



**SANTS**  
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION  
**TAKING EDUCATION TO THE PEOPLE**

## **STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

## Policy Information Page

<b>The following information to be completed by the policy owner/custodian:</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Student Complaints Policy and Procedures
<b>Approving authority</b>	Executive Committee
<b>New or revised policy</b>	Revised
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<b>Stakeholders consulted</b>	Head: Student Support, Marketing and Communications Manager, Executive Academic Director, Head: Academic Quality Enhancement, Academic Heads and students
<b>Policy Management</b>	
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Ryan O'Mahoney Managing Director
<b>Signature Policy Owner</b>	
<b>Policy Co-owner</b>	Prof Ina Joubert Executive Academic Director
<b>Cross-reference</b>	Assessment Policy and Procedures
<b>Language edited</b>	Yes/No
<b>Reviewed by a legal resource</b>	Yes/No

## Glossary of terms

Complaint	A written expression of dissatisfaction from a student with either the level of service delivery from SANTS or an action or decision that the student considers to be unfair, discriminatory, provocative, unwelcome, prejudiced, unjustified, or unsatisfactory. Overarching term for informal and formal complaint.
Formal complaint	A written expression of dissatisfaction from a student with either the level of service delivery from SANTS or an action or decision that the student considers to be unfair, discriminatory, provocative, unwelcome, prejudiced, unjustified, or unsatisfactory. Having first attempted to resolve the complaint through the informal procedure, a student who believes that his or her complaint has not been adequately addressed is advised to lodge a formal complaint.
Informal complaint	A written expression of dissatisfaction from a student with either the level of service delivery from SANTS or an action or decision that the student considers to be unfair, discriminatory, provocative, unwelcome, prejudiced, unjustified, or unsatisfactory. The complaint is handled through a well-documented informal resolution process.

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## **1. Purpose**

SANTS Private Higher Education Institution (SANTS) recognises a student's right to lodge a complaint and is committed to addressing complaints fairly, timeously, effectively and consistently.

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- Foster a culture that recognises complaints as a chance to enhance SANTS' rapport with students.
- Establish a complaints handling procedure that prioritises the ongoing enhancement of our services and standards.
- Encourage a culture where complaints are resolved promptly, objectively, and with sensitivity, ensuring confidentiality.
- Establish a fair and equitable platform that respects both parties (students and SANTS) without any form of discrimination or victimisation.
- Safeguard the privacy of all parties involved.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all students who are enrolled with SANTS.

It is necessary for all staff members to acquaint themselves with the policy, with a special emphasis on departments that have regular interactions with students.

The Head of Academic Quality Enhancement ensures that formal student complaints are handled consistently and follows uniform procedures, offering an independent and unbiased assessment of both academic and administrative complaints.

This policy does not deal with complaints related to assessment matters. The Assessment Policy and Procedures covers appeals regarding the assessment process. The primary objective of an appeal is to allow students to bring to the attention of the Assessment and Student Affairs Committee, feelings of dissatisfaction or injustice, which may arise from the assessment process and to seek appropriate recourse.

## **3. Categories of student complaints**

### **3.1. Academic Support Complaints**

These encompass various types of complaints, which may include but are not restricted to complaints regarding academic decisions, actions, processes, and/or procedures, encompassing the delivery of academic support services, decisions, and/or actions taken by academic staff that impact individual students or groups of students, access to and/or the quality of resources, as well as academic-related matters.

### **3.2. Workplace Integrated Learning Complaints**

These encompass various types of complaints, which may include but are not restricted to complaints about Workplace Integrated Learning (WIL) decisions and actions, processes and/or procedures. These complaints may include WIL support service delivery and decisions and/or actions by WIL employees that affect an individual student or groups of students.

### **3.3. Administrative Support Complaints**

These encompass various types of complaints, which may include but are not restricted to complaints about decisions and actions associated with administration services. Complaints may include service delivery, graduation, certification and decisions by administrative employees that affect an individual student or groups of students.

