

## Procedure: Student complaints

*The purpose of this procedure is to provide structure and guidance to staff dealing with student complaints.*

### WHERE STUDENTS CAN ACCESS THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Student Complaints procedure is outlined for students in the Student Handbook. There is a separate Student Handbook for NZST and YooBee Colleges students, the locations of these are below:

- The current versions are located on all brand websites
- YooBee students can also access this on the Student Hub
- NZST students are provided a copy at orientation or the commencement of their course
- Students can also find a copy on their student notice board, along with the Code of Practice and the Tertiary Education Dispute Resolution flyer

### INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

If a student approaches you with a concern, consider this an opportunity. It is not always easy to voice concerns, so if a student has chosen you then this is your opportunity to offer support and improve their student experience.

As per the Student Handbook, we ask that students initially try to resolve the issue directly with the person(s) concerned. If however a student does not feel comfortable to do so, they should seek support from their Tutor.

In some cases and due to the sensitivity of the complaint, a student may not feel comfortable discussing the issue with the Class Tutor. In these cases, and to facilitate a safe and supportive environment, it is appropriate for a student to approach the Team Leader directly.

#### The Tutor will:

- Seek further information or clarification from either the student, or from others, without naming the student unless express permission has been provided by the student for them to be named.
- The Tutor may also seek the support of their Team Leader or Campus Manager when considering the matter.
- Consider informal resolution strategies.

#### Informal resolution strategies will require the Tutor to:

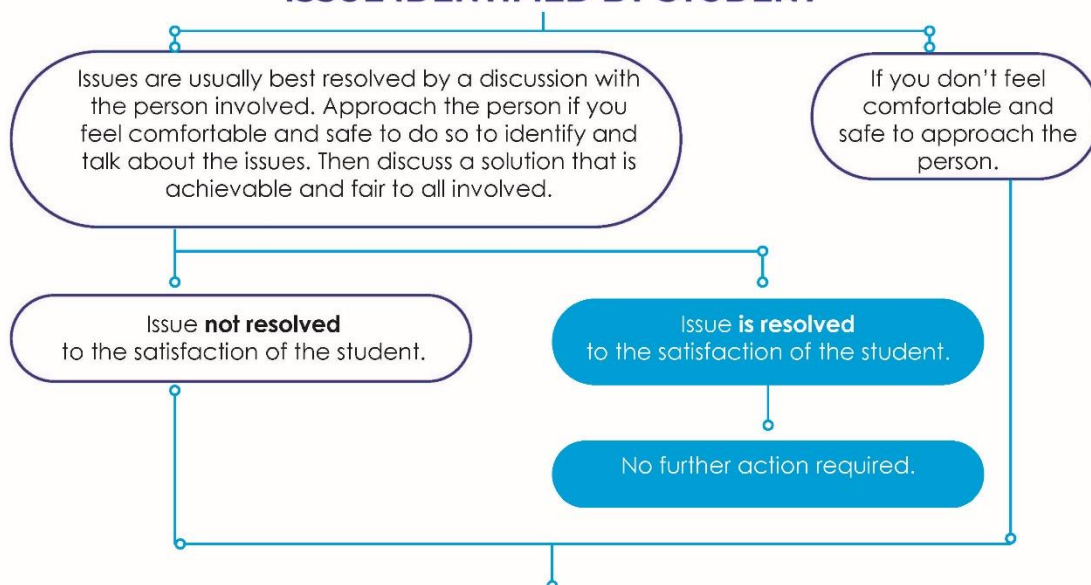
- ✓ **Be open and professional** – it is important that a student feels heard
- ✓ **Understand what the issue is** – ensure you have all the facts and know what the student needs to resolve the situation informally
- ✓ **Be clear** – advise the next steps and give realistic timeframes. Ensure you follow through
- ✓ **Seek support** from your Team Leader if you are unsure what action to take
- ✓ **Address the issue** – take steps to resolve the complaint, and confirm with the student that they feel this has been resolved satisfactorily
- ✓ **Put detailed notes in Selma** – ensuring to mark as confidential if the issue is of a sensitive nature  
Refer to the 'Student Notes' guide in the [Selma User Guides for NZMA and YooBee Teams Group for instructions](#)

