



New England College is the trading name of **New England Institute of Technology Pty Ltd**
RTO No: 31943 | CRICOS No: 03113M | ABN: 40 135 331 494

**Reference: Policy for VET FEE HELP and VET Student Loans Grievances
Academic and Non-Academic**

Version: V1.1

Date: 01.07.2017

Status: Published



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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version History

Version		
V1.1	01.07.17	Published

Review Process:

This policy shall be reviewed annually in compliance with education industry standards including the VET student Rules 2016 and other relevant standards/legislation.

Next Review Due: **June 2018**



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Policy for VET FEE-HELP and VET Student loan Academic & Non-Academic Student Grievance Policy Procedure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy procedure is to define the system available to students for dealing with VET FEE-HELP (grandfathered) and VET Student Loans student grievances.

SCOPE

The scope of this policy procedure applies to VET FEE-HELP (grandfathered) and VET student Loans scheme students.

New England College is committed to handling grievances through an effective, efficient, timely, fair and confidential manner.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The Compliance Manager, with input from other departments, is responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this policy and any associated guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION

The PEO is responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation and Students and Complainants are made aware of its availability.

Enquiries about interpretation of this procedure should be directed to Compliance.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document the following applies:

The Act refers to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

Student/s refers to all persons enrolled in a unit of study who are, or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act; and

Potential Students refers to all persons seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under sub clause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act and who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act

Academic Grievance refers to matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a VET course of study.

Non-Academic Grievance refers to matters which do not relate to Academic Matters. These grievances may be but not limited to personal information that New England College holds in relation to the student, application or financial matters, behaviours of the College staff.

Non-academic grievances tend to arise from events occurring at a provider venue or from decisions made by a provider.

Grievance: A cause of dissatisfaction based on the honest, reasonably-held belief that a complainant has been unfairly or unreasonably treated.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the Complainant's place of residence or mode of study.



Informal Complaint: The raising and attempted resolution of a grievance through informal discussion(s) between a complainant and New England College

Formal Complaint: A written statement of grievance lodged with New England College

Appeal: A review of the outcome of a formal complaint by New England College's PEO

Review: A review of the outcome of an appeal by an external body

External Body: an organisation external to and independent of New England College that can influence or instruct it to change a decision it has made regarding a formal complaint or appeal

Complainant: Anyone making a complaint to or raising a grievance with New England College, and accessing the complaints and appeals process

Department of Education: the government department responsible for administering the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003

Procedure

Overview

There are four stages in the grievance process:

1. Informal
2. Formal
3. Internal Review
4. External Review

General Principles

- 1) Any person lodging a grievance may be asked to attend meeting(s) with one or more New England College staff members at any stage of the grievance process.
- 2) The Complainant and any respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.
- 3) The Complainant and any respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.
- 4) At all stages of the process, discussions relating to grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or any respondent if requested.
- 5) Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored at New England College, 151 Wellington Rd, East Brisbane QLD 4169. Access to these records may be requested by writing to the PEO at the aforementioned address.
- 6) A Complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by New England College and the Complainant.



1. Informal Grievance Procedure

Students are encouraged initially to attempt to resolve a grievance informally by talking directly with the person concerned to resolve the problem. This step is not mandatory and a Student may proceed directly to the Formal Grievance Procedure.

2. Formal Grievance Procedure

2.1 STAGE ONE

2.1.1 Formal grievances should be submitted in writing to the Director at New England College, PO Box 7185, East Brisbane, QLD 4169.

The Complainant is invited to include suggestions about how the grievance might be resolved.

2.1.2 The Director will notify the Complainant of receipt of the grievance within 5 working days.

2.1.3 The Director will then assess the grievance, to determine the outcome and advise the Complainant in writing of their decision within 15 working days.

2.1.4 The Complainant will be advised of their right to access Stage Two of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One.

2.2 STAGE TWO

2.2.1 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One they may lodge an appeal in writing with the PEO at New England College, PO Box 7185, East Brisbane, QLD 4169.

2.2.2 The Complainant's appeal will be determined by the PEO who will conduct all necessary consultations with the Complainant and other relevant persons and make a determination of the appeal.

The Complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision within 10 working days.

2.2.3 The Complainant will be advised of their right to progress to Stage Three of the grievance procedure if they consider the matter unresolved.

2.3 STAGE THREE

Domestic Students:

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal and they are a domestic student then an independent mediator can be requested through LEADR, the Association of Dispute Resolvers. Complainants can contact LEADR directly as follows:

Address: Level 1, 13-15 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: 02 9251 3366 **Free call:** 1800 651 650

Fax: 02 9251 3733 **Email:** leadr@leadr.info

Costs of such mediation will be shared equally by New England College and the Complainant. As a guide mediator's costs would be \$385 for the first four hours (or part thereof). Subsequent hours would be \$137.50 per hour. It is common for most disputes to be resolved within the initial four hour allocation.



3. Further Action

If the Complainant has been through all stages of this grievance handling process and remains unsatisfied with the outcome of their grievance, then they may contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). For contact details and information please see: www.asqa.gov.au.

New England College will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the resolution of this grievance within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law.

Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies

4. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the Institution will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

5. Publication and amendment of this policy

This policy will be made publicly available on the New England College website (www.nec.edu.au) in an online accessible and printable format, in the section 'Policies and Procedures'.

Alternatively, a copy of this policy may be requested by contacting New England College using the contact details provided below:

Mail:

New England College
PO Box 7185,
East Brisbane, QLD 4169

Email: info@nec.edu.au

Phone: 07 3164 7070