

Complaints

Document control

Category	Academic	Sub-category	Improvement Opportunities
Version number	11	Responsibility	Director responsible for Academic
Approval date	12/11/2024	Next review	12/11/2027
Approved by	Academic Standards Committee	Resolution number	24/ASC10/2

1. Purpose

- 1.1. To enable a process which is based on principles of Te Tiriti partnership, participation and protection.
- 1.2. To provide a process by which complaints are resolved fairly and as quickly as possible, whilst protecting the rights of complainants and WITT kaimahi and ākonga.
- 1.3. To provide protection and support for all parties concerned during this procedure and ensuring that those involved are not subject to harassment, retaliation or victimisation.
- 1.4. To use pertinent information collected via this policy and procedure to improve the performance of the Institute as a whole.

2. Application

- 2.1. This policy and procedure applies to all WITT ākonga, kaimahi, contractors, and members of the general public who wish to lay a formal complaint about any WITT activity.
- 2.2. For complaints about harassment refer to Policy and Procedure [Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination](#).
This procedure should be read in conjunction with Policy and Procedures [Student Charter](#) and [Staff Code of Conduct](#).
- 2.3. The Complaints Officer is responsible for all complaints.

3. Definitions

[Abbreviations and Definitions](#)

Term	Definition
Concern	A matter where it is likely that resolution can be obtained by direct, informal consultation with the people concerned. A situation where the ākonga considers appropriate standards have not been met but the impact on them has not been great.
Formal Complaint	Formal notification of any issue adversely affecting one or more individuals that requires investigation, action, and response. Records of all complaints must be maintained centrally.
Risk	Any issues that constitute a risk to kaimahi, ākonga or other stakeholders such as government or industry should be evaluated for their level using the ' Risk Rating '

	Methodology ’ and reported to the appropriate Committee i.e. WITT Subsidiary Audit and Risk Committee.
Serious complaint	Issues involving violence, verbal abuse, cultural safety, unsafe conduct or work practice, disclosure of confidential Institute or personal information, theft, misrepresentation of WITT for personal gain, possession of or being under the influence of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol, or any other act not specifically addressed in this definition but which is of a similar nature.
Complaints Officer	All complaints of an academic nature are the responsibility of the Complaints Officer.

4. Policy

- 4.1. Ākonga are encouraged to resolve their concerns either directly with the person concerned, through online feedback, the Student Voice portal, or with the WITT Student Success team. Refer to [Student Voice Policy](#).
- 4.2. A complaint must be lodged to the Complaints Officer normally within 21 days of the incident or issue. It may be lodged in any of the following ways:
 - Completion of a confidential Complaint Form (submit to complaints@witt.ac.nz)
 - Written letter (submit to Registry)
 - Email
 - Verbally (directly to any kaimahi) who will record the issue
 - By kaimahi after disclosure by ākonga or other kaimahi – requires kaimahi to lodge the issue in writing on their behalf.
- 4.3. The Complaints Officer will be responsible for ensuring the complaint procedure is followed.
- 4.4. If a complaint is about a WITT kaimahi, the kaimahi has the right to have details of the complaint and the identity of the complainant UNLESS there are extenuating circumstances which may place the complainant at risk. Natural justice requires that a party be aware of their accuser. Therefore maintaining a complainant’s anonymity needs to be an exception rather than the rule.

Extenuating circumstances should therefore only be:

Where the complaint is made under Principle 10 (d) of the Privacy Act 2020 which includes prevention or lessening of a serious and imminent threat to:
 - Public health or public safety, or
 - The life or health of the individual concerned or another individual.
- 4.5. WITT reserves the right not to proceed with a complaint which is anonymous or based on hearsay.

Complaints made 22 or more days following the incident or issue may proceed at the discretion of the Complaints Officer.
- 4.6. A complainant or respondent may be represented at all stages of the complaints process by an advocate of their choice, who will have speaking rights.
- 4.7. A complainant or respondent may be accompanied by support people/whānau at all stages of the complaints procedure. The respondent may choose any support person they wish to represent them. Support people/whānau do not have speaking rights.
- 4.8. Any person can appeal the process or outcome of the complaint by lodging an appeal within seven working days. Refer to Appeals Policy.

Policy: Complaints

- 4.9. Any WITT kaimahi or ākonga who is subject to a complaint has the right to reply to the issues raised and must be given the opportunity to exercise this right.
- 4.10. The Complaints Officer will notify the Executive responsible for Finance of any complaints that could potentially result in an insurance liability, or financial payout.
- 4.11. Final outcomes of any investigation will be communicated, by the Complaints Officer, back to the appropriate person(s) and/or Schools.

