



AIM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

AIM GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES APPLY TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

All students of AIM or those seeking to enrol in a course of study with AIM and AIM staff are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy for academic or non-academic matters. These are set out to comply with VETAB and the Higher Education Provider legislation which cover both State and Commonwealth legislation. This grievance procedure is also available via the AIM Student handbook (http://www.aim.edu.au/verve/_resources/2009_Student_Handbook_090311.pdf) and on the AIM staff intranet website.

Submitting grievances about an academic or non-academic matter will be free or at minimal cost to the person accessing this process. All grievances submitted to AIM academic or non-academic will commence not later than 10 working days after the formal lodgement of the complaint/grievance/appeal. AIM students will remain enrolled while the complaint/grievance/appeal process is ongoing.

Students and staff of AIM or those seeking to enrol in a course of study with AIM are entitled to access the complaints and appeals procedures set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus of AIM at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study. The complainant and respondent will not be discriminated against as a result of a grievance being raised. The complainant/respondent have the right to be accompanied and supported throughout the process by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if they so desire. At all stages of the process, reasons and explanations will be given in writing on decision or actions taken, if so requested by the complainant/respondent.

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is a statement of concern reported to AIM that requires action or response from AIM. A grievance is not part of the regular student feedback that AIM encourages as part of its commitment to improve quality, but a formal complaint or appeal requesting a response or action.

AIM provides appropriate appeal and grievance processes for students who wish to make a complaint or appeal against an assessment or to provide feedback if they are unsatisfied with any aspect of their studies at AIM. Independent Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) and Course completion assessments may be arranged if the student feels there is a discrepancy between their results or their competency levels.

This policy is applicable to all AIM academic staff, members of the AIM Academic Board and its committees and members of the community.

There are separate procedures for academic and non-academic grievances as set out in this document.

The AIM Grievance procedure is published in the student handbook and is available on the AIM website

http://www.aim.edu.au/verve/_resources/2009_Student_Handbook_090311.pdf

The procedures and location of this document are communicated to students during AIM week (Orientation week) and to staff via the staff resource page and staff handbook and during the induction of new staff which is generally carried out by the respective Head of Department or the Dean of AIM.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following staff/students have responsibilities in the relation to the academic grievance process and its implementation:

- Complainant (An AIM student or prospective student)
- Respondent (the person against whom the grievance/complaint has been initiated under this procedure)
- Dean
- Chief Operational Officer
- Registrar

- Discipline and Appeals Committee (only for academic matters)
- Academic Board

ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

All AIM students or people seeking to enrol in any accredited higher education course with AIM are entitled to use the grievance procedures set out in this document and there are three stages at which a complaint may be addressed.

Each stage is free of charge, in some cases a minimal charge may arise. At the first stage of the process students may take their complaint to their Head of Department or the Registrar. The complaint will be dealt with within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint/appeal and will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. For international students, the process will take the length of a student's visa into consideration and the student's enrolment for future courses or units. While an appeal is being considered a student maintains his/her enrolment in their course.

Informal Resolution

Aim encourages all parties with a grievance or complaint to resolve issues informally. Students should discuss their grievance with the person/s involved. Students can approach their Head of Department, Dean or student counsellor for advice and support. Students unable to resolve their grievance may use the grievance processes listed below which provide a formal pathway for the resolution of a grievance related to academic issues. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the grievance has substance and is genuine and is required to participate in an appropriate manner.

1. Stage 1: Grievance Process

Students can approach AIM staff members and voice their concerns or grievance. The staff member advises the complainant of the AIM grievance procedure and the person with whom the grievance should be raised.

Unless the staff member and the student agree that the grievance should be handled by another person, the staff member becomes the grievance handler. Where the complainant is a person seeking to enrol in a course of study, the Registrar becomes the grievance handler.

