



# Complaints and Appeals Process for International Students

## Internal Process

The Penrhos College Complaints Management Policy and Flowchart can be found on the College website at: [www.penrhos.wa.edu.au/complaints.html](http://www.penrhos.wa.edu.au/complaints.html)

## Notes that for International Students

- The process of the Complaints management policy is followed
- Investigation into the complaint or appeal must begin within 10 working days of the complaint being lodged. Prompt decisions are required because of the student's visa restricts the length of stay in Australia
- Enrolment must be maintained during the process of investigation
- The College must have independent external persons available for an appeal process if the student remains dissatisfied

## Independent Conciliator

Additionally, an independent International Student Conciliator, located at the Department of Education Services (DES) is available to assist both parties to resolve the dispute themselves through mediation and conciliation. The role of the Independent Student Conciliator is intended to complement the College's own Complaints Management Policy.

Either party may consult the independent International Student Conciliator ('the Conciliator') at any stage during a dispute as part of a provider's internal complaints and appeals process. The Conciliator will not become actively involved in the matter until the parties have made an initial attempt to resolve the dispute between themselves.

The Conciliator is a suitably qualified person appointed by the DES to recommend appropriate action in disputes referred for conciliation, though does not have the power to direct either party to take a particular course of action.

The Conciliator will assist with issues relating to:

- the education providers services and facilities;
- content and standard of Education Services;
- amount of refunds paid to students;
- quality of instruction;
- academic progress of students;
- the conduct of international students;
- welfare services;
- information concerning part-time employment opportunities;
- accommodation provided by or advertised by an institution;
- suspension and expulsion of overseas students; and

- any other matters deemed appropriate by the Conciliator.

The processes and practices used by the Conciliator include:

- hearing grievances from international students and from education providers with international students;
- mediating and conciliating the resolution of grievances;
- chairing informal groups representing particular sectors of the industry where grievances are of a nature that they require particular expertise and knowledge;
- advising students and education providers of further legal channels available to them;
- liaising with education providers on matters concerning the provision of pastoral care and counselling for international students offered by the education providers;
- liaising with education providers on the procedures for resolving grievances offered by the education providers;
- liaising with relevant welfare agencies and other relevant bodies on matters which concern or may concern international students; and
- maintaining a public relations function with education providers and agencies on matters which concern or may
- for international students offered by the education providers;
- liaising with education providers on the procedures for resolving grievances offered by the education providers;
- liaising with relevant welfare agencies and other relevant bodies on matters which concern or may concern international students; and
- maintaining a public relations function with education providers and agencies on matters which concern international students

Students may access the services of the Independent Conciliator located at the Department of Education Services to supplement the internal stages of the appeals process.

Independent Conciliator  
 Department of Education Services  
 22 Hasler Road  
 Osborne Park WA 6017  
 Phone: +61 8 9441 1900  
 Fax: +61 8 9441 1901  
 Email: [des@des.wa.gov.au](mailto:des@des.wa.gov.au)

If the student withdraws from the complaints or appeals process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting the College, the Enrolment Manager must notify the Secretary of DEEWR of details pertaining to the matter that gave rise to the complaint, including steps taken to resolve or attempt to resolve it.

## External Process

### Overseas Students' Ombudsman

The Overseas Students' Ombudsman (OSO) offers a free, impartial and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by the College. For information, visit the Overseas Students' Ombudsman website [www.oso.gov.au](http://www.oso.gov.au) or call 1300 362 072 within Australia or call +61 2 6276 0111 from outside Australia.

The OSO will investigate a wide range of complaint types from a student against a privately registered provider and ensure that all students have access to an independent external statutory body. The investigation of the complaint will be at no cost to the provider or the student.

Some examples of overseas student complaints made against education providers that are investigated by the OSO relate to:

- refusing admission to a course;
- fees and refunds;
- student transfers between courses or education providers;
- the monitoring or reporting of student course progress or attendance;
- the cancellation of enrolment;
- accommodation or work arranged by a provide

The OSO cannot investigate complaints about:

- public providers (which are already covered by the State and Territory Ombudsman);
- domestic Australian students; or
- students from overseas who are not on a student visa (e.g. students studying on a visitor, working holiday or temporary business visa).

### Reference:

*Policy guidelines for the registration of education services to international students – 2015*  
Department of Education Services