



### ACEC Submission Form

Committee	Academic Council Executive Committee (ACEC)
Meeting Date	26 September 2018
Document Title:	Policy Review Proposal
Sponsor	Professor Barbara Dooley, Chair Academic Council Committee on Student Appeals and Complaints (ACCSAC)
Author	Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Office
Purpose	Submission of a proposal to review two existing policies: Student Complaint Policy Assessment Appeal Policy
Synopsis	<p>ACCSAC wishes to propose a review of both policies with particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• addressing issues and gaps identified by the Student Complaints Officer and the Assessment Appeals Officer through case handling experience, since both policies were implemented.</li> <li>• any relevant developments in student complaint and appeal handling approaches across the Higher Education sector and related best practice guidance which may have emerged since the implementation of the policies.</li> <li>• changes in data protection legislation that may require policy and/or procedural revision.</li> </ul>
Background	The ACCSAC has responsibility for the oversight of student complaints and assessment appeals processes. In its annual report to Academic Council (26 April 2018) the committee proposed to conduct a review of the Student Complaint Policy and the Assessment Appeals Policy.
Resource Implications	N/A
Invitees to meeting	N/A
Decision Required	Approval

#### Next Steps:

Communication	ACCSAC Chair / ACCSAC secretary
Implementation	ACCSAC Chair / ACCSAC secretary



# Policy Proposal

*This form should be completed and submitted for approval to the relevant governance body in advance of any policy development or major review of existing policy.*

Policy title:	Student Complaint Policy and the Assessment Appeals Policy
Policy developer/reviewer:	ACCSAC / Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Office
Policy owner:	Dean of Students
Approval pathway:	AC / ACEC
Proposed approval date:	AC 25 April 2019
Proposed effective date:	September 2019
Date of latest review if applicable:	N/A

## 1. Purpose of policy (review)

### **Student Complaint Policy**

The purpose of the Student Complaint Policy and process is to provide a formal mechanism whereby students wishing to express significant or sustained dissatisfaction may seek resolution through the University's agreed complaint handling process. The current Student Complaint Policy was first approved in 2014 and was implemented in September 2015. In 2016 the policy was updated to include information to students wishing to make complaints relating to bullying and harassment.

### **Assessment Appeals Policy**

The Assessment Appeal Policy provides an opportunity for students to appeal assessment outcomes on specified grounds. The policy was approved by Academic Council on 5 May 2016 and became effective from September 2016.

ACCSAC wishes to propose a review of both policies with particular focus on:

- addressing the issues and gaps that have been identified by the Student Complaints Officer and the Assessment Appeals Officer. These issues have been highlighted through case handling over the last 2-3 years.
- any relevant developments in student complaint and appeal handling across the Higher Education sector and related best practice guidance which may have emerged since the implementation of the policies in 2015 and 2016.
- Changes in data protection legislation may require the policies and procedures to be revised.

## 2. Policy scope

The scope of both policies will be reviewed to ensure that they continue to accurately reflect the categories and circumstances under which students may make complaints or submit assessment appeals. Attention will also be afforded to the review of circumstances where appeals or complaints

may be accepted from students whom are no longer registered. The stated grounds upon which students may submit an assessment appeal will be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and clearly articulated.

In addition, each policy contains stated time lines for the completion of the appeals and complaints process. The review will examine compliance with these timelines and the reasons behind delays where timelines are not adhered to. The review will pay particular attention to the student complaint handling timeline of 15 working days. The ACCSAC noted in their annual report that none of the three formal complaints (2016/17) investigated under stage 2 of the policy had been completed within the required timeline.

### **3. Impact of policy**

It is intended that the impact of reviewing the policy is to ensure that there is greater clarity for policy users, specifically students in terms of the categories and circumstances under which they can make complaints or submit appeals, and the timelines for completion of complaint and appeals processes. The review will also ensure that the policies are effective, clear from the user-perspective and reflect any relevant legislative and regulatory changes.

