic issues relating to candidature.

The College encourages all parties to the grievance to resolve issues informally and provides a process for informal resolution or pre-grievance procedures. For disputes involving supervision, candidates are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve the grievance by discussion with the supervisor(s) before entering into formal grievance procedures. If the matter cannot be thus resolved, the candidate should contact the Dean who will attempt to negotiate a resolution with the parties involved.

The formal grievance process shall be as follows:

1. The candidate making the grievance complaint shall file a written Grievance Report with the office of the Dean which shall contain:
  - a. a statement of the alleged grievance;
  - b. an account of the steps taken to resolve the grievance;
  - c. the names and positions of any people previously consulted;
  - d. copies of all documentation related to the grievance.
2. The Dean Shall
  - a. Gather any additional material required including a report from the respondent;
  - b. Make a further attempt to reach a negotiated settlement;
  - c. Refer the grievance to the Grievance Resolution Panel;
2. The Grievance Resolution Panel shall consist of:
  - a. The Dean of the College;
  - b. The chairperson of the Academic Board or nominee;
  - c. A member of the Research Committee;
3. The Grievance Resolution Panel shall meet with all parties under the following rules:
  - a. the panel and all parties shall have received documentation in advance of the meeting;
  - b. the candidate and respondent may be accompanied by an adviser who may offer advice but not act as advocate or spokesperson before the panel;
  - c. the procedures for resolution will be agreed upon by the panel after the panel has established that a grievance exists;
  - d. the panel will provide for both candidate and respondent to address the panel or receive a written statement in lieu of a personal appearance;
  - e. the panel shall determine the action necessary to resolve the grievance;
  - f. all proceedings shall be minuted;
  - g. if a resolution is reached, all parties will sign the agreement;
  - h. all persons directly involved will receive a copy of the agreement;
4. The College shall retain a copy on file.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

### **3.6.3 Postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature**

Appeals may be made by postgraduate research candidates against decisions of the Research Committee which fall within the following academic and procedural areas::

- Admission to candidature;
- Extension of candidature;
- Outcome of thesis examinations requiring correction and/or revision but where a final result has not been determined by the Academic Board.

A candidate wishing to lodge an appeal against a decision of the Research Committee should lodge such an appeal through the Dean, within one month of the date of the letter notifying the decision.

The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

The appeal will be brought before the Research Committee which may appoint an Appeals Sub-Committee. Appeals regarding the results of these examinations will be considered in the first instance by the Research Committee.

The Academic Board of the College may be asked to review the appeal if an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal in area of thesis examination.

## CONTACTS

### Grievance Officer at any of the Member Institutions

For contact details of the Grievance Officer at any of the Member Institutions contact:

Dr Les Gainer  
 The SCD Director (Administration)  
 Office of the Dean  
 Sydney College of Divinity  
 Email: [lesg@scd.edu.au](mailto:lesg@scd.edu.au)

<i>Location</i>	<i>Postal address</i>	Phone 02 9889 1969
Suite G5, Focus Building	PO Box 1882	Fax 02 9889 2281
64 Talavera Rd	Macquarie Centre NSW	
Macquarie Park NSW 2113	2113	

### Grievance Officers in the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity

The contact details for the Office of the Dean are:

**Dean** Professor Diane Speed  
[dean@scd.edu.au](mailto:dean@scd.edu.au)

**Director (Administration)**

Dr Les Gainer BSc PhD  
[lesg@scd.edu.au](mailto:lesg@scd.edu.au)

**Director (Finance & Compliance)**

Mr David Cheetham BA CPA  
[davidc@scd.edu.au](mailto:davidc@scd.edu.au)

**Director (Research)**

Assoc. Prof. Gerard Moore BA BTh STL STD  
[gmoore@scd.edu.au](mailto:gmoore@scd.edu.au)

<i>Location</i> Suite G5, Focus Building 64 Talavera Rd Macquarie Park NSW 2113	<i>Postal address</i> PO Box 1882 Macquarie Centre NSW 2113	Phone 02 9889 1969 Fax 02 9889 2281
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II. EXTERNAL GRIEVANCE OFFICER

The external Grievance Officer is Rev Dr Mark Harding: [MHarding@actheology.edu.au](mailto:MHarding@actheology.edu.au)

## GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS RAISING A GRIEVANCE

The following information is a summary of the procedures to be followed should you wish to lodge a grievance, whether academic or non-academic. A copy of the full policy and procedures, entitled 'Student Grievance Policy and Procedures of the Sydney College of Divinity' can be accessed in the following ways:

- The Sydney College of Divinity web site [www.scd.edu.au](http://www.scd.edu.au)
- The Sydney College of Divinity *Handbook* – available both in hard copy and on the website
- Your Member Institution's website
- Your Member Institution *Handbook*

The Sydney College of Divinity is committed to living out its vision and values in establishing and maintaining a harmonious and supportive environment conducive to study and personal development. The Sydney College of Divinity has a responsibility under legislation to ensure students are not subjected to discrimination, harassment, vilification or victimisation. We recognise that students may sometimes feel they have experienced disadvantage or distress, and will ensure that grievances are responded to promptly, with minimum stress and maximum protection for all concerned

This grievance policy and set of procedures apply to all currently enrolled students or persons seeking to enrol in Sydney College of Divinity approved courses of study at Sydney College of Divinity Member Institutions, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. It provides a mechanism for addressing grievances arising out of any kind of situation or process affecting the student, both academic and non-academic. Fairness demands that these and other concerns be responded to promptly and handled in a consistent and transparent manner. Note that some grievances require modifications to the general grievance process in that they involve decisions of Committees of the Academic Board. These are:

- grievances regarding assessment;
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding supervision, student progress and candidature; and
- postgraduate research candidate grievances regarding admission to candidature, extension of candidature, the outcome of thesis examinations

This document provides guidelines for students or persons seeking to enrol, wishing to raise a grievance.

Each step of the process is free of charge. The student remains enrolled whilst the grievance process is ongoing.

**Step 1** Discuss your grievance informally with the person concerned if you can, or alternatively with the person's superior. Staff within the Member Institution or SCD are available to advise or can assist you if needed.

**Step 2** If you can't resolve the grievance directly, you would normally proceed to lodge your grievance formally within the Member Institution in which you are enrolled or attempting to

enrol, following the procedures that follow in step 3. However, if for any reason you feel uncomfortable about lodging that grievance within the Member Institution, you can opt to lodge the grievance direct with the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity. In that case, ignore step 3 and proceed to the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity Option below.

**Step 3** At your Member Institution, approach your Department Head or Dean of students. They will ask you to complete the *Student Grievance Notification Form* (available at your Member Institution's Administration Office), and make an appointment to see you. Please note that the Member Institution cannot handle anonymous grievances except those related to child abuse. You can bring a friend to this meeting to assist you. Both you and your support person will be asked not to discuss this matter with anyone else while the grievance handler is looking into it for you.

Resolution may require the appointment of a Grievance Review Committee, and may involve external review. Your grievance handler will keep you informed during the process, and will give you comprehensive written information about the outcome and the reasons for the decisions made and/or actions taken. You have the right to access the full documentation throughout the five years of its confidential storage, after it has been lodged with the Registrar.

## **OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF THE SYDNEY COLLEGE OF DIVINITY OPTION**

Under normal circumstances, it would be expected that a student or person enrolling at a particular Member Institution would lodge their grievance within that Member Institution. However, you may choose to lodge your grievance direct with the SCD. The following would then apply.

Lodge your completed *Grievance Notification Form* at the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity, and make an appointment to see a grievance handler within the Office of the Dean. Please note that the Sydney College of Divinity cannot handle anonymous grievances except those related to child abuse. You can bring a friend to this meeting to help you. Both you and your support person will be asked not to discuss the matter with anyone else while the grievance handler is looking into it for you.

Resolution may require the appointment of a Sydney College of Divinity Grievance Committee, and may involve external review.

Your grievance handler will keep you informed during the process, and will give you comprehensive written information about the outcome and the reasons for the decisions made and/or actions taken. You have the right to access the full documentation throughout the five years of its storage, after it has been lodged with the Registrar.

**Victimisation** – We understand you may be afraid of being victimised as a result of raising a grievance. The Sydney College of Divinity and your Member Institution will not tolerate victimisation, and will take disciplinary action if it is proven to have occurred.

