



Student Appeal and Complaint Policy

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Status: Approved by AIC Senior Management Committee

Responsible for implementation: AIC Academic Team

Responsible for review: Director - Academics and Quality Assurance

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Version Control

History of amendments	Version/ pages/ section affected	Summary of changes
Last amended May 2023	Original document	Initial policy framework
Updated August 2025	Entire document	Clarified counselor roles, added academic concern routing procedures, included certificate delivery expectations, enhanced support structures

The individuals or group responsible for this document have the authority to make changes to it whenever necessary. In the event of any amendments, all relevant personnel will be duly notified.

The document can be found on the AIC website at the following link:

<https://www.aicedu.lk/academic-progression.php>

Purpose

To establish the structure and assign responsibility for management of Complaints and Appeals made by Students in order to promote the timely and fair resolution of issues.

AIC Campus has instituted the following procedures for student complaints and adheres to these procedures. Students who are currently registered, enrolled, studying and graduated are free to submit written complaints and appeals. Appeals and complaints are dealt with fairly and judiciously on a case-by-case basis. Students have the right of complaint and appeal in the following instances:

AIC is committed to pursuing high standards for student assessments and opportunities for appeal and complaint with appropriate allocation of resources in order to implement this Policy fully, to the best of our abilities. This Policy Statement is to be reviewed according to necessity, as well as periodically every two years.

Purpose and Institutional Commitment

The American International Campus is fundamentally committed to establishing comprehensive structures and assigning clear responsibilities for the effective management of complaints and appeals submitted by students, thereby promoting timely, fair, and transparent resolution of all academic and non-academic concerns that may arise during their educational journey. This policy framework ensures that every student voice is heard and that legitimate concerns receive appropriate attention and resolution through established institutional processes.

AIC Campus has instituted rigorous procedures for student complaints and appeals, adhering strictly to these procedures to maintain consistency, fairness, and transparency across all cases. Students who are currently registered, enrolled, actively studying, or who have graduated from AIC programmes maintain the right to submit written complaints and appeals regarding any aspect of their educational experience or institutional interaction that requires formal review and resolution.

All appeals and complaints are managed fairly and judiciously on a case-by-case basis, with each situation receiving individual attention appropriate to its specific circumstances, complexity, and potential impact on student welfare and academic progress. The institution maintains unwavering commitment to pursuing the highest standards for student assessments, support services, and opportunities for appeal and complaint resolution, allocating appropriate human and financial resources to implement this policy comprehensively and effectively.

Academic Concern Routing and Support Role Clarification

Program Coordinator Primary Responsibility for Academic Matters

AIC has established clear protocols for addressing academic concerns that ensure students receive appropriate specialist support from qualified academic personnel who possess the expertise necessary to resolve subject-specific issues effectively. All academic concerns, including but not limited to course content questions, assessment disputes, academic progress difficulties, programme structure clarifications, and academic accommodation requests, must be directed initially to the relevant Programme Coordinator who maintains primary responsibility for academic matter resolution.

Programme Coordinators possess comprehensive knowledge of curriculum requirements, assessment standards, academic regulations, and progression criteria specific to their programmes, enabling them to provide authoritative guidance and make informed decisions

regarding academic concerns. These coordinators maintain direct communication with academic staff, external examiners, and quality assurance personnel, ensuring that academic concerns receive expert attention from individuals who understand both the specific programme requirements and broader institutional academic standards.

Students experiencing academic difficulties or concerns should contact their Programme Coordinator directly through established communication channels, including scheduled office hours, email correspondence, or formal appointment scheduling systems. Programme Coordinators are equipped to address immediate concerns, coordinate with relevant academic staff when specialized input is required, and escalate matters to senior academic management when issues require institutional-level intervention or policy clarification.

Counselor Role Limitations and Referral Procedures

Counseling staff at AIC provide invaluable support for student welfare, personal development, and emotional wellbeing, but their involvement in academic matters is specifically limited to ensure that students receive appropriate specialist assistance for academic concerns while maintaining clear professional boundaries that allow counselors to focus on their areas of expertise and qualification.

When students approach counseling staff with academic concerns, counselors are required to immediately direct these students to the appropriate Programme Coordinator, providing clear explanation of why this referral is necessary and offering to facilitate initial contact if students are uncertain about the appropriate person to approach. Counselors should not attempt to resolve academic issues independently, provide academic advice beyond their scope of practice, or make commitments regarding academic matters that fall outside their professional competence.

This clear delineation of responsibilities ensures that academic concerns receive expert attention while protecting both students and counseling staff from potential confusion or inappropriate advice that could negatively impact academic progress. Counselors may continue to provide emotional support and coping strategies for students who are experiencing stress related to academic challenges, but the substantive academic issues must be addressed through proper academic channels.

