

Student Complaints Policy

1 Overview

The Student Complaints policy aims to ensure that all current and prospective students of UC International College (UCIC) are given access to a fair complaints resolution process.

As an NZQA accredited provider and a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (and amendments), UCIC follows procedures described by the New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA) at:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/education-code-of-practice/student-complaints/>

Areas in which a complaint can be made under this policy are those of a non-academic nature, and include but are not limited to:¹

- Course information
- Customer services
- Enrolment procedures
- Information or procedures for financial matters
- Student support and guidance
- Equipment and teaching resources

2. Scope

Any current or prospective student of UCIC who considers that they have been given incorrect information or been treated inappropriately or unfairly in their dealings with UCIC is entitled to access the complaints process set out in this policy.

3. Definitions

Term or Acronym	Definition
Academic matters	Matters which relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study.
Non-academic matters	Matters which do not relate to academic processes (as above) but which may relate to customer services and administration, marketing and information, facilities, fees and finance related matters and student welfare provision.
Appeal	A submission by a current student for a review of a decision made by UCIC of an academic or non-academic nature.

¹ Please refer to the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy for information relating to claims of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

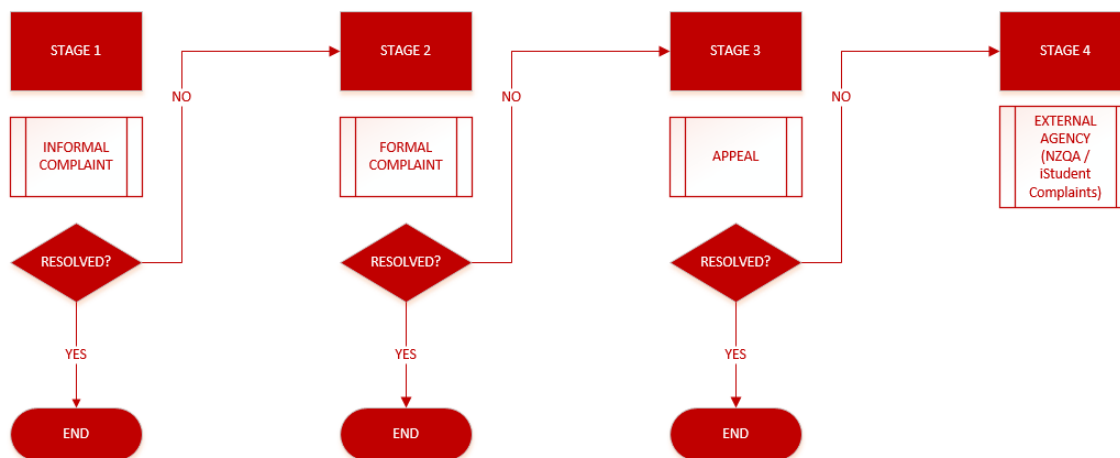
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with any process, outcome or service provided by UCIC.
Complainant	A person who formally makes a complaint.
Grievance	A wrong, actual or perceived, considered as grounds for complaint.
Respondent	A person responding to a complaint or appeal. This may also be the person who made the original decision the person is appealing.
Appeals and Grievance Committee	The final appeals body at UCIC that considers appeals from students against any decision by UCIC of an academic or non-academic nature.
The Code	The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (and amendments), established under section 238F of the Education Act 1989.
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority. An independent body that deals with complaints from international students about the care, advice or services that they have received from their education provider.
iStudent Complaints	An independent dispute resolution scheme that deals with contractual and financial disputes between international students and their New Zealand providers.

4. Policy Principles

The principles which underpin this policy are as follows and relate to all stages of the internal complaints process:

- The consideration of complaints will be dealt with according to principles of procedural fairness with respect to the right of a complainant to be heard by an impartial party.
- Attempts will be made to resolve complaints informally where possible.
- Complainants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in the complaints process.
- This complaints process does not restrict a complainant's right to pursue other legal remedies.
- Staff will make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits set out in this policy.
- All procedures will be made available to the public on the UCIC website.
- Complainants and/or respondents have the right to be accompanied by a support person (such as family member, whanau, friend, counselor or other support person).
- UCIC will take all reasonable steps to ensure that information regarding any complaint will be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the process.
- In accordance with the principles of natural justice, where a complaint includes allegations concerning the conduct or actions of another student or staff member, that person will be notified and given an opportunity to respond to any allegations.
- If, at any time during the internal or external complaints process, a decision is made which upholds the complaint, UCIC will immediately implement the decision and advise the complainant of the outcome.
- There is no cost associated with either the formal or informal stages of the complaints process.

The complaints process is illustrated by the diagram below:



5. Complaints Process

The complaints process commences with informal resolution between the complainant and the respondent. If a resolution cannot be reached, a complainant may then commence a formal complaints process as indicated below.