**Outcomes** – The following might be possible outcomes:

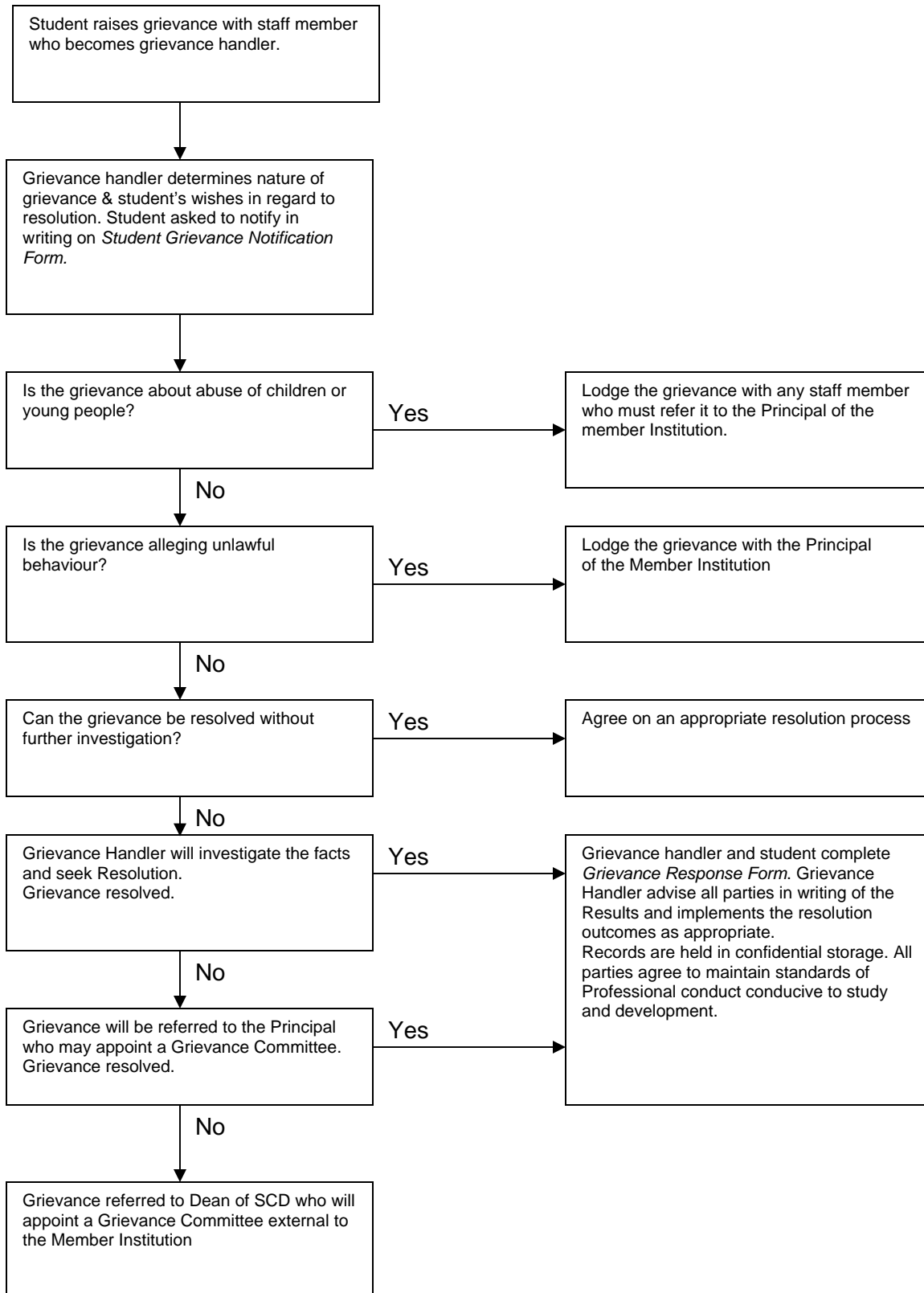
- You gain a better understanding of the situation and so you are no longer concerned.

- You reach a mutually acceptable resolution through mediation.
- You receive an apology and/or the problem is addressed.
- Where the facts surrounding your grievance cannot be substantiated, no action will be taken.

Where the issues are serious, the Member Institution (or the Office of the Dean of the Sydney College of Divinity if you lodged your grievance there) will take action under its disciplinary processes or under the relevant legislation. In extreme cases the grievance could result in the dismissal of staff or expulsion of students.

