

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Purpose:

This policy and procedure outline the processes undertaken by Sunshine Coast international College (SCIC) for receiving and responding to complaints or appeals. The policy and procedure also meets the requirements of:

- *Standards for RTOs 2015, Standard 6*
- *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 10.*

Scope

This policy and procedure apply to students, employees and third parties acting on behalf of SCIC and members of the public who engage with the College.

Definitions:

Complaint: A statement from a person (the complainant) that a product or service or action is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. Examples of complaints include, but not limited to:

- Student services support received by students
- Teaching or assessment delivered by ELICOS teachers
- Assessment outcomes/ results
- Services provided by education agents acting on behalf of the college.

Appeal: A request by a person (the appellant) to reverse a decision made about that person. Examples of when a person could submit an appeal include, but not limited to:

- A complaint not being substantiated.
- A decision to cancel a student's enrolment because of infrequent attendance, course progress or course fee payment requirements.
- Assessment decisions made by an ELICOS teacher.

Policy:

- SCIC will ensure that its complaints and appeals processes ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process.
- SCIC's complaints and appeals processes are publicly available on the College's website and are detailed in the Student Handbook provided to all enrolled students.
- Complaints and appeals will be acknowledged in writing via email within two working days of receipt of the complaint or appeal.
- SCIC notifies students of further consumer rights that may be applicable by including the following statement in the Complaint Form and Appeal Form: *'I understand that use of SCIC's Complaints & Appeals processes does not remove my right to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws'.*



- Where possible, the outcome of a complaint and appeal will be resolved within the earliest time frame. SCIC will endeavor to finalise a complaint within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of the complaint or appeal.
- The complainant or appellant will have the opportunity to meet with SCIC representative(s) to present their case. The complainant or appellant may bring a support person to any such meeting.
- SCIC may ask the complainant or appellant to supply additional documentation to support their complaint or appeal.
- The outcome of any complaint or appeal will be communicated to the complainant or appellant in writing within ten working days of decision. All complaints and appeals will, where practicable, be finalised within sixty days from receipt.
- If a complaint or appeal cannot be finalised within sixty days, the complainant or appellant will receive regular updates on the progress of the complaint or appeal.
- SCIC will provide the option for review by an appropriate independent party at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal if the process fails to resolve the complaint or appeal.
- SCIC will securely maintain records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes.
- If a complaint or appeal is substantiated in part or in full, SCIC will identify the potential cause of the complaint or appeal and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Procedure – Complaints:

Informal Complaint Resolution

- In the first instance, an informal attempt is made to resolve a complaint.
- The complainant is encouraged to raise their concerns directly with the relevant party to resolve the complaint, for example, Student Services, a teacher, Academic Manager or PEO.
- A written record is recorded of such informal complaints.
- Relevant personnel are informed of the informal complaint and corrective action is taken, where appropriate, to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Formal complaints:

- Formal complaints must be submitted in writing using the *Student Complaint Form* available from the college's website.
- The Student Complaint Form requests that the complainant submit all supporting documentation regarding their complaint.
- The Student Complaint Form and supporting documentation may be submitted to the college by hand or by email studentservices@scic.nsw.edu.au
- The Student Services Department will send the complaint documentation to the PEO via email immediately upon receipt from the complainant.
- The PEO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within two working days of receipt of the complaint from Student Services.
- The PEO will also advise the complainant that the College will endeavour to finalise the complaint within twenty-one working days from receipt of the complaint from the complainant and that additional support documentation may be requested from the complainant while the complaint is being investigated.