All records generated during this process will be maintained on the confidential central complaints file held by the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer will provide a bi-annual summary report to Academic Committee/Executive to enable Institutional quality trends analysis.
- 4.12. New ākonga will be made aware of this Complaints policy and procedure through various publications e.g. Student Handbook and iWITT.
- 4.13. Ākonga have the opportunity to provide feedback on the complaints process – refer to Complaint form.

Reconsideration of result

- 4.14. Ākonga who believe their mark or grade for an assessment is incorrect should first discuss this with their kaiako within five working days of the return of the assessment.
- 4.15. The kaiako provides feedback to the ākonga to clarify why the grade or mark was awarded and may, if justified, amend the result.
- 4.16. If the ākonga still believes that the mark or grade is incorrect, they may apply for a reconsideration following the process as set out in procedure 6.2 of this policy.
- 4.17. Reconsideration requests are investigated, and appropriate action decided by the delegated authority. Actions may include a recount, re-mark, reconsideration or review of evidence, reassessment, or no action. Reconsideration may lead to no change or to a raising of a grade or mark.
- 4.18. Ākonga may request a reconsideration of their course final grade following the process as set out in procedure 6.2 of this policy. There needs to be grounds for the reconsideration, e.g., an irregularity in the conduct of summative assessment or in the results reporting and approval process, and ākonga need to identify the grounds in their application.
- 4.19. Final grade reconsideration requests are investigated, and the appropriate action or outcome decided by the delegated authority. This may include reconsiderations of one or more assessment grades or assessment evidence, or amendment of the final grade.
- 4.20. If ākonga do not agree with a reconsideration decision, they may lodge a complaint following the process as set out in procedure 6.2 of this policy.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Director of School or delegate are responsible for ensuring that kaimahi and ākonga in their area are fully aware of this Complaints policy and procedures.
- 5.2. The Complaints Officer is responsible for ensuring the complaint is followed through to resolution in a timely manner, ensuring all pertinent records are maintained on file and provide a biannual summary report to Academic Committee/Executive. Refer to flowcharts 6.3 and 6.4 for procedure and timeframes.

6. Procedure

- 6.1. Concerns, Complaints, and Appeals (flowchart)
- 6.2. Reconsideration of Result (flowchart)

6.3. Complaints (flowchart)

6.4. Serious Complaints (flowchart)

7. Related forms and guidance documents

Forms and templates

- [Complaint Form](#)
- [Reconsideration of Result Form](#)