### **3.4. Financial Complaints**

These encompass various types of complaints, which may include but are not restricted to complaints about decisions and actions associated with financial services and service delivery related to bursaries and fees.

## **4. Procedures for the handling of student complaints**

### **4.1. Phase 1: Informal procedure**

Student complaints are to be lodged in writing through the MySANTS Learning Management System (LMS). Students who complain via a telephonic call are informed to send the complaint via the MySANTS LMS.

The informal complaint is handled through a well-documented informal resolution process.

Upon receipt of a written informal complaint from a student, the designated staff member assumes the responsibility of addressing the concerns raised by the student. It is the duty of the designated staff member to either resolve the informal complaint or appropriately refer it to the relevant department for further resolution. It is the duty of the designated staff member to answer and keep record of the informal complaint via the MySANTS LMS as well as the student's response.

### **4.2. Phase 2: Formal procedure**

Having first attempted to resolve the complaint through the informal procedure as described in 4.1 above, a student who believes that his or her complaint has not been adequately addressed is advised to lodge a formal complaint.

A formal complaint must be submitted in writing using the prescribed form included in this policy (Annexure A: Submission of formal complaint), with all relevant documents and correspondence attached as evidence, to the following email address: [aqe@sants.co.za](mailto:aqe@sants.co.za)

In cases where a formal written complaint is lodged, it is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Quality Enhancement to conduct an investigation. The Head of Academic Quality Enhancement acknowledges the receipt of the complaint within a period of five (5) working days and escalates the complaint to the relevant employee and line manager.

The assigned employee handling the investigation maintains official records of the steps taken in response to the complaint and the resulting outcome. The student is notified in writing about the outcome of the complaint within four weeks from the date of its submission.

#### **4.3. Phase 3: Appeals procedure**

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure, the student must lodge a formal written appeal within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the outcome.

A formal written appeal can be lodged to the Executive Committee as follows:

*Step One* An appellant/student may lodge an appeal with the Chair: Executive Committee in writing within a reasonable period of time but not later than 14 days following on the date on which notice was given on the outcome of the formal complaint process. A formal complaint must be submitted in writing using the prescribed form (Annexure B: Appeal against outcome of formal complaint: Form COM-02), with all relevant documents and correspondence attached as evidence, to the following email address: [exec@sants.co.za](mailto:exec@sants.co.za). Full details of the element(s) of disagreement(s) shall bear the signature of the appellant/student and a copy thereof must be filed with the Executive Committee.

*Step Two* The Chair: Executive Committee and one other designated manager shall assess the appeal.

*Step Three* After the outcome has been established, the Chair: Executive Committee and the designated manager shall confer with the appellant/student in order to resolve the disagreement(s). At this meeting the facts shall be presented and considered. An effort shall be made to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties.

*Step Four* The Chair: Executive Committee and designated manager shall communicate the outcome to the Executive Committee of the resolution or non-resolution of the appeal and will communicate its decision in writing to all parties concerned.

*Step Five* Should appellant/student not be satisfied with the Executive Committee decision, the appellant/students may register a formal complaint with the relevant Quality Council, within 14 days after receipt of report on appeal's outcome.

*Step Six* The outcome of the appeal process must be contained and recorded in a written record.

**Annexure A: Formal complaint: Form COM-01**

Student name and surname										
Student number										
Name of programme enrolled on										
Detailed description of formal complaint, including informal process followed.										
Student name	Student signature					Date				

This form should be completed and submitted via e-mail to: [aqe@sants.co.za](mailto:aqe@sants.co.za)

Documentation that substantiates the formal complaint must be submitted with Formal complaint: Form COM-01.



**Annexure B: Appeal against outcome of formal complaint: Form COM-02**

Student name and surname											
Student number											
Name of programme enrolled on											
Detail and outcome of formal complaint											
Reason for appeal against outcome of formal complaint											
Student name	Student signature						Date				

This form should be completed and submitted via e-mail to: [exec@sants.co.za](mailto:exec@sants.co.za)