REPORT OF STUDENT OMBUD ACTIVITIES
January – December 2015

Southern Cross University’s Complaints Policy ensures that students have the right to raise concerns or make a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with the processes or services of the University.

Students are encouraged, if appropriate, to try to resolve their complaint informally. Many complaints can be sorted out directly with the work unit and / or a staff member familiar with the issue. However, if this is not successful, students can then lodge a formal written complaint with the Complaints Assistance Officer. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint, they can then can lodge a request for internal review and investigation by the Student Ombud, pursuant to the Student Ombud Policy.

The Student Ombud contact officer is able to provide advice to students who lodge complaints via ombud@scu.edu.au. This may include referral to the Complaints Assistance Officer (complaints@scu.edu.au). Enrolled students may also contact the Student Advocacy Service, which is available at each campus for confidential advice and assistance. The contact details for this service can be found at http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/135

Student Ombuds are appointed by and are responsible to the Vice Chancellor. For particular matters, the Vice Chancellor can appoint SCU's Student Ombud (currently, Professor Bill Boyd), another senior officer of the University, or make an external appointment. In all cases, the Student Ombud must be an impartial investigator and any real or perceived conflicts of interest avoided.

Student Ombuds determine whether students have received fair and equitable treatment and whether proper processes have been followed. While they are not permitted to encroach on academic judgements, they may investigate the processes and policies surrounding those judgements.

As part of their investigation, Student Ombuds are entitled to have access to all relevant documents and can interview staff or students as required. This written report is provided to the Vice Chancellor for determination and may include recommendations for improvement to SCU’s processes and practices.

2015 ACTIVITIES
During 2015, a total of eleven matters were registered or redirected through ombud@scu.edu.au. Most of these matters involved the Student Ombud contact officer providing advice to the student about the formal complaints process or by referring them to a staff member in the appropriate work-unit who was then able to deal directly with their concerns.
Two matters related to student enrolment queries (advanced standing and a request for concurrent enrolment) and a further two matters related to exam processes and the location of exam venues. Three matters related to programs offered by the School of Business and Tourism; two for the School of Health and Human Sciences; and one for each of the School of Education and the School of Arts and Social Sciences.

There was no matter referred to a formal Student Ombud investigation process during 2015.

As at 31 December 2015, there were no Student Ombud matters outstanding.

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