Counseling staff maintain detailed referral procedures and contact information for all Programme Coordinators, enabling them to provide immediate and accurate direction to students seeking academic assistance. When academic concerns appear to have emotional or personal components, counselors and Programme Coordinators may collaborate

appropriately to ensure comprehensive support while maintaining clear boundaries regarding their respective areas of responsibility.

Certificate and Transcript Delivery Expectations

Orientation Communication Requirements

During mandatory programme orientation sessions, AIC provides comprehensive information to all new students regarding the timeline and procedures for receiving official certificates and transcripts following successful programme completion. This communication ensures that students maintain realistic expectations and understand the various factors that may influence delivery timelines for their official documentation.

Students are informed that certificate and transcript processing involves multiple stages including final grade verification, external examiner approval, awarding body processing, quality assurance checks, and official document production. For programmes leading to international qualifications, particularly those awarded by Pearson or other UK-based awarding bodies, additional processing time is required for overseas verification and certification procedures that may extend delivery timelines beyond those typical for domestic qualifications.

The institution provides detailed timelines during orientation, explaining that domestic programme certificates typically require four to six weeks for processing following final grade confirmation, while international programme certificates may require eight to twelve weeks due to additional verification requirements and international shipping considerations. Transcripts generally require two to four weeks for processing but may take longer during peak graduation periods when processing volumes are particularly high.

Students receive written information about these timelines in their programme handbooks and are advised to plan accordingly for any employment, further education, or professional registration requirements that may depend on official documentation. The institution encourages students to request official transcripts and certificates well in advance of any deadlines they may need to meet for career or educational progression purposes.

Tracking and Communication Systems

AIC maintains comprehensive tracking systems that enable students to monitor the progress of their certificate and transcript requests through clearly defined stages of processing. Students receive confirmation when their requests are received, updates when documents enter different processing phases, and notification when certificates or transcripts are dispatched for delivery or collection.

The institution provides multiple communication channels for students to inquire about the status of their documentation, including dedicated email addresses, telephone contact numbers, and online tracking systems where students can access real-time information about their requests using their student identification numbers and secure authentication procedures.

When delays occur due to external factors beyond institutional control, such as awarding body processing delays, international shipping disruptions, or verification complications, students receive prompt notification explaining the circumstances and providing updated delivery estimates. The institution maintains contingency procedures for urgent documentation needs, including provision of interim transcripts or official letters confirming programme completion when students face time-sensitive requirements.

Appeal Categories and Procedures

Student Conduct Appeals

Students maintain the fundamental right to appeal any decision rendered by the Student Conduct Office through a structured process that ensures fair review of disciplinary determinations while maintaining appropriate timelines for resolution. Appeals regarding student conduct decisions must be submitted to the Dean of AIC Campus within twenty-four hours of receiving official notification of the final decision, ensuring that appeals are lodged promptly while details remain fresh and relevant evidence is readily available.

The twenty-four hour appeal window reflects the serious nature of conduct decisions and the importance of maintaining institutional order while providing appropriate opportunities for students to challenge decisions they believe to be unfair or unsupported by evidence. Once this appeal window expires, conduct decisions become final and are not subject to further internal review, although students retain rights to external review through appropriate regulatory or legal channels when circumstances warrant such action.

Appeals regarding conduct decisions undergo thorough review by senior academic leadership who examine the original evidence, investigation procedures, decision-making processes, and any new information presented by the appealing student. This review process ensures that conduct decisions are supported by appropriate evidence, follow established procedures, and apply sanctions proportionate to the established violations.

Academic Performance and Grade Appeals

Students who wish to appeal academic grades or challenge assessment decisions must initiate their appeals within the immediate succeeding semester following the award of the

disputed grade, ensuring that appeals are addressed while course materials, assessment criteria, and teaching staff remain readily available for consultation and review. Appeals submitted beyond this timeframe are generally not accepted unless exceptional circumstances prevented timely submission and appropriate documentation supports the delayed appeal.

Grade appeals require students to provide specific evidence supporting their claim that the awarded grade does not accurately reflect their academic performance, assessment quality, or adherence to published marking criteria. This evidence may include documentation of assessment feedback, comparison with marking criteria, evidence of procedural irregularities, or circumstances that may have affected assessment delivery or evaluation that were not properly considered in the original grading process.

The institution maintains comprehensive procedures for grade appeal review that include reassessment by independent academic staff, examination of original marking processes, consideration of any procedural issues that may have affected the original assessment, and comparison with institutional standards and external examiner expectations. Students receive detailed written explanations of appeal outcomes, including specific reasoning for any grade changes or confirmation of original grades.

