

## Student Complaints and Appeals process policies and procedures

### Policy

Cambridge International College has a documented procedure, the *Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure* by which it ensures that students will be granted immediate access to the College's complaints and appeals processes.

The College undertakes to ensure that:

- I. All disputes, Complaints and Appeals will be handled professionally, equitably, confidentially, and in a timely manner, with a view to achieving satisfactory resolution;
- II. All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved in the *Student Complaints and Appeals policies and procedures*, prior to, and during the carrying out of the procedure;
- III. Prospective students are provided with a copy of the *Student Complaints and Appeals policies and procedures* document before making a contract to enrol, and again at course commencement
- IV. Relevant staff members are familiar with the *Student Complaints and Appeals policies and procedures*
- V. Each party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings held during the internal complaints and appeals processes.

A student's enrolment will be maintained until the Student Complaints and Appeals process is finalised.

- I. The student's enrolment will be maintained whilst the internal complaints and appeals process is ongoing for all types of complaints and appeals.
- II. The student's enrolment will be maintained whilst the internal *and* external complaints and appeals process is ongoing as per advice at Stage 5 of this document.

### Option 1 – Informal Resolution of Complaints

**Stage 1:** Students are encouraged, in the first instance, to resolve the concern or difficulty directly with the staff member(s) and/or students concerned.

**Stage 2:** Where satisfactory resolution is not reached as Stage 1, the matter is referred to the Student Complaints Officer, who will identify the nature of the complaint, and then refer it to the appropriate manager for resolution as follows:

- a. Course Coordinator - academic issues
- b. Attendance Co-ordinator - attendance issues
- c. Student Counsellor - personal or other/general concerns
- d. Campus/Operations Manager - other, i.e. concerns regarding the College's resources, services, facilities or information provided about the College's services and facilities

### Option 2 – Formal Resolution of a Complaint or Appeal

Where satisfactory resolution is not reached in Stage 2, the student may access the formal Complaints and Appeals process. This process will commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable. Students will be advised that there will be no cost to them.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee Hearing will be formally convened to consider Complaints which are not resolved at Stage 2:

#### Attendance

Students who wish to appeal the College's Intention to Report the student for not maintaining satisfactory attendance will be given the opportunity to appeal to a full Meeting of the Complaints and Appeals Committee. At this meeting the student has the opportunity to establish that:

- I. they have information that they wish to present to challenge the calculation of their reported potential attendance figure:
  - a. (English courses) they have evidence to substantiate that there are compassionate and/or compelling circumstances that have prevented them from attending their classes, OR
  - b. (VET courses) they are making satisfactory academic progress in the period in which it is alleged that they have breached the 80% minimum attendance requirement
- II. Any other matter related to the monitoring of their attendance

#### Course Progress

Students who wish to appeal the college's intention to Report the student for not maintaining satisfactory Academic Progress requirements will be given the opportunity to appeal to a full Meeting of the Complaints and Appeals Committee. At this meeting the student has the opportunity to establish that:

- I. they have information that they wish to present to challenge that they are not making satisfactory course progress
- II. any other matter related to the monitoring of their course progress

#### Misbehaviour

Students who wish to appeal the college's intention to suspend or cancel their enrolment for identified misbehaviour. At this meeting the student has the opportunity to establish that they have evidence that there are not adequate or relevant grounds for the suspension or cancelation of their enrolment.

#### Any other matter

Students will have the opportunity to present information or documentation to support their complaint or appeal against a College decision or action.

#### **Process for Convening Complaints and Appeals Hearings/ Formal Committee Meetings**

- I. The student should lodge a Student Complaint or Appeal Notification form to the College within the required time frame.
- II. When the *Student Complaint & Appeal Notification form* is received by the College, the student will be informed in writing as to the date, time and location of the Committee meeting .
- III. The Internal Complaints and Appeals hearing will comprise the student, and the student's representative (if requested), the student or staff member the student has made a complaint against and representative if relevant, the Committee Chairperson, the Complaints and Appeals administrative support member and one other member of staff.
- IV. The student will receive written notification of outcome of the meeting. The notification will include the reasons for the outcome as soon as practicable.
- V. Where the student's appeal is not upheld the written notification will include advice on how to access the external appeals process.

## Stage 5 Formal resolution (external)

Where the Internal Complaints and Appeals Committee is unable to resolve the issue at Stage 4, and/or the student lodges an appeal against the decision of the Internal Complaints & Appeals Committee, the student is given information on how to access Overseas Students Ombudsman (Victoria) or The Office of the Training Advocate (South Australia) who will conduct the External Appeals Process. The student will be advised that the external appeals process will be conducted at no cost to them.

*Advice to Victorian students about the **Overseas Students Ombudsman:***

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au) or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

*Advice to South Australian students about the **Office of the Training Advocate:***

The Office of the Training Advocate offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Office of the Training Advocate website: <http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/> or call 1800 006 488.

The student may contact the Overseas Students Ombudsman (Victoria), The Office of the Training Advocate (South Australia) directly, or they may seek the assistance of the Committee Chairperson to contact the external appeals body.

**Note - Re: Attendance/Course Progress**

The student may access and receive the outcome of only one external appeals process before the College may report the student to DIAC/DEEWR with regards to non-compliance for attendance and course progress issues (Standards 10 and Standards 11 – National Code 2007).

