



# Higher degree by research student grievance fact sheet

The [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(HESA\)](#) and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency's [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) require universities to have grievance procedures in place that include internal and external review mechanisms to address academic and non-academic issues.

Universities that are awarded research block grants through the Research Training Program (RTP) are required to make grievance procedures for higher degree by research (HDR) students publicly available as part of their RTP scholarship policy. This is a requirement of subparagraph 1.6.45(10) of the [Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#).

Universities are autonomous self-accrediting institutions established under state, territory and Commonwealth legislation, and are responsible for the content, delivery and quality of the courses they offer. Division 19 of HESA sets out general quality and accountability requirements that universities must meet.

If you are a HDR student and have a grievance regarding internal university issues, there are a number of pathways you can pursue. Some of these are listed below.

## Seek a local solution

If you are a HDR student and have a grievance, you should approach your supervisor(s) and/or academic unit HDR coordinator or support person as a first point of call. These individuals can work with you to try and resolve the issue if possible. If the issue is unresolved, they will be able to inform you of your university's internal grievance procedures.

## Utilise internal university grievance procedures

If you are unsatisfied with the outcome of your discussion with your supervisor and/or HDR coordinator, you are entitled to pursue the university's internal procedures to remedy the situation.

You can make a complaint about any aspect of your experience with a university, its agents or related parties. Your university's RTP scholarship policy must identify the grievance and review procedures for HDR students. Your university's website should also provide detailed information about lodging a complaint.

Most universities also provide information about the advocacy services available to students in need at their universities for university-related issues. Advocacy officers provide support relating to academic and misconduct appeals, academic offences and other disciplinary issues. Student advocacy services are also a useful information source for navigating university policies and procedures.

## Further avenues of appeal

If a formal complaint is lodged, your university will provide a response or decision in writing. This will include information about the next course of action should you be unhappy with your university's decision. General information about higher education student complaints, including further pathways to pursue a grievance, is available on the [StudyAssist website](#).

