

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY**

### **Australian College of Theology Academic Matters**

The Presbyterian Theological Centre (PTC) is an affiliated College of the Australian College of Theology (ACT). Accordingly the governing body of the PTC, the Theological Education Committee of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in NSW, has adopted the ACT's

1. *Dispute Resolution Policy for Domestic Students*
2. *Dispute Resolution Policy for International Students*

as the means of dealing with complaints that are defined in those policies and can be found on:

<http://www.actheology.edu.au/undergrad%20handbook/09%20HESA%20policies.pdf>

Complaints concerning matters other than these are dealt with in the following internal process.

### **PTC Student Grievance Policy (Internal Process)**

#### **Introduction**

During their time of study within the PTC, students and staff will experience differences of opinion with each other. This is a healthy situation and in most cases, leads to lively debate, learning, refinement of ideas, understanding and spiritual growth. Such differences of opinion are not considered in the following policy. Where the student grievance policy is to be implemented, it should be done in a context of mutual trust and brotherly love.

#### **Policy**

Where a student has a grievance about their own welfare or that of others; or the operation of the Centre; or the theological orthodoxy of a particular lecturer (as expressed in the Bible, as the supreme standard and the Westminster Confession of Faith as the subordinate standard, read in the light of the Declaratory Statement contained in the Basis of Union of the PCA); or the personal behaviour of a particular lecturer, the student has the right to have the matter dealt with as a grievance under the following procedure and may be supported by a person of his/her preference, without cost to the TEC. Such a person is present in a support role and does not have the right to represent the student by speaking on their behalf.

#### **Procedure**

1. Complaints concerning the welfare of students and the operations of the Centre generally may be raised with the Students' Representative Council and through the Council, with the Principal.
2. Complaints concerning the personal behaviour of a lecturer towards a student may initially be discussed with the Principal. If the grievance is against the Principal, it may be addressed directly to the TEC Executive. In every instance the lecturer

- who is the subject of complaint shall have a right of reply throughout the process. If the grievance against a lecturer remains unsatisfied after discussion with the Principal, the student may raise the matter formally with a sub-committee of three members of the Theological Education Committee Executive appointed for that purpose. The grievance must be addressed formally by letter to the secretary of the TEC, outlining the details of the grievance.
3. If the theological orthodoxy (as defined in this policy) of a particular lecturer is a cause of grievance to a student, the matter should first be discussed with the lecturer concerned. If the resulting explanations are not considered satisfactory, the student may discuss the matter with the Principal and if still unsatisfied, the student may raise the matter formally with the Faculty, by letter addressed to the Secretary of the Faculty.
  4. If as a result of raising the grievance of theological orthodoxy with the Principal and the Faculty, the matter is not resolved, and the student wishes to proceed further, students having first exercised their rights of complaint under (3) above, may take the matter up with a sub-committee of three members of the Theological Education Committee appointed for that purpose. In this instance, the grievance must be addressed formally by letter to the secretary of the TEC. In the case of lecturers who are under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery, if the matter remains unresolved, any further action must be taken through the Presbytery, to be dealt with under the GAA code of discipline.
  5. In the case of candidates for the ministry only, further appeal on matters of assessment or course content may be made through the Principal to the College Committee.
  6. A final avenue of appeal in the case of candidates for the ministry on matters affecting their progress through the course of training exists by way of petition to the General Assembly of Australia.
  7. Appropriate records of the handling of a grievance/complaint will be kept for a minimum of five years and treated as confidential, with appropriate access to involved parties.
  8. The complainant may withdraw a grievance at any stage in the process. If the grievance is withdrawn, the matter will be deemed to be closed.
  9. The process shall take place at no cost to the student, apart from travelling expenses.

*Adopted 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008*  
*Theological Education Committee*