8. Record management

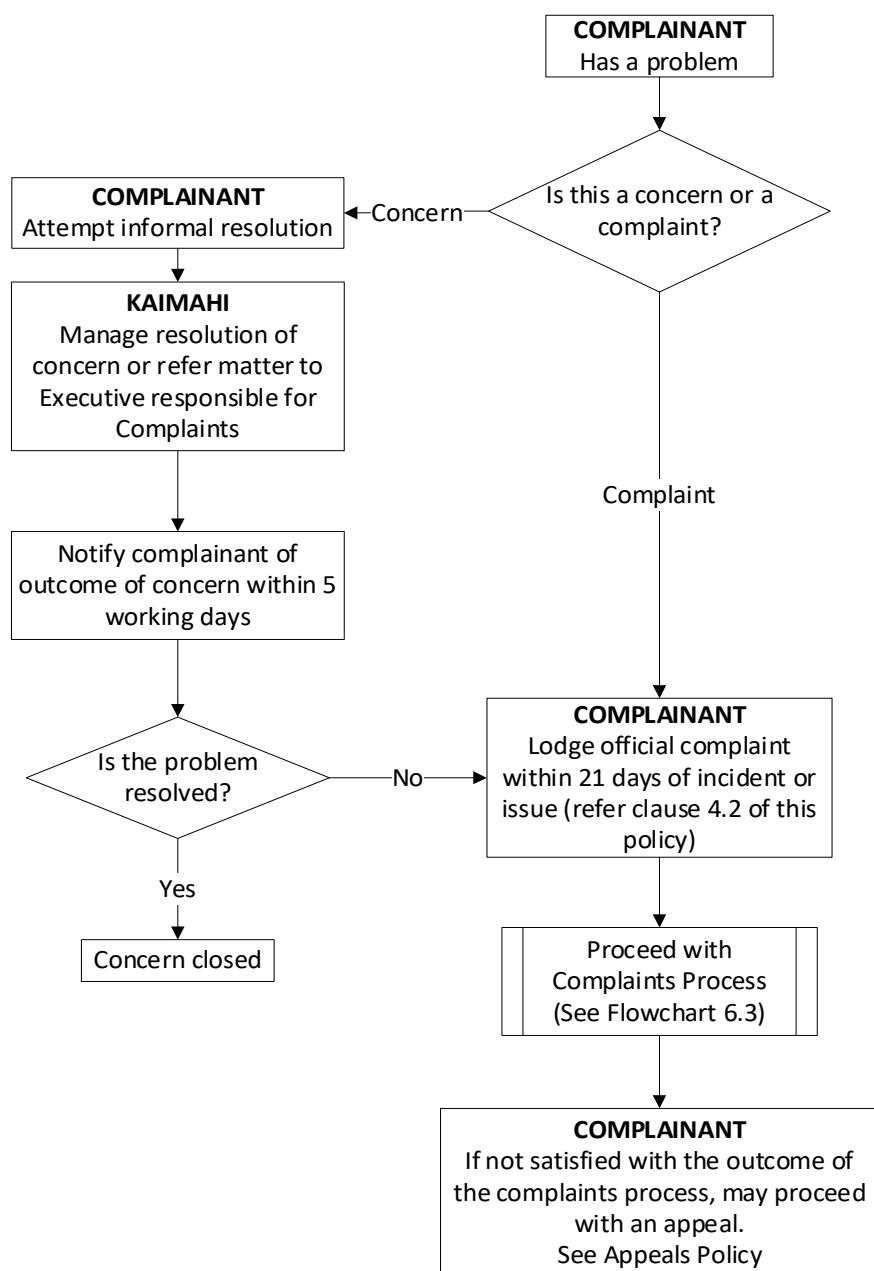
Record	Responsibility	Filed	Retention time	Disposal action
Bi-annual Summary Reports	Complaints Officer	Complaints database	10 years from last information entry date	Transfer to Archives New Zealand
Complaint – that set precedent	Complaints Officer	Complaints folder	10 years after complaint was closed	Transfer to Archives New Zealand
Complaints – that do not set precedent	Executive Director	Serious Complaints file Executive Director's Office	Indefinitely	Transfer to Archives New Zealand
Documentation Examples: – <i>Information Requests</i> – <i>Agency reply to requests</i> – <i>Communications with Privacy Commissioner</i> – <i>Agency investigations into complaints</i>				
Ākonga				
Complaint – relating to individual ākonga	Complaints Officer	Complaints folder	7 years after date of last action	Destroy
Disciplinary Hearings (Serious)	Complaints Officer	Complaints folder	10 years after last date of action	Destroy
Disciplinary Hearings (Minor)	Complaints Officer	Complaints folder	7 years after last date of action	Destroy
Documentation Examples: – <i>Advice of allegation and response</i> – <i>Reports</i> – <i>Investigation notes</i> – <i>Signed statements</i> – <i>Inquiry records</i> – <i>Referrals to external bodies</i> – <i>Records of remedial and/or disciplinary action</i> – <i>Submissions in relation to disciplinary action</i>				
Academic Committee minutes/ Executive notes	Chairperson	Academic Services & Quality	10 years	Transfer to Archives New Zealand

