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Complaint and Appeals Policy

Policy Overview

The Complaints and Appeals Policy at St George and Sutherland Community College (SGSCC) provides a structured process for students, staff, and other stakeholders to raise concerns and seek resolution to disputes or issues they may encounter during their engagement with the college. The policy ensures that all complaints and appeals are handled fairly, impartially, and promptly, in line with regulatory requirements and the principles of natural justice.

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **Provide a Clear Framework:** Establish clear procedures for lodging and handling complaints and appeals to ensure they are resolved efficiently and transparently.
- **Ensure Fairness and Equity:** Safeguard the rights of all parties by ensuring that complaints and appeals are handled without bias or favoritism.
- **Maintain Compliance:** Comply with the RTO Standards 2025, the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, and other relevant legislation, including the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Privacy Act 1988.
- **Promote Continuous Improvement:** Use feedback from complaints and appeals to enhance the quality of services provided by SGSCC.

Procedures and Implementation

1. Lodging a Complaint:

Informal Resolution:

Individuals are encouraged to resolve minor issues informally by discussing them directly with the relevant parties or staff members involved. This approach often leads to quicker resolutions.

Formal Complaint:

If the issue is not resolved informally, the individual may lodge a formal complaint by submitting a Complaints Form to the RTO Manager. The complaint must include details of the issue, relevant evidence, and any steps taken to resolve it informally.

2. Handling of Complaints:

Acknowledgment:

The RTO Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five (5) working days.

Investigation:

The complaint will be investigated by an impartial member of staff who is not involved in the matter. The investigation may include interviews with the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses, as well as a review of relevant documentation.

Outcome:

The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the complainant in writing within twenty (20) working days. The decision will include the reasons for the outcome and any corrective actions to be taken.

SGSCC - St George & Sutherland Community College Inc.

127-129 Sutherland Road Jannali, NSW 2226

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3. Appeals Process:

Grounds for Appeal:

The complainant may appeal the outcome of a complaint if they believe the decision was unjust, or if there was a procedural error or new evidence that was not considered.

Lodging an Appeal:

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Appeals Committee within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint outcome. The appeal should outline the reasons for the appeal and any supporting evidence.

Appeals Committee:

The Appeals Committee, comprised of senior management who were not involved in the original complaint investigation, will review the appeal. They may request additional information or hold further discussions with the parties involved.

Final Decision:

The final decision will be provided to the appellant in writing within twenty (20) working days of receiving the appeal. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final and binding.

4. External Review:

Referral to External Bodies:

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeals process, they may refer the matter to an external body such as Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for training-related complaints, the Resolution Institute, or the Overseas Students Ombudsman for issues involving international students.

ASQA:

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/about/complaints>

Resolution Institute:

Level 1, 13 Bridge Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Toll-free call 1800 651 650
International call +61 9251 3366
Leadr@leadr.com.au
www.leadr.com.au

Overseas Student Ombudsman

GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601
Toll-free call 1300 or (+612 6276 0111)
ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
www.oso.gov.au

Legal Rights:

The complainant also retains the right to seek legal advice and pursue the matter through the legal system if they believe their rights have been violated.

5. Confidentiality and Privacy:

Confidential Handling:

All complaints and appeals will be handled confidentially, and information will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.

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Record Keeping:

Records of all complaints and appeals, including decisions and actions taken, will be maintained securely for at least five years in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and SGSCC's data management policies.

6. Monitoring and Review:

Continuous Improvement:

SGSCC will regularly review complaints and appeals data to identify trends and areas for improvement. This data will be used to enhance policies, procedures, and the overall student experience.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if required, to ensure it remains effective and aligned with current regulations and best practices.

Applicability and Responsibilities

Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all students, staff, and stakeholders of SGSCC, including domestic and international students.

It also applies to all staff involved in the handling and resolution of complaints and appeals.

Who is responsible?

- **RTO Manager:** Responsible for receiving, acknowledging, and coordinating the investigation of complaints.
- **Appeals Committee:** Responsible for reviewing appeals and making final decisions.
- **All Staff:** Responsible for supporting the resolution of complaints and adhering to this policy's guidelines.

References

- **RTO Standards 2025:** Standards 2.7 and 2.8 of the Outcome Standards. Provides guidelines for the complaints and appeals processes, ensuring fairness and transparency in decision-making.
- **National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018:** Standards 8 and 10, which require registered providers to have a documented complaints and appeals process and to ensure students are aware of their rights to access these processes.
- **Fair Work Act 2009:** Relevant for employment-related complaints, ensuring compliance with workplace rights and obligations.
- **Privacy Act 1988:** Ensures that all personal information related to complaints and appeals is handled in accordance with national privacy standards.

This policy ensures that SGSCC provides a supportive and transparent environment where complaints and appeals are managed with integrity and respect, promoting trust and accountability across the college community.

Flowchart of Complaint & Appeals Process at SGSCC

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