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## 1. INTENT

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to define the principles that govern the approach taken by Edith Cowan College in handling Complaints that are made by Students or members of the public.
- 1.2 This Policy is supported by the [Complaints Procedures](#).

## 2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Staff who are the subject of a Complaint by a Student or member of the public where the Complaint relates to conduct of the person:
  - a) whilst performing their College-related duties; or
  - b) separate from their College-related duties, but where it is reasonably believed the conduct could seriously impact that person's ability to perform their College duties.
- 2.2 This Policy complements, but does not supersede, formal processes established for the resolution of concerns related to academic matters designated under other instruments.
- 2.3 Complaints raised by Staff about their work environment are out of scope of this Policy and are to be dealt with under Navitas grievance resolution policies and procedures.

## 3. DEFINITIONS:

- 3.1 The [Glossary of Policy Terms](#) applies to this Policy.

## 4. POLICY CONTENT:

- 4.1 The College will develop and maintain processes that inform the way this Policy will be made operation. Compliance with these processes is required by the College.

### Informal Resolution of Concerns

- 4.2 As a general principle any person with a concern is encouraged to seek initial resolution of the concern with the College work area directly where appropriate. Alternatively, the person may:
- a) Contact a relevant senior Staff member in that area, where appropriate; or
  - b) Lodge a Formal Complaint under Clause 4.5.
- 4.3 To the extent reasonable and practicable, any concern will be managed by the ECC work area which has a direct connection with the concern raised.
- 4.4 Where a concern cannot be resolved locally or it would be inappropriate to do so, the person with the concern may request that it be escalated as a Formal Complaint.

### Formal Complaints

- 4.5 Any person with a Formal Complaint may lodge it through a process made accessible via the College's website.
- 4.6 Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, ECC will facilitate an investigation, if necessary, of the Complaint and a substantive response to it.
- 4.7 ECC will commence assessment within ten (10) Calendar Days of the Formal Complaint being made.
- 4.8 ECC must act fairly in addressing each Formal Complaint and take reasonable steps to complete the investigation process for a Complaint expeditiously which, where practicable, will be within thirty (30) Calendar Days. Where this timeframe may not be met, the Complainant will be informed and provided with a new timeframe.
- 4.9 Upon completion of an investigation into a Formal Complaint, ECC will initiate any action required promptly and each Complainant will receive a written statement of the outcome of a Complaint including reasons for the outcome and any further avenues of appeal where they exist.
- 4.10 ECC will keep a written record of each Formal Complaint outcome.

### Complaints Management Principles

- 4.11 To the extent reasonable, ECC will provide:
- a) comprehensive, free and easily accessible information about the College's Complaints processes;
  - b) Complainants with the opportunity to detail any Complaints, obtain independent professional advice or other support and, where a meeting is involved, be accompanied and assisted by a support person; and
  - c) a degree of flexibility in the Complaint management process, without compromising the integrity or confidentiality of the process.

### Discontinuation of Formal Complaints

- 4.12 ECC may discontinue dealing with a Formal Complaint, in part or whole:
- a) To the extent reasonable and practicable, on receipt of a written request from the Complainant that the Formal Complaint be withdrawn; or
  - b) Where the subject matter of the Formal Complaint has been previously considered or is, in the College's opinion, frivolous or vexatious;
- where reasons have been or will be provided to the Complainant.

### Dealing with Unreasonable Complainant Conduct

- 4.13 The guiding principles for dealing with unreasonable Complainant conduct are:
- a) Students have a right to Complain about the College's decisions and actions. All Complainants should expect their concerns to be treated seriously and promptly by the College;
  - b) The College has a right to decide how to deal with a Student Complaint, including making decisions on the issues that will be investigated, who will conduct the investigation, the time and resources to be allocated to the Complaint, the assistance the Complainant needs to provide and how the Complaint will be resolved in the following situations:
    - i. Unreasonable persistence – refusing to accept that a Complaint is closed, re-framing an old Complaint, persevering obstinately with an argument or continuing to phone or contact the College after a matter is closed;
    - ii. Unreasonable demands – raising issues beyond the College's responsibilities, asking for a remedy that is impractical or disproportionate, insisting that more time be spent on a Complaint than is warranted, insisting on speaking to the College Director and Principle, and/or directing the College on how to handle the Complaint
    - iii. Unreasonable lack of cooperation – demonstrating an unreasonable lack of cooperation;
    - iv. Unreasonable arguments – exaggerating issues, holding irrational beliefs, being obsessed with irrelevancies or trivialities, refusing to consider counter-arguments or being guided by conspiracy theories; and
    - v. Unreasonable behaviour – threatening violence, abusing investigation Staff or being rude or aggressive.

### External Complaints Resolution

- 4.14 Following the provision of a decision from a Formal Complaint, or at any time during the resolution process with Edith Cowan College, Complainants may lodge a Complaint with an external agency.
- 4.15 When closing a Formal Complaint Student and Academic Services will provide Complainants with details of external avenues of Complaint that are available and appropriate for the issue at hand.

### Administration and Reporting

- 4.16 ECC will maintain records of all Formal Complaints and will report on Formal Complaints to corporate and academic governance bodies.

## 5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The **College Director and Principal** is the Policy owner and has overall responsibility for the content of this Policy and its Operation.
- 5.2 **Students** are required to comply with the content of these Procedures and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to their application.
- 5.3 **Staff** members are responsible for ensuring that Complaints brought to their attention are treated with due consideration, are dealt with in a timely manner, in accordance with the principles outlined in this Policy and acted upon or referred to the appropriate area of the College for resolution.

## 6. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 6.1. This Policy is supported by the [Complaints Procedures](#).
- 6.2 Academic review mechanisms are outlined in the relevant academic policies, including:  
[Academic Integrity Policy](#)  
[Academic Progression Policy](#)  
[Admissions Policy](#)  
[Assessment Policy](#)  
[Enrolment Policy](#)  
[Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Policy](#)
- 6.4 Documents used in the development of this Policy include:  
[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)  
[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

### 7. CONTACT INFORMATION:

For queries relating to this document please contact:

<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	College Director and Principal
<b>ALL ENQUIRIES CONTACT:</b>	Quality and Compliance Manager
<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	08 6279 1133
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:concerns@ecc.edu.au">concerns@ecc.edu.au</a>

### 8. APPROVAL HISTORY:

<b>POLICY APPROVED BY:</b>	Senior Executive Team
<b>DATE POLICY FIRST APPROVED:</b>	May 2021
<b>DATE LAST MODIFIED:</b>	May 2021
<b>REVISION HISTORY:</b>	May 2021 – Complaints and Appeals Policy separated into Student Complaints Policy and Student Appeals Policy. January 2024. Major revision to reflect policy changes at ECU and to broaden the policy scope to include members of the public.
<b>NEXT REVISION DUE:</b>	January 2026