- The PEO will commence assessment of the complaint within 10 working days of it being made.
- The assessment of the complaint will be conducted in a professional, fair, and transparent manner.
- The PEO will investigate the complaint. Investigation of the complaint may include, but not limited to the following:
 - Review of supporting documentation submitted by the complainant.
 - Interviews with other parties that may be the subject of the complaint.
 - Review of documentation relating to the complaint, for example, completed assessments, student records and written communications.
 - Interview with the complainant; the complainant will be contacted to arrange a suitable meeting time and advised that they may bring a support person to this meeting.
- The PEO will document all matters discussed at meetings with the complainant or any other parties involved during the investigation of the complaint.
- Once finalised, the PEO will ensure the complainant is given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including detailed reasons for the outcome.
- The PEO will advise the complainant of the complaint outcome within ten working days of the complaint review conclusion.
- When advising the complainant of the outcome of the complaint, the PEO will also advise the complainant of their right to access an external complaint handling process at minimal or no cost to the student.
- The complainant will also be advised that they must exhaust PEO's complaints and appeals handling processes before accessing the external appeals handling process.
- The PEO will also give the complainant the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling body.
- For the purposes of this policy and procedure, the external complaints handling body is the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- Information about submitting a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman may be viewed at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>
- The complainant will be advised that, if they wish to appeal the complaint outcome, they must do so within twenty working days of receipt of being notified in writing of the complaint outcome.
- If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the complainant, PEO will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision and advise the overseas student of that action.
- The PEO will record the nature and outcome of the complaint in the Complaints Register.

Procedure – Appeals:

- Appeals must be submitted in writing using the *Student Appeal Form* available from the College's website.
- The Student Appeal Form requests that the complainant submit supporting documentation to support their complaint.
- The Student Appeals Form and supporting documentation may be submitted to the college by hand or by email to studnetservices@scic.nsw.edu.au
- The Student Services Department sends the appeal documentation to the Academic Manager via email immediately on receipt from the complainant.
- The Academic Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within two working days of receipt of the appeal from Student Services.
- The Academic Manager will also advise the appellant that the college will attempt to finalise the appeal within twenty-one working days from receipt of the appeal from the appellant and that additional support documentation may be requested from the appellant while the appeal is being investigated.

- The Academic Manager will commence assessment of the appeal within ten working days of it being submitted to the College.
- The assessment of the appeal will be conducted in a professional, fair and transparent manner.
- The Academic Manager will investigate the appeal. Investigation of the appeal may include, but not limited to the following:
 - Review of supporting documentation submitted by the appellant.
 - Interviews with other parties that may be the subject of the appeal.
 - Review of all documentation relating to the appeal.
 - Interview with the appellant; the appellant will be contacted to arrange a suitable meeting time and advised that they may bring a support person to this meeting.
- The Academic Manager will document all matters discussed at the meetings with the appellant or any other parties involved during the review of the appeal.
- Once finalised, the Academic Manager will ensure the appellant is given a written statement of the outcome of the appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome.
- The Academic Manager will advise the appellant of the appeal outcome within ten working days of concluding a review of the appeal.
- When advising the appellant of the outcome of the appeal, the Academic Manager will also advise the complainant of their right to access an external appeal handling process at minimal or no cost to the student.
- The Academic Manager will also be given the appellant the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling body.
- For the purposes of this policy and procedure, the external appeals handling body is the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Information about submitting an appeal to the Commonwealth Ombudsman may be viewed at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>
- If the internal or any external appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the appellant, SCIC will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the decision and advise the appellant of that action.
- The Academic Manager will record the nature and outcome of the appeal in the Appeals Register.

