Universal English College

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE 3

2. SCOPE 3

3. DEFINITIONS 3

4. POLICY STATEMENT 3

COMPLAINTS 3

APPEALS 3

GENERAL 4

5. PROCEDURE 5

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE 5

INTERNAL APPEAL PROCEDURE 6

EXTERNAL APPEAL PROCEDURE 7

6. RESPONSIBILITIES 9

7. REVISION HISTORY 9

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the policy and procedure adhered to by Universal Education Centre Pty Ltd (trading as Universal English College and herein referred to as "the College") and its staff with respect to student complaints and appeals relating to academic and non-academic matters.

1.2 In its management of matters relating to complaints and appeals relating to international students, the College prioritises the provision of high-quality service and the protection of the rights of potential and current international students as well as protection of the reputation of the College and of the Australian international education industry as a whole

2. SCOPE

2.1 This document applies to all staff and students in the College.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 *Complaint*: a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.

3.2 *Appeal*: to apply for review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third-party providing services on the RTO's behalf (if applicable).

3.3 *College Senior Management Team*: includes the CEO, Campus Director, Student Services and Administration Manager, Head of Sales and Head of Marketing.

3.4 *Academic Matters:* refer to all matters directly related to study activities such as teaching and training, attendance, assessment, progress, course content, facilities, curriculum, trainers, assessors, course materials or course documents such as learning materials, transcripts or qualifications.

3.5 *Non-Academic Matters*: refer to all matters not directly related to training and assessment activities such as the enrolment process, payment of fees or other financial matters, contractual matters including withdrawals & refunds, interpersonal matters when interacting with other students or College staff or stakeholders, student services matters, data management and its privacy and all other matters.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

Complaints

4.1 Students are entitled to make a complaint about their learning experience at any time should the need arise. A complaint can be about any aspect of our business, and includes issues regarding the conduct of:

- 4.1.1 the College, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- 4.1.2 a third-party providing services on the College's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- 4.1.3 another student of the College.

4.2 The College encourages students to attempt to resolve their grievance informally prior to submitting a formal complaint.

4.3 Complaints may be submitted by completing the online Complaints Form available on the College website.

4.4 The College will ensure the complaints processes will begin within 10 working days of receiving the formal written lodgement of the complaint.

Appeals

4.5 The College has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the College or a third-party providing services on the College's behalf (if applicable).

4.6 Students are entitled to appeal assessment outcomes, complaints handling outcomes and general decisions if they feel they are unjust.

4.7 Students can appeal assessment decisions, complaints handling outcomes or general decisions up to fifteen working days after they have been informed of the decision.

4.8 The College encourages students to attempt to resolve their grievance informally prior to submitting a formal internal appeal.

4.9 Internal appeals may be submitted by completing the online Appeals Form available on the College website.

4.10 The College will ensure the internal appeals processes will begin within 10 working days of receiving the formal written lodgement of the internal appeal.

4.11 The College will ensure that the internal appeal decision maker is independent of the decision being reviewed.

4.12 Students are also entitled to access the external appeals process at minimal or no cost if not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling and appeals process.

General

4.13 The College is committed to maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints and appeals handling system that is easily accessible to students. This is achieved by:

- 4.13.1 Having a culture that views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve the College systems and processes;
- 4.13.2 Having a complaints and appeals handling system that is confidential and student focused;
- 4.13.3 Having a complaints and appeals policy and procedure that aims to resolve any issues internally wherever possible.
- 4.13.4 Handling complaints and appeals promptly, objectively and sensitively, ensuring the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process;
- 4.13.5 Ensuring the *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* is publicly available at all times via the College website;
- 4.13.6 Directing all prospective students to the *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* prior to making a decision to enrol with the College;
- 4.13.7 All students are given information about the *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* during their orientation program;
- 4.13.8 Encouraging the parties to approach a complaint or appeal with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation;
- 4.13.9 Ensuring that the views of all parties to a complaint or appeal are respected, and not discriminated against nor victimised;
- 4.13.10 Provide the opportunity for a student to formally present his or her case;
- 4.13.11 Ensuring complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable;
- 4.13.12 Implementing the internal complaints and appeals policy and procedure at no cost to the student;

4.13.13 Ensuring there is consistency in the handling of complaints and appeals;

4.13.14 Informing the student that, at any stage during the complaint or appeal process, they are entitled to be assisted or accompanied by a support person;

4.13.15 Advising the student of his or her right to access the external appeals process at minimal or no cost if the student is not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling and appeals process.