On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler will:

- ensure that the process of investigation into the grievance commences within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint/appeal/grievance, that all supporting documentation has been collected and that all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

- the student is informed and receives acknowledgment of the receipt within seven working days from the date the complaint/appeal/grievance has been lodged;
- facilitate resolution in a timely manner, normally within at least four weeks;
- where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;
- document the process and forward records to the Registrar's office

2. Stage 2: Formal Appeal Process

The second stage of the process is as follows:

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response or the time taken to resolve the matter, the complainant may submit a complaint in writing and appeal to the Discipline and Appeals Committee.

AIM Student Services will be able to issue the complainant with the appropriate forms. The appeal will be submitted to the Registrar who will deal with the appeal within a reasonable time but not longer than 10 working days from the receipt of the appeal.

The Registrar is AIM's representative who manages the academic grievance procedures when an appeal or complaint has been lodged. The Registrar liaises with all concerned parties during the grievance process and maintains records of all documentation such as applications for appeals and the outcomes of the appeals for a period of at least five years. These records are confidential. Access can be granted via the Registrar to parties involved within 48 hours of the Registrar receiving a formal request.

The Dean chairs the Discipline and Appeals Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Board and reports the D&AC recommendations to the Academic Board. Decisions and recommendations by the D&AC are communicated by the Registrar to all parties in a clear and transparent manner. Decisions and recommendations made by the D&AC are supervised and implemented by the Registrar.

Discipline and Appeals Committee (D&AC)

The Discipline and Appeals Committee (D&AC) is authorised by the Academic Board to deal with:

- breaches of discipline by students and apply sanctions if necessary; and
- appeal against grades by students

The Discipline and Appeals Committee meets as required and reports directly to the Academic Board.

Membership consists of: Dean, Assistant Registrar, Chief Operational Officer, Head of General Studies, in some cases the Registrar might attend a meeting..

D&AC Meetings are scheduled on weekly basis.

If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a scheduled meeting they will inform the Assistant Registrar accordingly.

Appeals:

The Discipline and Appeals Committee provides an appeal process for students who wish to appeal results or academic decisions. It also deals with requests such as withdrawals or deferrals for courses or units after census date, where a student claims special circumstances such as illness or misadventure, appeals where RPL's requests have not been granted, special consideration requests for assessments, correction of results on transcripts, requests to change degrees etc.

Process for Students to Lodge an Appeal Request:

- Requests and appeals should be forwarded in writing to student services. Appropriate forms to request an appeal can be produced by student services staff on request and are also on the AIM website for students to download.
- Student will be advised when next D&AC meeting will take place and given an approximate date for a reply to their request/appeal/complaint, usually not longer than 10 working days after the Committee has met.
- An assessment of the nature of the request/appeal/complaint will be made by the Registrar and forwarded to appropriate staff member or Committee e.g. HoD, Dean or D&AC for further processing. Matters forwarded to D&AC will be added to the agenda for next scheduled D&AC meeting.
- The D&AC will reach decisions/outcomes for students, except where in some cases, the Committee might determine that a matter will need further consideration by either the Dean and/or the AIM Executive Committee or Academic Board (e.g. a student's appeal might have general policy or financial implications for AIM).
- The student will be informed of the outcome of the appeal by the Registrar in writing as soon as a decision has been reached but not later than 10 working days after the meeting. The response to the student will be:
 - a) transparent and be written in plain English
 - b) explain the process and the basis on which the decision was reached

3. Stage 3: External Review Process

The third stage of the process at which a complainant can access is as follows:

In compliance with the Higher Education provider Guidelines AIM has an arrangement for an external review of decisions made under the above paragraph by an independent person or body established or nominated by AIM.

If a student is not satisfied with the decision of the Discipline and Appeals Committee, the complainant may submit a request in writing that the matter be further reviewed by an external reviewer. On receipt of a written request from a complainant for an external review of the decision made by the Discipline and

Appeals Committee, the Dean will contact the external reviewer and arrange for an appointment and will assist the complainant in making contact with the external reviewer.