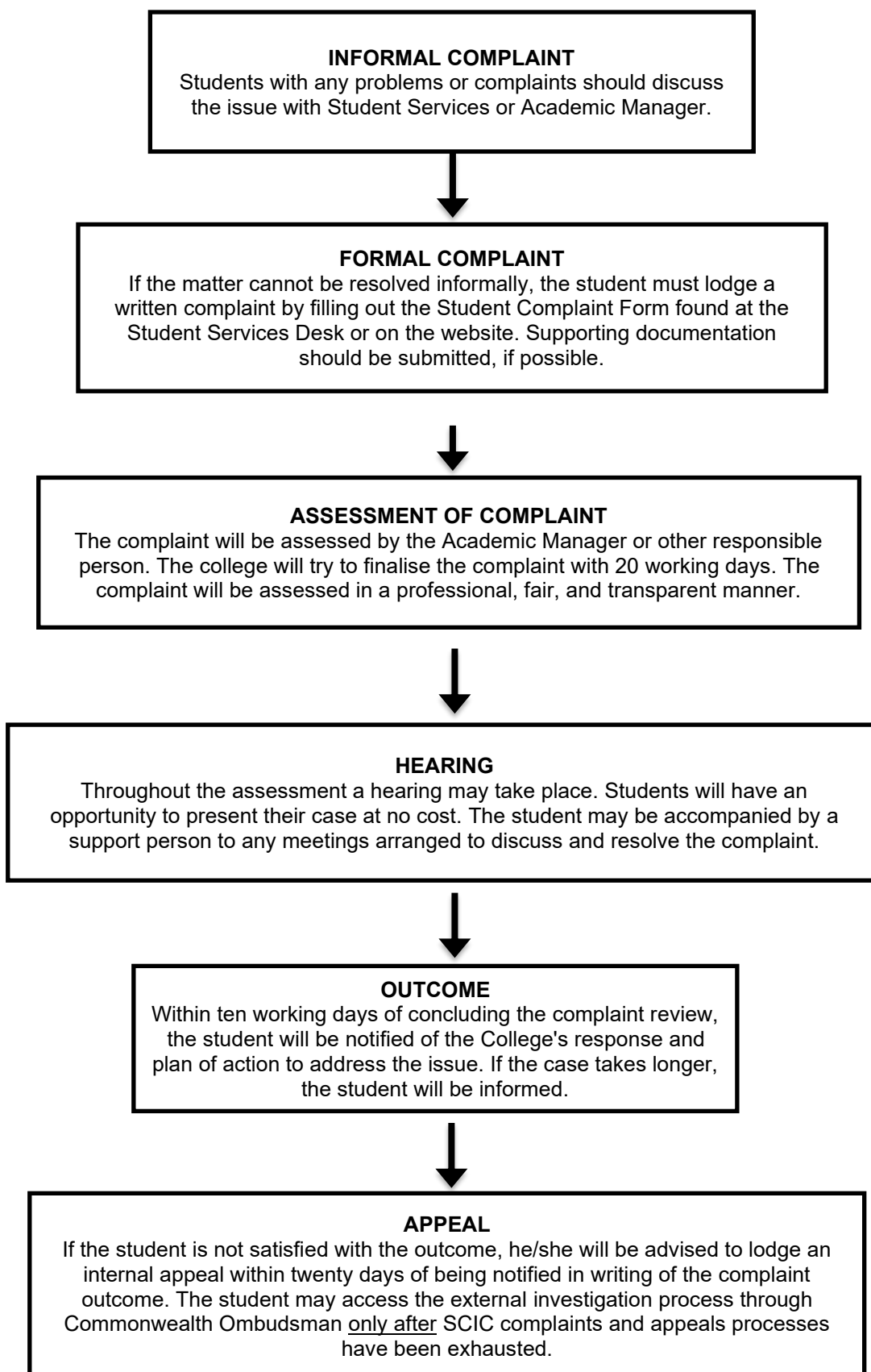
Supporting documentation

- Student Complaint Form
- Student Appeal Form
- Complaints Register
- Appeals Register

Version Control:

Title				
Complaints & Appeals Policy & Procedure				
Description				
Describes processes used by SCIC to manage student complaints and appeals for overseas students				
Created By				
Date Created				
27.02.2024				
Maintained By				
Joe Lynch				
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date Modified	Status
v2.0	J Lynch	Procedure chart updated for accuracy	08.04.2024	
V2.1	J Lynch	Update minor typos	13.06.2024	
V2.2	J Lynch	Updated Ombudsman contact details	25.02.2025	
V3.0		Remove reference to 'trainer/ assessor' replace with ELICOS teacher	24.06.2025	Current

Complaints Procedure Chart



Appeals Procedure Chart

FORMAL APPEAL

The student must submit an appeal form with supporting documentation and evidence.



ASSESSMENT OF APPEAL

The appeal will be assessed by the Academic Manager or other responsible person. The college will try to finalise the appeal with twenty-one working days. The complaint will be assessed in a professional, fair, and transparent manner.



HEARING

Throughout the assessment of the appeal, a hearing may take place. Students will have an opportunity to present their case at no cost. Student may be accompanied by a support person to any meetings arranged to discuss and resolve the appeal.



OUTCOME

Within ten working days of concluding the appeal review, the student will be notified of College's final decision and plan of action to address the issue. If the case takes longer, the student will be informed.



APPEAL

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, he/she will be advised to lodge an external appeal within 20 days of receipt of being notified in writing of the appeal outcome. The student may access to external investigation process through the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Phone: 1300 362 072
Web: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>