



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

# **2023 University of Waikato Student Complaints Report**

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## Student Complaints Report

This report details University of Waikato student complaints for 2023 as required under the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (Code). In accord with the Code requirements this report will be made publicly available via the University website.

### Complaints Process

In 2021, the University implemented the MyComplaints portal within the student management system - MyWaikato. The portal allows students, and staff (or staff on behalf of students), to lodge formal complaints online. Whilst the portal provides a mechanism for staff to lodge complaints of student misconduct (primarily related to academic integrity), it is also the central method for students to lodge formal complaints against staff, other students, or the University generally.

The MyComplaints portal encourages students to consider several options prior to making a formal online complaint – with the aim of investigating if the matter can be resolved at a local level prior to being formalised (dependent upon the seriousness of the complaint). In the first instance, students are encouraged to consider approaching the person directly and discussing the issue with them in a respectful and kind manner. If the first option is not suitable or successful, and the matter is of an academic/paper nature, then students are encouraged to contact their academic class representative. If the second option is not suitable or successful, then students are encouraged to contact their Head of School or Division Director to discuss the complaint. If the previous steps to resolve the complaint have been unsuccessful or are not suitable, then students are advised to submit an online formal complaint through the MyComplaints portal. It is important to note that the complaints webpage is explicit in stating that matters such as harassment and bullying behaviour etc, “may need to be addressed in a more formal manner in the first instance”.

All complaints received through the system are triaged and tracked by key staff based in the Academic Office. Complaints can be assigned to a single delegated authority for decision making in accordance with the relevant regulations ([Student Discipline Regulation](#) and [Student Complaints Procedures](#)). Due to the sensitive nature of complaints, the MyComplaints portal is

confidential. MyComplaints tracks the amount of time since a complaint was made, which helps staff to ensure a timely resolution of complaints. Students can request that a complaint is considered through a specific Tikanga Māori process. The spirit of tikanga is to seek resolutions to complaints in a way that encourages a facilitated open exchange of views to achieve a resolution that is agreed by all the parties involved.

## Complaints Reporting Protocol

For the purposes of this report a complaint is defined as - a formal student complaint that has been lodged through the University’s online MyComplaints portal.

The student complaints detailed below are divided into three groupings as the online complaint's portal separates the complaints into the following categories: General Complaints, Higher Degree Complaints and Student Misconduct Complaints.

## General Complaints

The University received a total of 42 general complaints from students including 29 academic-related complaints, 3 facilities complaints, 1 other/general complaint, and 9 staff complaints (see Table 1). These complaints were processed using the Student Complaints Procedures process: 37 complaints were resolved, 4 were ongoing at the end of the academic year, and one was withdrawn.

General Complaint Type	No.	Incorrect complaint or withdrawn	Investigated	Resolved	Ongoing
Academic - course	5	0	5	3	2
Academic - enrolment	11	0	11	10	1
Academic - exams	2	0	2	2	0
Academic - processes	11	0	11	11	0
Facilities	3	0	3	3	0
Other - general	1	1	0	0	0
Staff	9	0	9	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 1 General Complaints**

## Higher Degree Complaints

The University received a total of 5 complaints from students under the heading of Higher Degree (Postgraduate) matters (Table 2). Five complaints were about the higher degree academic processes, of which 1 complaint was an incorrect/withdrawn complaint, and 4 remained ongoing at the end of the academic year.

Higher Degree Complaint Type	No.	Incorrect complaint or withdrawn	Investigated	Resolved	Ongoing
Academic - processes	5	1	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 2 Higher Degree Complaints**

## Student Misconduct Complaints

The University received 3 complaints from students about other students. All 3 complaints involved student misconduct (Table 3). The complaints were processed utilising the University's Student Discipline Committee process and were resolved.

Student Misconduct Complaint Type	No.	Incorrect complaint or withdrawn	Investigated	Resolved	Ongoing
Student behaviour	3	0	3	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 3 Student Misconduct Complaints**

## Dispute Resolution

The Code provides a mechanism for tertiary students who have exhausted their institution's complaints process, the opportunity to take their complaint to an external Ministry of Education appointed disputes resolution provider. The Tertiary Education Disputes Resolution (TEDR) organisation has been appointed by the Minister for Education as the provider of the tertiary education domestic disputes resolution scheme. In 2023, no University of Waikato complaints were referred to TEDR.



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