		Coordinator /CE Executive Manager		
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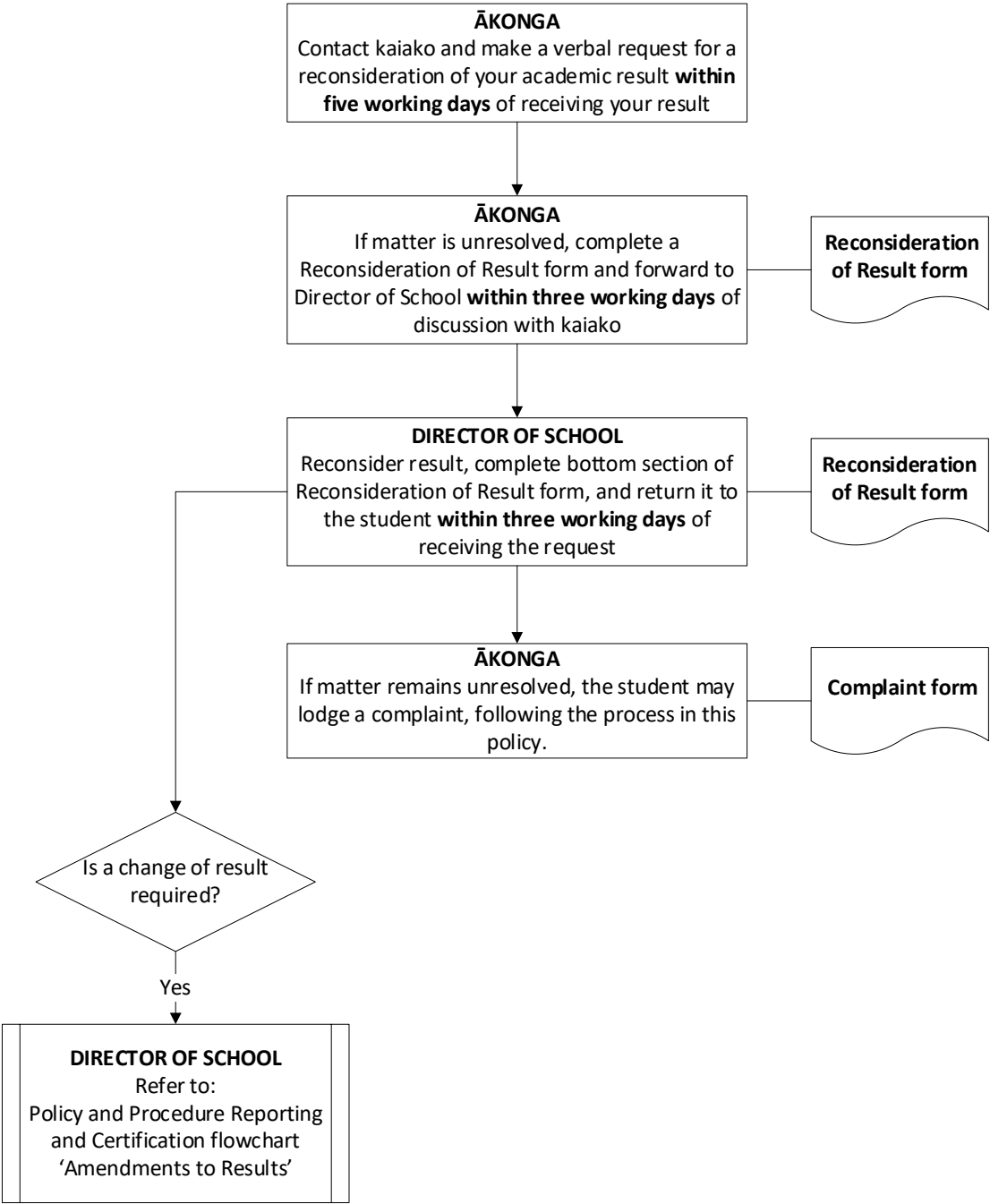
9. Revision history

Version	Description of change	Effective date
05	Biennial review. Complaints and improvement processes which are covered by other policies and procedures (referred to within this document) have been removed. Flowcharts for Suggestion or Registered Concern and Improvement Opportunities, have been deleted. Remaining flowcharts have been reviewed. Changes in responsibilities to reflect current organisation structure.	16/05/06
06	Administrative change. Clause 4.2 added.	14/03/07
07	Add clause 4.1. Update flow chart 'Complaints' to include how to lodge complaint.	18/12/07
08	Revised for currency, clarity and updated onto new template. Revised clauses 4.1; 4.2; 4.3 Privacy Act principle; 4.10. Updated titles. Flowcharts updated to reflect title changes.	20/11/12
08a	Academic Committee has reassigned and approved (Res. No. 14/AB09/4) roles and responsibilities previously held by the Academic Director in the QMS.	15/08/14
08b	Academic Standards Committee has reassigned and approved (Res 15/ASC12/6) roles and responsibilities previously held by the Executive Director, Learning and Health Development in the QMS.	25/09/15
09	Updated with responsibility to Executive responsible for Complaints and amended to include current processes and reference to Risk Evaluation Matrix.	15/05/18
09a	Academic Board approved delegation to Academic Quality Coordinator to amend all Policy and Procedures with the current WITT Staff and Committee structures (Res no. 20/AB01/8).	04/02/20
10	This policy review was triggered by the Interim Domestic Code (IDC) Self-Assessment audit/improvement plan to include Student feedback, identify any barriers to making a complaint, update complaint form, absence of policy guidelines and reporting line for non-academic complaints.	21/09/21
11	Reviewed to bring policy in line with Te Pūkenga Policy and Te Kawa Maiooro. Reconsideration of Result has been removed from the Appeals Policy and added to the Complaints Policy. The revisions also made clearer the path for escalation of issues from concern to complaint to appeal. Titles have been updated, and responsibility for serious complaints shifted to Directors from Chief Executive.	12/11/24