Transfer Credit and Academic Recognition Appeals

Transfer students who believe that their previous academic qualifications or learning experiences have not been appropriately recognized in transfer credit decisions maintain the right to appeal these determinations through academic departments that possess specialist knowledge of the relevant subject areas and qualification frameworks. Transfer credit appeals require comprehensive documentation of previous learning, including official transcripts, course descriptions, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and any other evidence that supports the claim for additional credit recognition.

Academic departments review transfer credit appeals with consideration of current programme requirements, learning outcome alignment, assessment standard comparability, and institutional policies regarding maximum transfer credit allowances. This review process may include consultation with relevant academic staff, examination of external qualification frameworks, and comparison with similar transfer credit decisions made in comparable circumstances.

Students who submit transfer credit appeals receive detailed explanations of review outcomes, including specific reasoning for any changes to transfer credit awards or confirmation of original decisions. When transfer credit appeals are successful, students

receive updated academic transcripts reflecting the additional recognized credits and may qualify for adjusted programme duration or modified study plans that account for the newly recognized prior learning.

Academic Advising and Support Appeals

Students who encounter difficulties with academic advising services, including inadequate guidance regarding degree completion requirements, unsatisfactory responses to transfer credit questions, inappropriate advice regarding course selection, or lack of responsiveness from assigned Faculty Academic Advisors, may appeal these concerns to the Dean of AIC Campus for prompt review and resolution. Academic advising appeals focus on ensuring that students receive accurate, timely, and comprehensive guidance that supports their academic success and timely programme completion.

The institution recognizes that effective academic advising is essential for student success and maintains high standards for advisor responsiveness, accuracy of information provided, and quality of guidance offered to students navigating complex academic requirements. When advising appeals are submitted, prompt meetings are scheduled to review the student's concerns, examine the quality of advice provided, and implement corrective measures that address any deficiencies in advising services.

Academic advising appeals may result in reassignment to different advisors when ongoing difficulties cannot be resolved, provision of additional specialized advising support when complex circumstances require enhanced guidance, or implementation of specific action plans that address identified deficiencies in the advising relationship while ensuring continued student progress toward degree completion.

Non-Academic Complaint Resolution

Financial and Administrative Concerns

Students experiencing difficulties with financial matters, including billing disputes, payment plan complications, scholarship or financial aid concerns, or questions regarding student account management, should direct these concerns to the Head of Finance at AIC Campus who maintains specialized expertise in institutional financial procedures and student account management. Financial complaints receive prompt attention to prevent potential disruptions to student enrollment or academic progress due to unresolved monetary issues.

The institution maintains comprehensive procedures for reviewing financial concerns that include examination of student account records, verification of payment processing, review of applicable financial policies, and consultation with relevant administrative staff who may

have been involved in the original financial decisions or transactions. Students receive detailed explanations of financial complaint resolutions, including any adjustments made to their accounts and clarification of future payment obligations or opportunities.

Administrative concerns beyond financial matters, including registration difficulties, facility access problems, technology support issues, or other institutional service concerns, are addressed through appropriate administrative departments with expertise in the relevant functional areas. The institution maintains clear referral procedures that ensure administrative complaints reach the appropriate personnel for effective resolution while preventing unnecessary delays or confusion about responsibility for different types of concerns.

Student Welfare and Personal Support

The Student Welfare Coordinator provides specialized support for students experiencing personal difficulties that may impact their academic progress or campus experience, including housing concerns, health-related challenges, family emergencies, or other personal circumstances that require institutional accommodation or support. This support focuses specifically on non-academic personal matters while maintaining appropriate boundaries that ensure academic concerns receive proper academic attention.

Student welfare support includes assistance with connecting students to appropriate community resources, coordination of emergency support when students face crisis situations, liaison with external agencies when professional intervention is required, and advocacy for students who need institutional accommodations due to personal circumstances beyond their control. The Student Welfare Coordinator maintains confidential case management procedures that protect student privacy while ensuring appropriate support is provided.

When students approach the Student Welfare Coordinator with concerns that have both personal and academic components, appropriate coordination occurs between welfare support staff and academic personnel to ensure comprehensive assistance while maintaining clear boundaries regarding areas of responsibility. This collaborative approach ensures that students receive holistic support that addresses both their personal needs and academic requirements without confusion about which staff members are responsible for different aspects of their concerns.

Institutional Principles and Procedural Standards

Fundamental Fairness and Natural Justice

AIC operates all complaint and appeal processes according to principles of natural justice and procedural fairness that ensure every student receives appropriate opportunity to present their concerns, access relevant information about their cases, and participate meaningfully in resolution processes. These principles include the right to be heard, the right to know the case against them when applicable, the right to present evidence and arguments, and the right to have their matters considered by impartial decision-makers who are free from conflicts of interest.