3.1 External Reviewer

Recommendations from an external reviewer will be implemented and procedures will be adjusted accordingly if deemed necessary. A student will be notified of the outcome of the external review process not later than 10 working days after the external review process has commenced.

Recommendations from external examiners will be forwarded to the Dean who will advise the Academic Board if changes to procedures have been recommended by not later than 30 working days after the recommendation has been received. Changes to AIM policies or procedures will be published on the AIM website and will be available to both students and staff.

The details of the appointed external reviewer are as follows:

Dr Scott Dickson, Dean

Australian College of Physical Education

Email: dean@acpe.edu.au

3.2 Complaints Against Staff Involved in the Grievance Process

Students who have grievances against any staff member involved with the grievance process are able to approach the Dean of AIM in the first instance. If the complainant believes that this is inappropriate because of the nature of the complaint, then the complainant can approach the external reviewer directly with his/her concerns.

Appeal against grades or assessments:

- A student may appeal against an assessment in any unit. *An appeal must be lodged with the Registrar within three weeks of results being posted* for the semester in which the unit was undertaken. Dissatisfaction with grades does not constitute grounds for an appeal. On appeal, a review will be made of all components contributing to the original assessment. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the assessment process has:
 - a) been fairly applied
 - b) no procedural or factual errors in the processing of the grade have been made
 - c) had all appropriate components included; and
 - d) had accurate addition of marks on which the assessment grade is based.
- The D&AC will determine whether the original grade stands or the original grade is to be amended due to an error of calculation or process.

- A student may request a remark of a written assignment. A remark of an assignment will be undertaken by the Head of Department or, if the Head of Department was the original assessor, by a suitably qualified person to be determined by the Dean. A remark will carry a non-refundable fee of \$ 50.00.

Disciplinary Procedure in cases of plagiarism:

- A staff member that discovers an instance of a student guilty of plagiarism or cheating in exams or for a submitted assignment must report this incident to the Head of Department including a copy of the assignment in question. The D&AC will consider cases of plagiarism.
- Students will be notified in writing by the Registrar of any penalties which are the result of proven academic misconduct *not later than 10 working days after the D&AC has met*. Students are able to appeal these decisions on the basis of procedural anomalies or factual errors which have a significant effect on the final decision. Students are advised that are able to appeal a decision in writing not later than 14 working days after being notified of the decision.

Process for Heads of Department to lodge claims of academic misconduct:

- Head of Department will inform the Registrar in writing about the nature of the academic misconduct and provide supporting documentation.
- Claims will be tabled at the next scheduled D&AC where a decision should be reached.
- The student concerned will be informed if there will be a delay in response time and will be advised of the nature of the delay not later than 5 working days after the meeting has taken place.

Communication with the Complainant

A student who has lodged an appeal/request that has been dealt with by the D&AC will be informed of the outcome after the Committee has met and has reached a decision, but not later than 10 working days after the meeting has taken place.

If the Committee has been unable to reach a decision e.g. additional information/documentation has been requested, then the student will be informed of this not later than ten working days after the Committee has met and will be asked to provide additional information if so required. A reasonable timeline will be set for the student to submit the additional information/documentation and the appeal/request will be re-tabled at the next scheduled D&AC.

NON ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

All AIM students or people seeking to enrol in any accredited higher education course with AIM are entitled to use the grievance procedures set out in this document and there are three stages at which a complaint may be addressed.

Each stage is free of charge, in some cases a minimal charge may arise. At the first stage of the process students may take their complaint to their Head of Department or the Registrar. The complaint will be dealt with within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint/appeal and will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. For international students, the process will take the length of a student's visa into consideration and the student's enrolment for future courses or units. While an appeal is being considered a student maintains his/her enrolment in their course.

What is a complaint?