### **4. Resource needs**

The ACCSAC will establish a policy review working group to conduct the reviews. In consultation with the Dean of Students, the ACCSAC may co-opt members of staff from the Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Office to participate and support the work of the review groups.

### **5. Compliance with national legislation, University Statutes and policies**

GDPR and the related changes required for obtaining, using, storing and retention of personal data may require the policies and procedures to be revised.

The review will consider whether any updates are required to the policies to reflect or direct to the UCD Dignity and Respect Policy and the UCD Child Safeguarding Statement.

### **6. Supporting documents**

It is likely that the reviews will highlight the need for revised or additional supporting documents for those responsible for applying the policy, as well as guidance material developed specifically for the student audience.

### **7. Communication and training needs**

The reviews may also highlight the requirement for enhanced communication and information dissemination regarding the policies and their related processes. Training programmes for those with specific responsibilities under the policies may be required.



## Policy Development/Review – Pilot Equality Impact Assessment Form

*Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic and evidence-based process which verifies that the University's policies and practices are non-discriminatory, and are fair and inclusive in meeting the legitimate needs of the diverse groups that make up the University community. The key purpose of the Pilot Form and Toolkit is to help identify any Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) impact (positive or negative) associated with new or updated policies, along with any potential discrimination or gaps in policy development.*

*This form should be completed, in conjunction with the EIA Toolkit Guidelines, and submitted for approval to the relevant governance body in advance of any policy development or major review of existing policy. Equality impacts should continue to be considered throughout the policy drafting process (please see EIA Toolkit Guidelines for details) and the final Equality Impact Assessment Form (with revisions, if required under Outcomes 1-4 below) should be submitted again with the final policy for approval by the relevant governing body.*

Policy title:	Student Complaints and Assessment Appeals Policies
Policy developer/reviewer:	ACCSAC / Student Engagement, Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Office
Policy owner:	Dean of Students
Approval pathway:	AC/ ACEC
Proposed approval date:	tbc
Proposed effective date:	September 2019
Date of latest review if applicable:	

EIA Date:	
Membership of Policy Group (including EDI Group member):  TBA	
Scope of Policy:  As above.	
Policy Development Phase:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed new policy</li> <li>Undertaking a review of an existing policy</li> <li>Other (please state):</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Please identify any opportunity to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the University or any potential adverse impact that the development of this policy could have, on any of the equality grounds identified below.	
<b>Equality Ground</b>	<b>Identified Impact</b>
Race	None

Disability	Review provides the opportunity to ensure the process is fully accessible. i.e. complaint forms formatted appropriately, accessible meeting spaces for students, complainants and respondents with disabilities.
Gender (including gender identity)	Ensure gender representation on Investigating Officer panel / Assessment Appeals committees
Age	Clear signposting / and communications regarding any special provision for complainants under 18 – including Ombudsman for Children and reference to the Child Safeguarding Statement. Child protection process guidance for IOs to be considered.
Sexual Orientation	None
Religion	None
Civil Status	None
Family Status	None
Membership of the Travelling Community	None
Socio-economic Status	Review provides an opportunity to examine the practice of charging a fee for the processing of Assessment Appeals, noting that there is no fee associated with student complaints.
<p>Select one of the four outcomes below to indicate how the development/review of the policy will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision.</p> <p>Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy is/will be robust and/or promotes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the University. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Outcome 2: Adjust the policy – this involves taking steps to address any adverse impacts before the policy has been developed. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Outline these steps:</i></p> <p>Outcome 3: Continue the policy while mitigating against any potential adverse impacts. <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Outline how these adverse impacts can be mitigated against:</i></p> <p>Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice, as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented or mitigated against. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>In case of option 2 or option 3, if policy adjustment or mitigation is required, please indicate recommended timeframe before policy requires a further EIA review to ensure it is non-discriminatory and upholds UCD's public sector equality duty.</p>	

The form should be signed by the Chair of the Policy Development/Review Group:

*Fabian Dorley*

Chair