The institution ensures that all students have access to comprehensive complaint and appeal processes regardless of their background, financial circumstances, or other personal characteristics that should not influence their ability to seek redress for legitimate concerns. Support is provided to students who may need assistance understanding procedures, preparing documentation, or participating effectively in formal processes due to language barriers, disabilities, or other circumstances that could otherwise limit their access to fair resolution.

Procedural fairness requires that all complaint and appeal processes follow established timelines, provide appropriate notice to all affected parties, maintain confidentiality where appropriate while ensuring transparency in decision-making, and apply consistent standards across similar cases to prevent arbitrary or discriminatory treatment of student concerns.

Confidentiality and Information Management

The institution maintains appropriate confidentiality throughout all complaint and appeal processes, protecting sensitive personal information while ensuring that relevant information is available to decision-makers who require access to complete and accurate information for effective case resolution. Personal information is shared only when necessary for investigation purposes and only with personnel who have legitimate need for access to such information as part of their institutional responsibilities.

Students are informed clearly about confidentiality limitations and information-sharing requirements before beginning formal complaint or appeal processes, ensuring they understand what information may be shared, with whom it may be shared, and under what circumstances disclosure may be required. This transparency allows students to make informed decisions about their participation in formal processes and helps them understand the boundaries of confidentiality protection.

Record-keeping procedures ensure that all complaints and appeals are documented comprehensively in the institution's formal recordkeeping system, maintaining appropriate security for sensitive information while ensuring that institutional learning can occur

through analysis of complaint patterns, resolution effectiveness, and opportunities for policy or procedural improvements that may prevent similar concerns in the future.

Timely Resolution and Communication

AIC maintains firm commitment to resolving all complaints and appeals in a timely manner that balances the need for thorough investigation with recognition that prolonged uncertainty can negatively impact student welfare and academic progress. Specific timelines are established for different types of complaints and appeals, with regular communication provided to students about progress toward resolution and any factors that may affect expected timelines.

Students are kept informed throughout the resolution process about the status of their complaints or appeals, next steps in the process, any additional information that may be required, and realistic expectations about resolution timelines. This ongoing communication prevents unnecessary anxiety and ensures that students can plan appropriately around the resolution process when their academic or personal circumstances may be affected by the outcomes.

When circumstances arise that may delay resolution beyond established timelines, students receive prompt notification explaining the reasons for delay, revised timeline estimates, and any interim measures that may be appropriate to minimize negative impacts while comprehensive resolution is pursued. The institution prioritizes cases where delays could significantly impact student welfare, academic progress, or other time-sensitive matters.

External Review and Final Appeal Options

Exhaustion of Internal Remedies

Students are encouraged to pursue resolution of their concerns through internal institutional processes before seeking external review, recognizing that internal procedures are designed to provide comprehensive resolution while maintaining ongoing relationships that support continued academic success. The institution's internal appeal processes are designed to be thorough, fair, and effective, providing meaningful opportunities for resolution without requiring external intervention in most circumstances.

The AIC Campus Appeals Panel represents the highest internal appeal authority within the institution, with decisions made by the Dean based on panel recommendations being final for internal purposes. This final internal review ensures that all reasonable internal remedies have been explored comprehensively before students need to consider external options that may be more formal, time-consuming, or adversarial in nature.

However, the institution recognizes that some circumstances may warrant external review when internal processes have been exhausted without satisfactory resolution or when concerns arise about the fairness or comprehensiveness of internal procedures. Students retain the right to seek external review through appropriate regulatory agencies, professional bodies, or legal channels when internal processes prove insufficient to address their legitimate concerns.

External Agency Options and Support

When students determine that external review is necessary following exhaustion of internal remedies, the institution provides appropriate information about relevant external agencies and procedures available for different types of concerns. This information includes contact details for regulatory bodies that oversee higher education, professional associations relevant to specific academic disciplines, consumer protection agencies that address educational service concerns, and other appropriate external review options.

The institution maintains cooperative relationships with external review agencies and participates constructively in external investigations when they are initiated, recognizing that external oversight serves important public purposes and contributes to continuous improvement in institutional practices and procedures. This cooperation includes providing requested information, participating in investigation processes, and implementing recommendations that emerge from external reviews when they are determined to be appropriate and beneficial.

Students who pursue external review continue to receive appropriate support from the institution for ongoing academic and personal needs that are separate from the matters under external investigation, ensuring that their educational progress and welfare are not negatively affected by their decision to seek external resolution of their concerns.

This comprehensive Student Appeal and Complaint Policy demonstrates AIC's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of student support while ensuring that all concerns receive appropriate attention through clearly defined processes that protect student rights and promote fair resolution of all institutional matters affecting student welfare and academic success.