Captain Cook Institute Pty Ltd trading as
George Brown College
Level 4, 56-58, York Street, Sydney NSW 2000
+612 9279 4949

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Name:	**Complaints and Appeals Policy**
Approved by:	PEO
Date Approved:	17 May 2024
Implementation Owner	General Manager – George Brown College
Maintenance Owner	General Manager – George Brown College
Review Date	16 May 2025

George Brown College (GBC) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair, and equitable complaints handling and appeals process that is easily accessible to all stakeholders. GBC ensures their overseas students have the right to natural justice protected through access to professional, timely, and inexpensive processes outlined in this documented Complaints and Appeals Policy. The Letter of Offer & Enrolment Agreement, and the right to make complaints and seek appeal of decisions and action under various responses do not affect the right of the student to act under the Australian Consumer Law if the Australian Consumer Law applies.

GBC aims to:

- Develop a culture that views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works.
- Set in place a complaints and appeals handling system that is client-focused and helps GBC prevent complaints from recurring.
- Ensure that any complaints are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity, and complete confidentiality.
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to complaints and appeals is not Discriminated against nor victimised.
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to the complaints and appeals.

A complaint can be defined as ‘the expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of GBC’s services and activities’, such as the:

- Enrolment, induction/orientation process.
- Quality of education provided.
- Academic matters, including student progress, assessment, curriculum, and awards in a VET course of study.
- Handling of personal information and access to personal records.
- The way someone has been treated.

This *Complaints and Appeals Policy* is designed to ensure that GBC responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

Before an issue becomes a formal Complaint

All are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s)

concerned. There is support staff available within GBC to assist students in resolving their issues at this level.

Complaints and Appeals handling process for students

This Policy can be utilised by GBC stakeholders, including students enrolled and potentially seeking to enrol in a course of study with GBC for complaints and appeals of an academic or non-academic nature. Complaints and Appeals of an academic nature include matters related to student progress, assessment, curriculum, and awards in a course of study. Complaints and Appeals of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including complaints in relation to personal information that GBC holds in relation to the student.

All stakeholders, especially referring to students, can complain about Trainers, Assessors, other Staff, Agents, or other students.

GBC will respond to any complaint or appeal the overseas student makes regarding his or her dealings with GBC, with GBC's education agents, or with any related party GBC has an arrangement with, to deliver the overseas student's course or related services.

During all stages of this Policy, GBC will take all steps to ensure that:

- The complainant and the respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against.
- The complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to the complaint may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
- A full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so, requested by the complainant or the respondent. Where the internal or external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, GBC will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome.
- All records are filed in the Continuous Improvement Register.

There is no cost to the complainant.

Stage one – Informal complaints and appeals
Any GBC stakeholder with a question or complaint may attempt an informal resolution by raising the matter verbally or face-to-face with GBC staff. Matters raised as such are not formal complaints and are therefore not documented, recorded, or reported unless identified by staff to whom the complaint was made as relevant to the wider operation of the college.

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their question or complaint are encouraged to register a formal complaint and appeals process.

Stage two – Formal complaints and appeals

Using the Complaints & Appeals Form, which is available on the GBC website, a formal complaint and appeals process must be submitted in writing in person at GBC student services or via email to gm@georgebrown.nsw.edu.au.

Appointed staff will receive and acknowledge the Complaints & Appeals Form and escalate it to the relevant department manager.

The process commences within ten working days of the formal lodgment of the Complaints & Appeals Form along with supporting information, and all measures are taken by GBC to finalize the process as soon as practicable.

Where GBC requires more than 60 calendar days to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, it will:

- Inform the complainant in writing as to why more than 60 calendar days are required.
- Provide the complainant with regular updates on the progress of the process.

The relevant department manager or their nominee will then endeavor to resolve the complaint and provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address it, including the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process within 20 working days from the outcome if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint.

Stage three – Internal appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint, they may lodge an appeal with the GBC Director (who is senior to the original decision maker) again, using the Complaints and Appeals form.

An appropriate person or committee will be appointed to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties.

Where possible, such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the Director or their nominee will provide a written report to the complainant advising further steps taken to address the complaints and appeals, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days from the lodgment of the complaint and appeal. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal, at no extra cost.

Stage four – External appeal

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal, they may then lodge an external appeal with the Overseas Student Ombudsman.

Contact details for the Ombudsman are:

Email:	ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Website:	http://www.oso.gov.au/
Call:	Within Australia: 1300 362 072 / Outside Australia: +61 2 6276 0111
Inquiries:	Monday to Friday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Postal:	Commonwealth Ombudsman, GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601

Students who wish to lodge an external appeal must complete the form online at http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students, using the form in the "online complaint form" link. This is a free government service.

GBC agrees to be bound by the external reviewer's recommendations and the Director will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 working days of receipt of the report from the external reviewer.

Further action

If a complaint and appeals remain unresolved after the external appeal, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to the Department of Education and Training National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73.

The Policy set out in this document does not replace or modify any other responsibilities that may arise under other policies or statute or any other law.

Nothing in this policy limits the rights of individuals to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, this Policy does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Enrolment status

Where a student chooses to access this policy, GBC will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals handling process is ongoing.

Record keeping and confidentiality

A written record of all complaints and appeals handled under this Policy and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaints and appeals appropriate access to these records, upon written request to GBC.

All records relating to complaints and appeals will be treated as confidential and will be covered by GBC's privacy and personal information policy.

Younger Students under 18:

Younger students may access this policy in the same way as stated above. The process remains the same. Under 18 students will need to use the U18 Complaints and Appeals Form. This Form can be used by both the student and/or their legal guardian. When using this Form, Under 18 students must have the legal Guardian's declaration signed prior to GBC accepting the complaint form.

GBC will continue providing welfare and accommodation arrangements to the students until the complaints and appeals process is finalised.

Where the complaints/appeal is related to welfare and accommodation services provided by a third-party GBC will liaise with the third party to investigate and resolve any issues.

Students or legal guardians of students may access the GBC Complaints Policy via the GBC website. Students and their legal guardians have the provision to complain about training and assessment matters or services provided by GBC.

Under-18 students and their parents are advised to refer to the Under-18 Students Policy and Procedure and contact the Student Services Team if they have any questions.

Change History

Version	Approval date	Review by	Approved by	Change
V.5	17 May 2024	General manager	PEO	U18 Students part revised as per Compliance Consultant's advice after internal audit dated April 2024
V.4	17 May 2023	General manager	PEO	U18 Students part added
V.3	25 October 2017	General manager	PEO	Development of policy