**Note - Re: Suspension/Cancellation of Enrolment**

Where the appeal relates to the College's decision to defer/suspend or cancel a student's enrolment for misbehaviour (Standard 13 - National Code 2007), the College will only await the outcome of the internal appeals process where it supports the College before notifying DIAC/DEEWR through PRISMS of the change to the student's enrolment.

The Overseas Students Ombudsman /The Office of the Training Advocate will provide a written statement of the outcome including reasons and details for the decision to the complainant and Cambridge International College at the completion of the external appeals process.

If the outcome of the internal or external appeals process results in a decision favouring the student CIC will immediately implement any corrective action, decision or measures required as indicated in the written response provided by the external appeals body. The student will be advised as to the course of action taken by the College as per the external appeals body's written advice.

**Additional Note:**

Students may make a complaint to the external appeals body at any time during the appeals or complaints processes.

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### Further details relevant to the Complaints and Appeals procedures:

1. Students may raise any matters of concern relating to teaching/training delivery and assessment, certification, compliance, student amenities, discrimination, harassment, information given and any other issues that may arise.
2. Description of types of Complaints/Appeals:
  - 2.1 An academic matter – something to do with teaching, learning, or assessment issues in a student’s course
  - 2.2 An administrative matter – anything to do with the management of the College and/or the administration of a student’s enrolment at the College including attendance.
  - 2.3 A more general matter – anything to do with a student’s comfort, safety and general well being whilst attending the College
3. Cambridge International College commits to address and, if possible, to resolve any Complaint/Appeal fairly and equitably and as soon as practicable.
4. Cambridge International College will encourage the parties to approach a Complaint/Appeal with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.
5. Nothing contained in this Complaints and Appeals procedure prevents a student from exercising their rights to other legal remedies or obtaining advice from other authorities or agencies:
6. The student may also make a complaint to the following authorities -
  - 6.1 Contact the *Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations* (DEEWR) ESOS helpline (02) 6240 5069 or email [esosmailbox@deewr.gov.au](mailto:esosmailbox@deewr.gov.au)
  - 6.2 Victoria: Contact the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)
  - 6.3 South Australia: Contact the *Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Training* (DFEEST) on 08) 8226 3821 [www.dfeest.sa.gov.au/](http://www.dfeest.sa.gov.au/)
  - 6.4 Victoria: Contact the *Law Institute of Victoria* on 03) 9607 9550 or [www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au) for referral to a solicitor
  - 6.3 South Australia: Contact the *Law Society of South Australia* on 08) 8229 0222 or [www.lawsocietysa.asn.au](http://www.lawsocietysa.asn.au) for referral to a solicitor.
  - 6.5 Victoria: Contact *Consumer Affairs Victoria* (CAV) on 1300 55 8181, [www.Complaintline.com.au](http://www.Complaintline.com.au)
  - 6.6 South Australia: Contact *Office of Consumer and Business Affairs* on 08) 8204 9777 [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)
  - 6.7 Victoria: Contact the *Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria* 03) 9281 7100 [www.eoc.vic.gov.au](http://www.eoc.vic.gov.au)
  - 6.10 South Australia: Contact the *Equal Opportunity Commission South Australia* 08) 8207 1977 [www.eoc.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp](http://www.eoc.sa.gov.au/site/home.jsp)

### Who is Responsible

- Campus/Operations Manager
- Manager, Compliance
- Complaints and Appeals Committee Chairperson
- Student Complaints Officer

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**Documentation Required:**

**Stage 1 - informal resolution:**

Record of interview/counselling notes signed and dated by the interviewer (Course Coordinator/Attendance Review Officer/Student Counsellor/Campus Manager and student) (Copies: staff member and student)

**Stage 2 - informal resolution:**

Record of interview/counselling notes signed and dated by the interviewer (Course Coordinator /Attendance Review Officer/Student Counsellor/Campus Manager and student) (Copies: staff member and student)

**Stage 3 - Internal Formal resolution:**

- I. *Formal student complaint/appeals form – internal process* submitted by the student (Copy: complaints and appeals administrative support person)
- II. All documentation e.g. counselling notes, letters/correspondence, reports, student documents etc. attached to the *formal student complaint/appeals form – internal process* (Copy: complaints and appeals administrative support person)

**Stage 4 - internal formal resolution:**

- I. Letter advising the student of the date and time of complaint/appeal hearing to be sent (Copy: complaints and appeals administrative support person and student)
- II. Documentation pack prepared for the committee hearing (copies of documents on the student file) and documentation provided by the student prior to and during the committee hearing.
- III. Student Complaints & Appeals Committee Meeting Minutes Record Sheet signed and dated by the Committee Chairperson and the student (Copy: complaints and appeals administrative support person)
- IV. Letter informing the student of the outcome of their appeal

**Stage 5 - external formal resolution:**

Student External Appeals Form (Copies: Overseas Students Ombudsman/The Office of the Training Advocate, Complaints & Appeals Committee Chairperson & student)

Written outcome of the Overseas Students Ombudsman/The Office of the Training Advocate External Appeals committee hearing signed and dated by the convenor of the committee and the student (Copies: Overseas Students Ombudsman /Office of the Training Advocate, Complaints & Appeals Committee Chairperson & student)

**Documentation Note:**

- I. Notes of the meeting date and outcome of meeting is made on the student's file
- II. A copy of the appeal documentation is held on the student's file.

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