4.13.16 Maintaining a student's enrolment whilst a complaint or appeal is in progress and the outcome has not been determined.

4.13.17 Providing the student with a written statement of their complaint or appeal outcome at the conclusion of the process, including details of the reasons for the outcome;

4.13.18 Ensuring that where the outcome of a complaint or appeal process has highlighted a systemic College issue, the CEO implements appropriate rectification action to prevent the issue reoccurring.

4.14 Where the College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the College will:

4.14.1 Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and

4.14.2 Regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

4.15 The College:

4.15.1 Securely maintains records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes, and

4.15.2 Identifies potential causes of complaints and appeals and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

5. PROCEDURE

Complaint Procedure

5.1 Students should initially attempt to resolve a complaint through an informal process directly with the person involved. This aims to resolve the complaint as quickly and as close to the source of complaint as possible.

5.2 If an attempt to resolve a complaint informally with the person involved is unsuccessful, or the student is unsatisfied with the outcome, the student is encouraged to request a meeting with a member of the College Senior Management Team to discuss the matter.

5.3 The member of the College Senior Management Team will attempt to resolve the complaint informally at the meeting. If required, the member of the College Senior Management Team will commit to investigating the matter and arrange a follow up meeting with the student to discuss the outcome of investigation and offer a solution if necessary.

5.4 If the attempt to resolve the complaint informally with the assistance of the member of the College Senior Management Team is unsuccessful, or the student is unsatisfied with the outcome, the student is invited to lodge a formal complaint using the online Complaint Form available on the College website.

5.5 After the student has lodged a complaint, they will receive an email confirming that the College has received the complaint.

5.6 Any student that experiences difficulty when completing the complaint form should ask a College staff member to assist them.

5.7 Once a complaint form has been lodged (with any relevant supporting material), the formal complaints process will commence within 10 working days from the day it was lodged.

5.8 A member of the College administration team records the complaint in the student's file and on the College complaints register.

5.9 A member of the College Senior Management Team will contact the student to arrange a formal meeting regarding the complaint. The student will have the opportunity to formally present their case to the appropriate member of the College Senior Management Team or CEO. There is no cost to the student to for this process.

5.9.1 Only a member of the College Senior Management Team or CEO may deal with a formal internal complaint assuming they are not the subject of the complaint.

5.9.2 In the event that no members of the College Senior Management Team and the CEO are eligible to address the complaint, the complaint will be directed to an external body for review at no cost to the student.

5.10 During the meeting, the student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person. This applies to any additional meetings involving the complaint.

5.11 The designated member of the College Senior Management Team or CEO will aim to resolve the complaint within ten working days from the commencement of the formal complaint process, unless all parties agree in writing to extend this time.

5.12 Within five working days of the conclusion of the internal complaints handling process, the College will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the complaint, including associated reasons for the outcome, and of their right to an internal appeal should they be not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling process.

5.13 A record of the outcome, including reasons for the outcome, will be retained in the student's file.

5.14 If any matter arising from the formal complaint indicates a systemic College issue, the CEO will be informed in writing so the matter can be used to inform the continuous improvement activities of the College.

5.15 If the student does not elect to access the College internal appeals process, the College will implement the complaint outcome (as conveyed to the student) and undertake any continuous improvement activities arising from the complaint.

5.16 If the student does elect to access the College internal appeals process, they must submit their appeal by completing the online Appeals Form available on the College website. A student must submit their application for an internal appeal within 20 working days of receiving the complaint outcome. Applications received after this time will not be processed.

5.17 Once a valid and completed internal appeals form is received from a student, the appeals process is commenced.

Internal Appeal Procedure

5.18 Students who are not satisfied with the result of a complaint or conduct of the complaint handling process, or an assessment or general college decision, are able to appeal the decision.

5.19 Prior to lodging a formal internal appeal, the student is encouraged to request a meeting with a member of the College Senior Management Team to discuss the matter.

5.20 The member of the College Senior Management Team will attempt to resolve the appeal informally at the meeting.

5.21 If the attempt to resolve the appeal informally with the assistance of the member of the College Senior Management Team is unsuccessful, or the student is unsatisfied with the outcome, the student is invited to lodge a formal internal appeal using the online Appeal Form available on the College website.

5.22 If the student lodges an appeal using the online form, they will receive an email confirming that the College has received the appeal request.