Students who require support may contact UCIC’s Student Welfare Officer, a UCSA Advocate or access UC support services.

Staff members who are the subject of a complaint retain the full support of UCIC and can also access the Navitas Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

5.1 Stage One - Informal Process

The first step is direct informal communication between the complainant and respondent within five (5) working days of becoming aware of the problem, to allow both parties to discuss their point of view and attempt resolution. The complainant may wish to have a support person with them at the initial meeting with respondent.

The complainant is entitled to request and receive a written response giving reasons and full explanation for decisions and actions taken.

5.2 Stage Two - Formal Complaints Process

If the complainant has engaged in the Stage One informal process and is not satisfied with the outcome, a written formal complaint must be submitted to the Quality and Compliance Coordinator within five (5) working days of the informal decision or outcome. You will be required to fill in a Complaints Form and include a description of the complaint, supporting facts or evidence and the efforts taken to address the issue informally, including any staff members contacted, correspondence and/or meetings held.

The Quality and Compliance Coordinator will forward the complaint to the applicable senior staff member (see Appendix A), who will examine the complaint and review the decision in light of any additional information provided by the complainant. In accordance with the principles of natural justice, where a complaint includes allegations concerning the conduct or actions of another student or a staff member (respondent), the respondent will be notified of the claim and will be given opportunity to respond to any allegations.

To avoid any conflict of interest, where a staff member has been involved at the informal stage (other than in a facilitation role), the matter will be referred to an appropriate, independent staff member to carry out Stage Two.

Where possible, the complainant and respondent will be advised of the complaint outcome in writing within ten (10) working days of receiving notice of the complaint in writing. At a minimum, this will consist of a written acknowledgement of the complaint.

5.3 Stage Three - Appeals and Grievance Committee

The complainant may submit an appeal on the following grounds:

- The complainant wishes to submit key new information that was not known or not available at the time the initial decision was made. (The complainant must state why this information was not known or available at the time the initial decision was made).
- The complainant believes that correct process was not followed in accordance with UCIC policy or procedures. (The complainant must state what UCIC policy or procedure was not followed).

Appeals should be submitted on the official UC International College Appeals Form to the Quality and Compliance Coordinator, available from the front desk or by emailing student_services@ucic.ac.nz.

Appeals should be lodged within five (5) working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of Stage Two.

Refer to the UCIC's Appeals Policy and Appeal Procedures for further information: <https://www.ucic.ac.nz/policies>

5.4 Stage Four - External Agencies

Prior to making an external complaint, students should first follow UCIC's Internal Complaints process.

However, where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage Three and believes that UCIC has not acted in accordance with the Code, they may refer the matter to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Further information about making a complaint about a provider's compliance with the Code of Practice can be found at: www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/make-a-complaint/make-a-complaint-about-a-provider/

For financial or contractual disputes, complainants should contact iStudent Complaints: www.istudent.org.nz
There is no cost associated with having a case heard by the NZQA or iStudent Complaints.

6. Administrative Procedures

This is accessible through the UCIC policy library on its website.

Details of complaints will be held in the Complaints Register. Records of complaints will be kept for an initial period of seven (7) years. If no external complaint has occurred during this period, the records will normally be destroyed. These records will be under the responsibility of the Quality and Compliance Coordinator.

These records will be confidential and filed separately from student files. Internal disclosure and access should be limited strictly to those employees who need to have access for official purposes. UCIC reserves the right to share information with appropriate staff members if they have concerns regarding the welfare of the complainant or respondent.

Recommendations arising from any external review of the Student Complaints Policy or procedures should be implemented as soon as practically possible.

7. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with UC International College policies as applicable.

Policy Title	Student Complaints Policy	
Policy Owners	College Director and Principal	
Contact Persons	Academic Manager, College Director and Principal	
Key Stakeholders	All students of UCIC, UCIC staff	
Approval Body	UCIC Executive Committee	Meeting date approved 10/9/2019
Relevant Legislation	The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (and amendments), the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and the International Student Contract Dispute Resolution Scheme Rules 2016	
Related Policies	All UCIC policies	
Related Guidelines	UC International College Internal Complaints process	
File information	File number N/A	Version number v4.1
Date Effective	10/9/2019	Next Review Date October 2021

Appendix A: Formal Appeal – key contacts

Type of grievance or complaint	Senior staff member responsible
Academic	Academic Manager (or nominee)
Admission	Admissions Manager Marketing and Admissions Director
Fees	College Director and Principal Marketing and Admissions Director
Student Services	Student and Academic Services Coordinator
Student Support	Academic Manager (or nominee)
Education Agents	Marketing Manager Marketing and Admissions Director
Conduct of staff	College Director and Principal
Conduct of students	Academic Manager (or nominee)