While the Institute's intention is for students to complete their studies without unnecessary barriers or incidents, sometimes processes or factors inadvertently or unintentionally interfere with students' learning. AIM has procedures in place for students to provide feedback on the quality of AIM's courses, and after graduation, will ask graduates to participate in program evaluation. In times more immediate solutions are needed and students are able to access the complaints procedures as one of the avenues to achieve more timely outcomes.

Grievances/Complaints

Grievances do not cover academic results. (See section Appeal of Grade).

Informal Resolution

Aim encourages all parties with a grievance or complaint to resolve issues informally.

In the first instance students should discuss their grievance with the person/s involved. Students can approach their Head of Department, Dean or student counsellor for advice and support with this step. Student unable to resolve their grievance may use the grievance process listed below which provides a formal pathway for the resolution of a grievance related to non-academic issues. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the grievance has substance and is genuine and is required to participate in an appropriate manner.

1. Stage 1: Grievance Process

Non academic grievances can be lodged as a verbal complaint or a written complaint

Students can approach AIM staff members and voice their concerns or grievance. The staff member advises the complainant of the AIM grievance procedure and the person with whom the grievance should be raised.

Unless the staff member and the student agree that the grievance should be handled by another person, the staff member becomes the grievance handler. Where the complainant is a person seeking to enrol in a course of study, the Registrar becomes the grievance handler.

On receiving a grievance, the grievance handler will:

- ensure that the process of investigation into the grievance commences within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint/appeal/grievance, that all supporting documentation has been collected and that all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- the student is informed and receives acknowledgment of the receipt within seven working days from the date the complaint/appeal/grievance has been lodged;
- facilitate resolution in a timely manner, normally within at least four weeks;
- where other parties are involved, monitor the process to ensure a mutually acceptable resolution is reached without undue delay;
- document the process and forward records to the Registrar's office

2. Stage 2: Formal Appeal Process

The second stage of the process is as follows:

If a grievance remains unresolved by the process outlined above, the grievance handler refers the grievance to the Registrar. The Registrar is AIM's representative who manages the non-academic grievance procedures when a complaint or grievance has been lodged. The Registrar liaises with all concerned parties during the grievance process and maintains records of all documentation such as written documentation or formal complaints for a period of at least five years. These records are confidential. Access can be granted via the Registrar to parties involved within 48 hours of the Registrar receiving a formal request.

The Registrar is AIM's representative who manages the non-academic grievance procedures when an appeal or complaint has been lodged. The Registrar liaises with all concerned parties during the grievance process and maintains records of all documentation such as applications for appeals and the outcomes of the appeals for a period of at least five years. These records are confidential. Access can be granted via the Registrar to parties involved within 48 hours of the Registrar receiving a formal request. The Registrar will inform the person who has lodged the grievances that the complaint has been received within 10 workings of having received the complaint and keep a log of the non-academic grievance. The Registrar will decide if the request can be resolved without involving one of AIM's Committee's and if necessary discuss the issue with the

Dean or Chief Operational Officer, or if deemed appropriate, refer the matter to one of AIM's Committees'.

2a) Verbal Complaints Procedure

On receipt of an oral complaint the receiver must –

Interview with Complainant

- clarify the complaint with the complainant;
- identify complainant expectations;
- thank complainant for making complaint as it may be of use in the quality improvement process;
- if the staff member receiving the complaint is unable to solve it because of lower authority level, it is referred to the Registrar.
- if the complaint is such that it may lead to legal, media or political issues the matter will be referred to the Dean of the Institute;

Resolution of Complaint

- resolve complaint by offering solutions within delegation;
- document resolution of complaint on Complaints Register and Corrective Action Report;
- follow up to ensure that agreed actions have been carried out.

Unresolved Complaints

- if the receiver cannot resolve complaint the matter will be referred to the Registrar who will contact the complainant with ten working days from the date the complaint has been received. If the matter cannot be resolved the issue will proceed as Written Complaint (see 2b.).