5.23 Any student that experiences difficulty when completing the appeal form should ask a College staff member to assist them.

5.24 Once an appeal form has been lodged (with any relevant supporting material), the formal internal appeals process will commence within 10 working days from the day it was lodged.

5.25 A member of the college administration team records the appeal in the student's file and on the College appeals register.

5.26 A member of the College Senior Management Team, one that was not involved in the complaint management stage or the owner of the general decision the student wishes to appeal, will contact the student and provide them with an opportunity to submit additional information relevant to the original complaint. A meeting may also be arranged to discuss matters further. There is no cost to the student for this process.

5.26.1 Only a member of the College Senior Management Team or CEO may deal with a formal internal appeal assuming they did not make the decision that lead to the appeal.

5.26.2 In the event that members of the College Senior Management Team and the CEO are not eligible to address the internal appeal, the appeal will be directed to an external body for review at no cost to the student.

5.27 If a meeting is scheduled, the student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person. This applies to any additional meetings involving the internal appeal.

5.28 The College will aim to resolve the appeal within ten working days from the commencement of the formal internal appeal process, unless all parties agree in writing to extend this time.

5.29 Within five working days of the conclusion of the internal appeal handling process, the College will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including associated reasons for the outcome, and of their right to an external appeal should they be not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal appeal handling process.

5.30 A record of the outcome, including reasons for the outcome, will be retained in the student's file.

5.31 If any matter arising from the internal appeal indicates a systemic College issue, the CEO will be informed in writing so the matter can be used to inform the continuous improvement activities of the College.

5.32 If the student elects to access the external appeals process, they must inform the College in writing within 7 working days of being informed of the outcome of the internal appeal so that the student's enrolment may be maintained until the process is concluded.

5.33 A record of the appeal is recorded in the student's file.

External Appeal Procedure

5.34 Students that are unsatisfied with an outcome of an internal appeal, are invited to lodge a formal request for an external appeal using the online Appeal Form available on the College website.

5.35 If the student lodges a request for an external appeal using the online form, they will receive an email confirming that the College has received the external appeal request.

5.36 Any student that experiences difficulty when completing the appeal form should ask a College staff member to assist them.

5.37 Once an external appeal form has been lodged (with any relevant supporting material), a member of the College Senior Management Team will refer the external appeal to one of the following external independent third parties for resolution:

International Students

Commonwealth Ombudsman
Suite 2, Level 16 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000, or
Level 6, 34 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: 1300 362 072 (Calls from mobile phones at mobile phone rates)
Phone International: +61 2 6276 0111
Website: http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/

5.38 The external independent third party will manage the external appeal process through to completion.

5.39 If a student elects to lodge an external appeal, it has the following effect on their enrolment:

5.39.1 If the appeal is against the College's decision to report the student for:

a) Unsatisfactory course progress, or
b) Unsatisfactory attendance

The College must maintain the student's enrolment (i.e. not report the student for unsatisfactory progress or attendance) until the external appeal process is complete and has supported the College's decision to report. The College must wait for the outcome of the external appeals process in this case as reporting a student for unsatisfactory progress or attendance may result in cancellation of the student's visa.

5.39.2 If the appeal is against the College's decision to:

a) Defer or suspend a student's enrolment due to misbehaviour, or
b) To cancel the student's enrolment

The College only needs to await the outcome of the internal appeals process (supporting the College) before notifying the Department of Education through PRISMS of the change to the student's enrolment. Once the Department of Education has been notified of a deferment, suspension or cancellation of a student's enrolment, the student has 28 days in which to:

c) Leave Australia,
d) Show the Department of Home Affairs (formerly the Department of Immigration and Border Protection) a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), or
e) Provide the Department of Home Affairs with evidence that he or she has accessed an external appeals process.

5.39.3 For all other scenarios, the College will maintain a student's enrolment until the external appeals process has been completed.

5.40 Following the receipt of the outcome of the external appeal by the independent third party, the College will immediately implement the decision, convey the outcome to the student, place a copy of the documentation on the student's file, and undertake any continuous improvement actions arising from the decision.

5.41 Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits a student's rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The Senior Management Unit is responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedure.

7. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Version	Description of modifications	Approved by
12.02.24	2.0	Reformatting of version 1.1 to new template	Dan Wortley
21.08.25	2.1	Remove mention of AISI and UECB	Dan Wortley