

IEFT GRIEVANCE COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

PURPOSE

This document sets out IEFT's policy for responding to student grievances, complaints and appeals, in accordance with Section 2.4 of *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all current and prospective higher education students of IEFT who have a grievance, wish to make a complaint, request a review or appeal a decision which falls within the control of IEFT and its staff.

DEFINITIONS

An **Academic Grievance** is a concern about an academic matter or process which a student brings to the attention of IEFT staff in an informal way. Examples include, but are not limited to, concerns about:

- academic progress decisions;
- applications for credit transfer or recognition of prior learning (RPL);
- assessments;
- academic integrity;
- content, structure or quality of the program;
- authorship or intellectual property.

A **Grievance** is a concern about a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or a service provided by IEFT, which the student brings to the attention of IEFT's staff in an informal way.

A **Non-academic Grievance** is a concern about a non-scholastic matter, situation or process; or a concern about a person or people, which the student brings to the attention of IEFT staff in an informal way. Examples include, but are not limited to, concerns about matters such as:

- the provision of student support services;
- unsatisfactory attendance;
- the IEFT Code of Conduct;
- IEFT facilities and amenities;
- suspension or cancellation of enrolment for non-academic reasons;
- use of personal information;
- fees and other financial matters;
- perceived discrimination or unfairness;
- bullying, sexual harassment, and other forms of harassment.

A **Complaint** means a grievance has not been resolved informally (for example, by the affected parties discussing the matter), and the student's concern is written down for an official response.

An **Appeal** means that a student is dissatisfied with a decision made by IEFT in response to a complaint. The student then has ten (10) working days from the date on the written notification in which to lodge an appeal to have the decision reviewed. This includes decisions relating to complaint outcomes, as well as admission, credit transfer and RPL, unsatisfactory academic progress, unsatisfactory attendance, misbehaviour, and/or suspension of enrolment and exclusion.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

The **CEO** is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The **Grievance Adviser** is an appropriately qualified and nominated member of staff whose role is to provide advice to a student who has a grievance or is considering making a formal complaint, either academic or non-academic, about the process for resolving a grievance or complaint. The Grievance Adviser is not the Dean (Emotionally Focused Therapy).

All **staff** have a responsibility to advise students who have a grievance or are dissatisfied with a decision made by IEFT of their right to lodge a complaint or appeal.

POLICY

1. It is IEFT's policy that:
 - students are entitled to express their concerns about a situation, a process, a decision, a person or people, a facility or a service provided by IEFT;
 - students have access to effective systems for handling any complaints that might arise during the course of their studies, as one way of ensuring the highest possible academic and service standards;
 - Confidentiality will be strictly observed by all participants at all stages of the Complaints and Appeals process;
 - Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept in the Institute's formal record keeping system, and will remain confidential.
2. Whenever it is possible, IEFT encourages students to resolve issues informally, with the staff member or person concerned. In cases where informal resolution is not possible or is not achieved, a formal complaint process may be commenced.
3. A student has 10 working days, from the date of the decision or event, to lodge a formal complaint or appeal.
4. The student will receive acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint /appeal lodgement form application within two working days of lodgement of the complaint/appeal.
5. Complaints will be heard and addressed through the internal complaints handling processes as quickly as possible (refer to the *Grievance Complaints and Appeals Procedure*).
6. Complaints and appeals will be treated seriously, sensitively, and impartially.
7. When the appeal is against a decision by IEFT to terminate a student's enrolment, the student's enrolment will be maintained until the internal appeal is concluded.
8. A respondent will be informed about the nature of the complaint against him / her in writing and provided with the opportunity to respond within five working days.
9. Complainants, appellants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment as a result of their participation in a complaints or appeals process. Students can be confident that there will be no negative consequences, and that the complaint or appeal will be fairly investigated.
10. The procedures followed will be seen as fair by everyone involved, as far as is possible.
11. All parties will be kept regularly informed of the progress and outcome decisions of their complaint or appeal.
12. Students have the right to refer their complaint or appeal to external professional mediation after exhausting all avenues of resolution available within IEFT.
13. In the event of the student remaining dissatisfied with the result or conduct of IEFT's internal procedures for handling of the complaint and the external mediation process, the student may choose to take further action under Australia's consumer protection laws, through Fair Trading NSW (<http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/>).

MONITORING

All formal complaints, decisions and outcomes will be monitored by the CEO (or delegate).

TIME LIMITS

IEFT is unlikely to consider a complaint from a former student whose enrolment was finalised six months or more prior to the time of lodging the complaint.

RECORDS of FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The student's record will be updated to document the outcome of each stage of the process, and any subsequent actions.

A copy of all related documentation, including a statement of findings, outlining the reasons for decisions made at each stage of the complaint and appeal(s) process, will be retained on the student's record.

A copy of the statement of findings and reasons for decisions will be provided to the student, and any respondent.

RELATED

Grievance Complaints and Appeals Procedure
Student Selection and Admission Policy
Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer Policy
Academic Integrity Policy
Student Assessment Policy
Student Welfare and Support Policy
Students at Risk Policy
Students at Risk Procedure

Version Control

Document: Grievance Complaints and Appeals Policy		
Approved by: Academic Board		Date: 2017/03/07
Version: V1.1	Replaces Version: V1.0	Next Review: 2019