2b) Written Complaints Procedure

The AIM Complaint Form allows students to lodge concerns about any issues related to their studies at AIM. Each report lodged with AIM will be reviewed and action will be taken to resolve issues that are resolvable. Each student lodging a report should ensure his/her contact details have been provided and will receive a response from the Institute. This will be done within 10 working days after receipt of the formal complaint.

The process of managing Student Complaints is illustrated on the flowchart below.

The process for dealing with written complaints is

Investigate Complaint by

- assessing information received by complainant;
- interviewing relevant staff;

- reviewing relevant records;
- gathering other relevant information;

Where Considered Necessary, Interview Complainant and

- clarify the complaint with the complainant;
- identify complainant expectations;
- thank complainant for making complaint as it may well be of use in the quality improvement process;

Resolution of Complaint

- resolve complaint by offering solutions within delegation;
- document resolution/s of complaint on the Complaints Register and Corrective Action Report;
- follow up by the Registrar to delegate to ensure that agreed actions have been carried out and recorded on Corrective Action Report.

Stage 3: External Review Process

The third stage of the process at which a complainant is addressed is as follows:

If not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the complainant may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process by the person appointed by AIM for this purpose.

Unresolved Complaints

- After 5 working days the Registrar will report any unresolved complaints to the Dean;
- if a student or staff member requests further formal action, the Dean is to refer the matter to the External Reviewer in writing with a summary of action taken to date and relevant records;

External Reviewer

Recommendations from an external reviewer will be implemented and procedures will be adjusted accordingly if deemed necessary.

Recommendations from external examiners will be forwarded to the Dean who will advise the Academic Board if changes to procedures have been recommended by not later than 30 working days after the recommendation has been received. Changes to AIM policies or procedures will be published on the AIM website and will be available to both students and staff.

The details of the appointed external reviewer are as follows:

Dr Scott Dickson

Dean

Australian College of Physical Education

Email: dean@acpe.edu.au

Complaints Against Staff Involved in the Grievance Process

Students who have grievances against any staff member involved with the grievance process are able to approach the Dean of AIM in the first instance. If the complainant believes that this is inappropriate because of the nature of the complaint, then the complainant can approach the external reviewer directly with his/hers concerns.

Communication with the Complainant

A student who has lodged a non-academic grievance/complaint that has been resolved will be informed of the outcome after a decision has been reached by not later than ten working days from the date a written complaint has been lodged.

If AIM has been unable to reach a decision e.g. additional information/documentation has been requested, then the student will be informed of this not later than five working days after the matter has been brought to AIM's attention and will be asked to provide the additional information required. A reasonable timeline will be set for the student to submit the additional information/documentation required and the complaint/grievance will be reviewed by not later than 10 working days after the documentation has been received