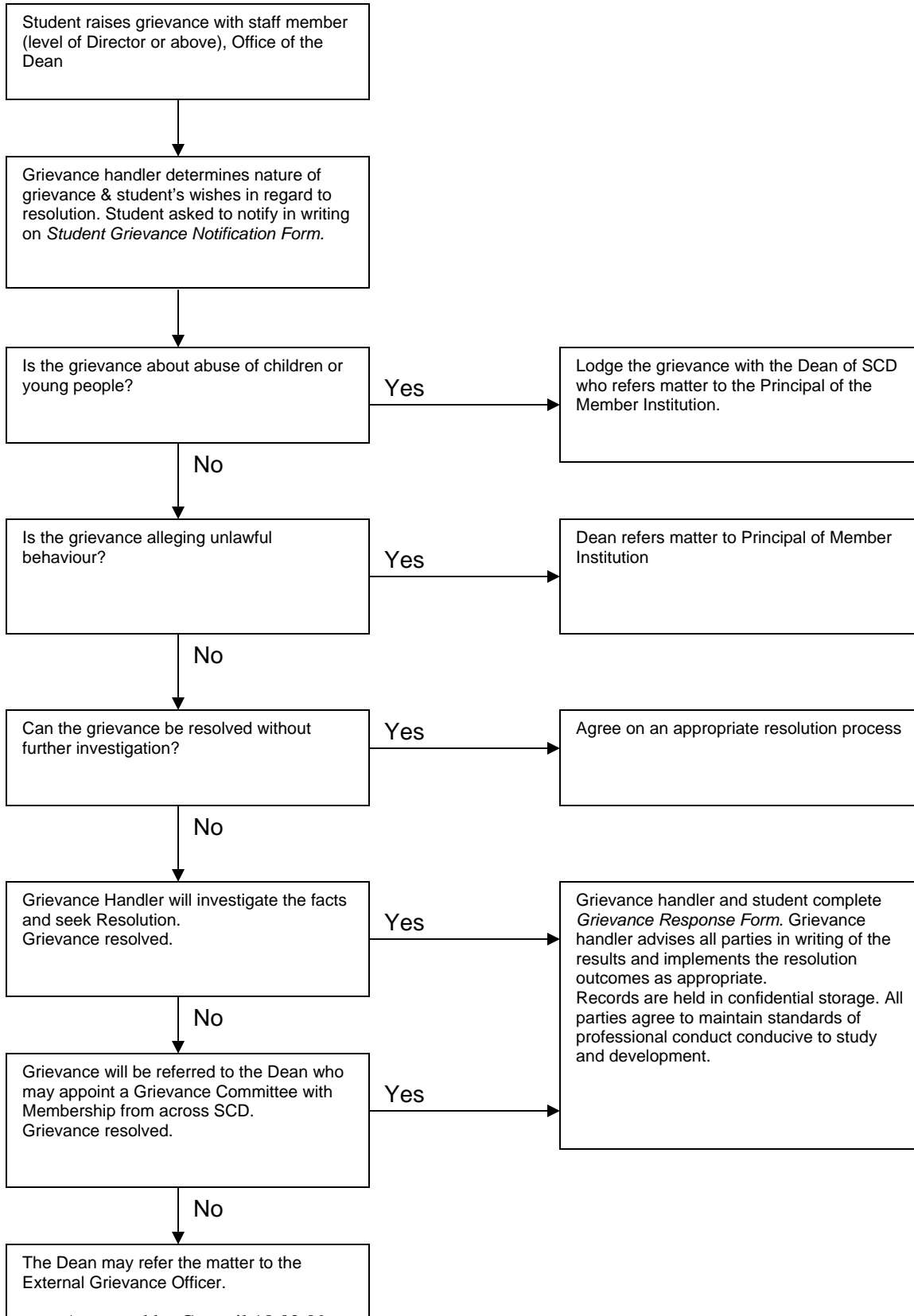
## GRIEVANCE LODGED AT MEMBER INSTITUTION

### III. Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart



## GRIEVANCE LODGED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN

### IV. Student Grievance Resolution Flowchart



# V. STUDENT GRIEVANCE RESPONSE FORM

**RESPONSE FROM:**

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

What steps have been taken to resolve the grievance at this stage?

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What were the results of the actions?

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**GRIEVANCE HANDLER:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### 3. PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Has the grievance been resolved?

YES Please complete the section below.

NO Refer matter to the next person as per Grievance Flowchart.

I confirm that the grievance outlined above has been resolved to my satisfaction and that no further action is required.

**STUDENT:**

(name) \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_

**GRIEVANCE HANDLER:**

(name) \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(title) \_\_\_\_\_

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_