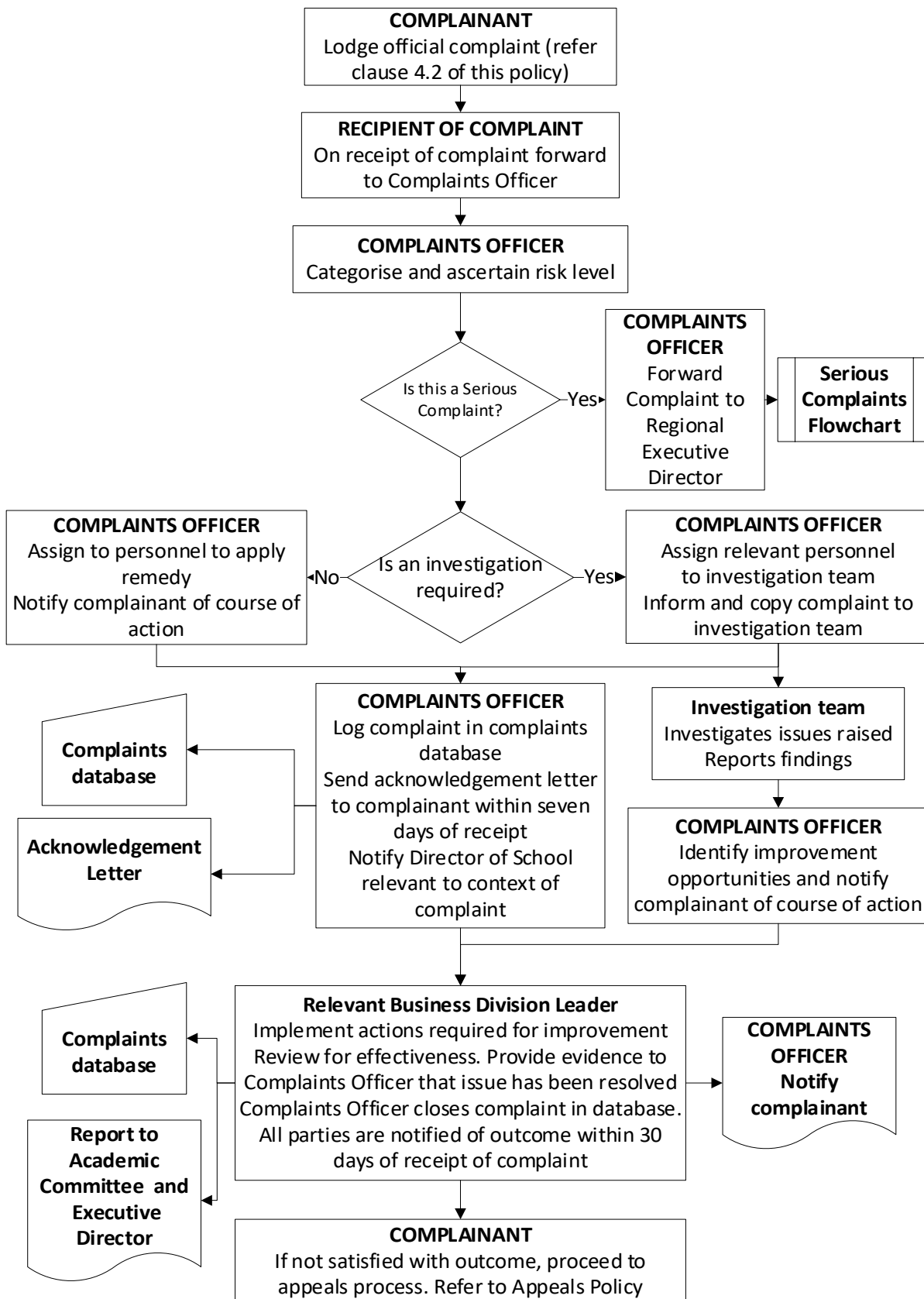
6.1 CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS, AND APPEALS



6.2 RECONSIDERATION OF RESULT



6.3 COMPLAINTS



6.4 SERIOUS COMPLAINTS

