

AU Student Appeals Committee

Terms of Reference

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Student Appeals Committee at Adelaide University.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years.

1. Establishment

	[authority]
	5 January 2026
	31 January 2029

The Student Appeals Committee (SAC) is established under the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy as a standing committee of Academic Board.

2. Purpose

The SAC determines outcomes of appeals referred under the Student Appeals Procedure and is the final avenue of internal appeal within the University.

In carrying out its purpose, the SAC assesses appeals fairly, consistently, and in accordance with natural justice.

3. Scope

The SAC will consider appeals referred to it under the Student Appeals Procedure. Appeals must satisfy the eligibility and grounds for appeal, as outlined in the procedure.

Complaints regarding decisions which the University has not designated as appealable decisions may be dealt with under the Student Complaints Resolution Procedure or as otherwise provided under University policy.

4. Authority

The SAC has authority to:

- consider and determine student appeals
- affirm, overturn, or vary decisions
- refer matters back to the original decision-maker for reconsideration, with recommendations.

Decisions of the SAC are final within the University. Students may contact the Adelaide University Student Ombud or pursue a complaint with an external agency (e.g., the National Student Ombudsman) if they remain dissatisfied.

5. Membership

Appointment and Tenure

When convened, the SAC will comprise four panel members drawn from a nominated group of Adelaide University staff and students.

Before the start of an academic year, each College PVC, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, and the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation will nominate up to three staff to serve as panel members of the SAC, for endorsement by the Provost. Nominees will have experience in University academic or administrative processes and comprise a mix of genders and academic and professional staff.

The Provost will appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair, who may be nominees (but are not required to be).

Up to six student members will be appointed annually in collaboration with the Adelaide University Student Association (AUSA).

Staff panel members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair, will be appointed for a two-year term, subject to continued availability and eligibility. Where such members cannot continue for a second year, the annual nomination process will seek to fill any vacancies. Student members serve for a one-year term in alignment with AUSA representation cycles.

Where panel membership is insufficient to support SAC appeals, additional nominations may be called for at the discretion of the Provost, on advice from the Associate Director, Student Governance (or delegate).

Appointed members will undertake relevant training before commencing their SAC role.

Convening the Committee

The Senior Manager, Complaints, Appeals and Conduct, in accordance with the Student Appeals Procedure, will determine if a matter should be referred to the SAC. Where a referral is made, the Associate Director, Student Governance (or delegate) will convene a meeting of the SAC, to be held within 20 working days of the referral being received, or otherwise as soon as practicable.

When convened, the SAC will comprise:

- the Chair (or Deputy Chair)
- two additional panel members
- one student member
- a Student Complaint and Conduct Advisor (as executive support)

In convening the SAC, consideration will be given to:

- independence from the area relevant to the decision being appealed
- appropriate experience and expertise, taking into account the nature of the appeal
- diversity in membership.

A quorum is three members, including the Chair (or Deputy Chair) and the student member.

Members must not participate in an appeal where they were involved in the decision being appealed. Any other potential conflicts of interest must be declared. Where a Chair or Deputy Chair is unable to convene a meeting due to a conflict of interest, an alternate Chair

will be nominated by the Provost.

6. Meeting procedures

A notice of the SAC meeting will be emailed to the student at least five working days before the meeting. The notice will advise the student:

- that the matter is being referred to the SAC and the date, time and location (which may be online) of the meeting
- they have a right to attend the meeting and to speak in support of their appeal
- they may bring a support person, who cannot be a lawyer
- the names and roles of the panel members participating in the SAC
- what information is being provided to the SAC (and copies of relevant documents that were not produced or submitted by the student).

The SAC will take any reasonable action necessary to accommodate any special needs of the student to participate in the meeting.

The SAC may invite the original decision-maker or review officer (or nominee) to attend part of the meeting or to respond in writing to the student's grounds or specific points of appeal. The SAC may also make additional enquiries, either before, during or after the meeting, to assist with its decision.

For complex cases, the Chair may request the additional support of an internal or external expert to assist the committee.

Meetings will be held without undue formality and in accordance with principles of natural justice. The Chair (or Deputy Chair) will ensure confidentiality is maintained. The Chair has discretion to adjourn a meeting for a reasonable time, where additional information is required or at the request of one of the parties.

SAS Student Complaint and Conduct Advisors will act as Executive Officers to the Committee to provide procedural support and expertise, and to support an accurate record of the meeting and outcomes.

7. Decision-Making and Outcomes

The Committee will deliberate in private and reach its decision by consensus. Where required the Chair has the casting vote.

The Committee may:

- affirm a decision
- overturn a decision or part of a decision
- vary a decision
- refer a matter back to the original decision-maker for reconsideration, with recommendations

The SAC's decision and reasons will be communicated in writing to the student within 10 working days of the meeting or decision. The communication will include information about any impact on the student's enrolment (and visa conditions where relevant) and, where an appeal is denied, a student's right to consult the Adelaide University Student Ombud and seek external review.

Relevant parties within the University will be advised of the outcome. Any required outcomes or actions following the SAC's decision will be implemented promptly, subject to processes where a student seeks external review.

8. Confidentiality and Recordkeeping

All deliberations and records of the SAC are confidential and will be managed in accordance with Adelaide University's privacy and information management policies.

Records of appeals and decisions will be retained securely in the designated record-keeping system.

9. Institutional Learning and Reporting

A de-identified report of SAC referrals and outcomes will be provided to Academic Board every six months, including analysis of any trends, underlying causes, and associated actions.

Periodic (de-identified) summaries of decisions, trends and learnings will be provided to the Provost, College PVCs and relevant senior leaders for continuous improvement purposes. The SAC Chair and Associate Director, Student Governance will identify systemic or policy issues emerging from student appeals and make recommendations for improvement.