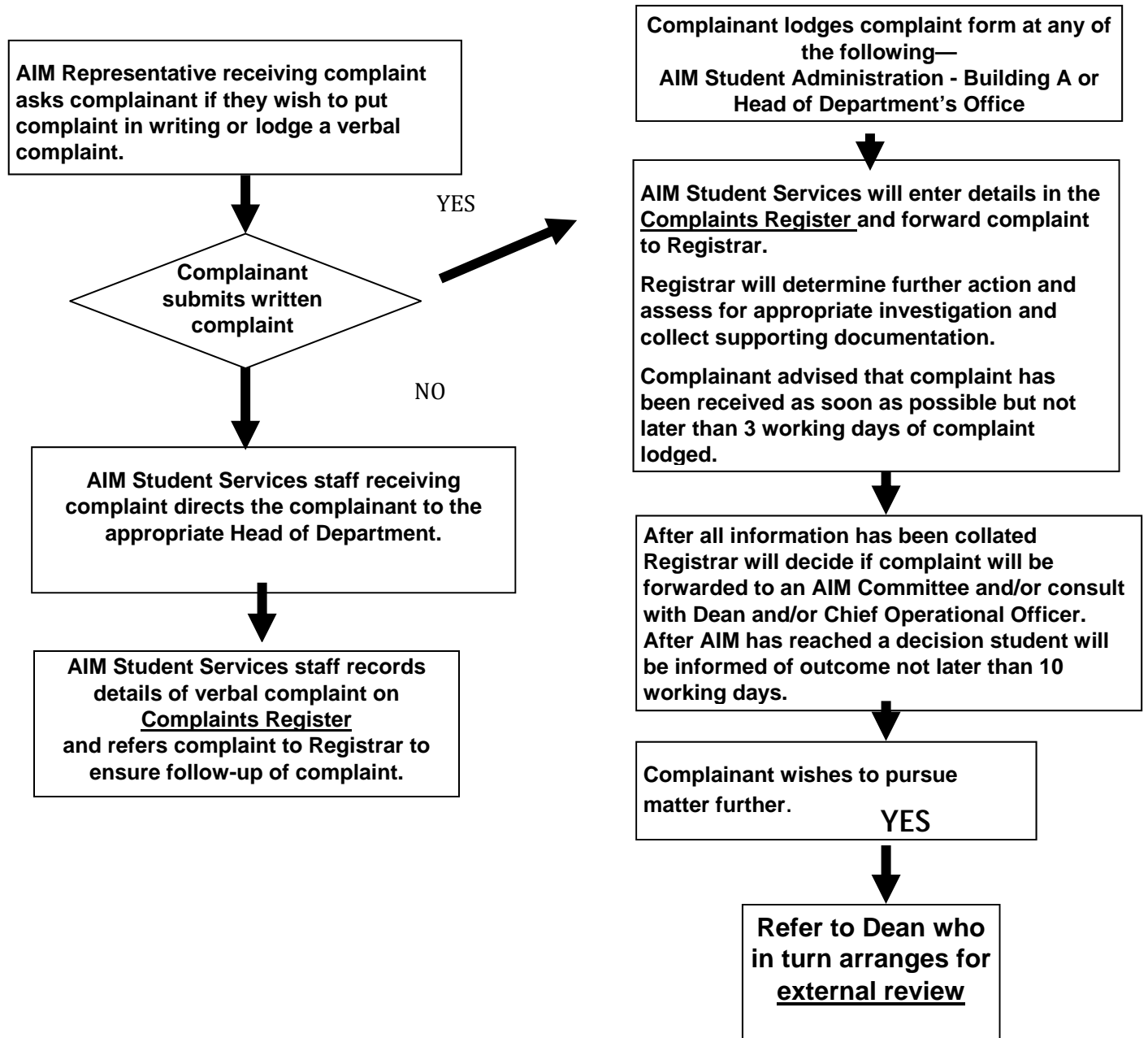
Record of Complaint Register Policy

All complaints (whether verbal or written) shall be brought to the attention of an Administration Officer, who will record the date and nature of the complaints and the complainant's name.

The appropriate action taken in response to the complaint and the required feedback to the complainant will be registered in the complaint register;

- Records of all appeals and applications for review of decisions will be kept and will be accessible to all interested parties for a period of five years. Such records will remain confidential.
- Records of appeals and their outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and filed in a separate file and kept by the Registrar for a period of five years. Parties to the complaints will be allowed supervised access to these records.

Non-academic Grievance Process Flowchart



PUBLISHING OF DISSEMINATING OF THIS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

These AIM Grievance policies and procedures are published on the AIM webpage in the student handbook and are available to all students and staff.

The AIM Grievance policies and procedures have been approved by the AIM Academic Board on 22 November 2007

This policy is communicated to academic staff through the Student Handbook and the Staff resources page on the AIM website (accessible only to AIM staff). The Registrar is responsible for the training of academic staff in the application of the above policies and procedures. The Registrar is also responsible for the training of support staff in its application.