#### When should an Informal Complaint be escalated?

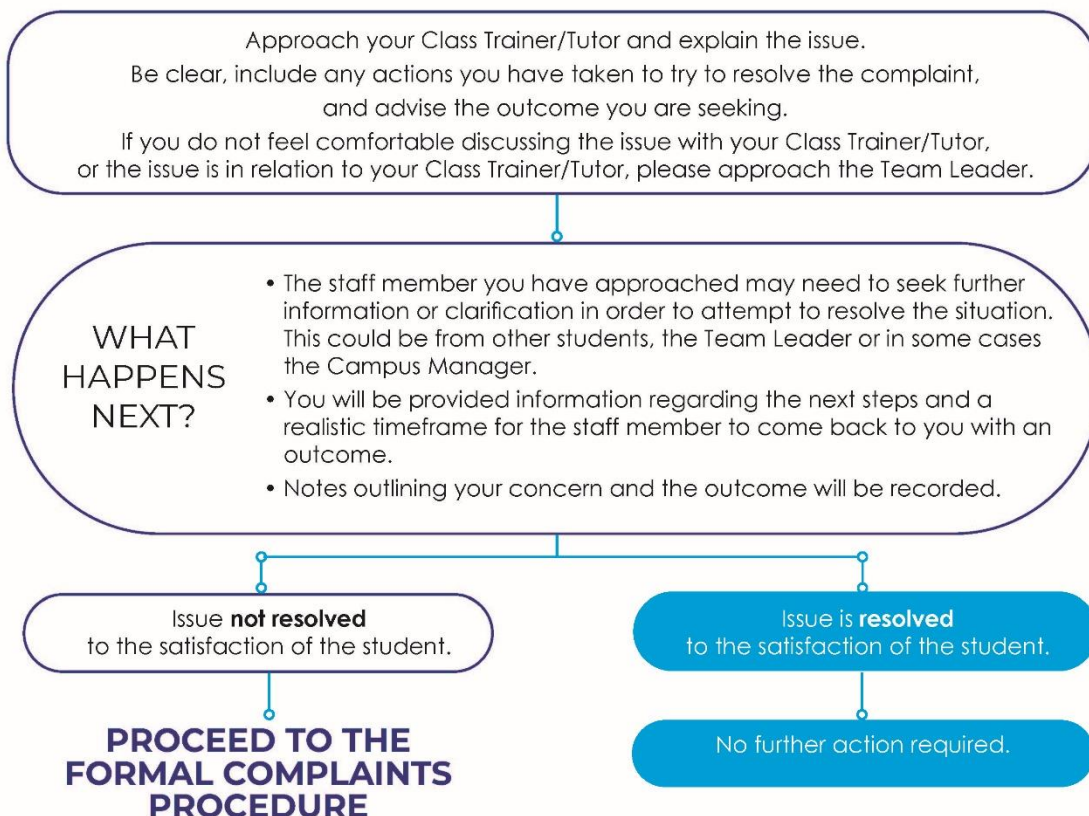
If the staff member feels they are unable to resolve the complaint with the student, or an informal complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student may decide to follow the formal complaints procedure. We must ensure the student is aware of the next steps, such as where they can access the Formal Complaints process.

# INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

## ISSUE IDENTIFIED BY STUDENT



## SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT



## FORMAL COMPLAINTS

If any complaint cannot be resolved fairly and equitably through the informal complaints procedure, the student may decide to submit a formal complaint to the Campus Manager.

### The students will:

- Students must submit the formal complaint using the *Formal complaint/Reconsideration request* form.

### The Campus Manager will:

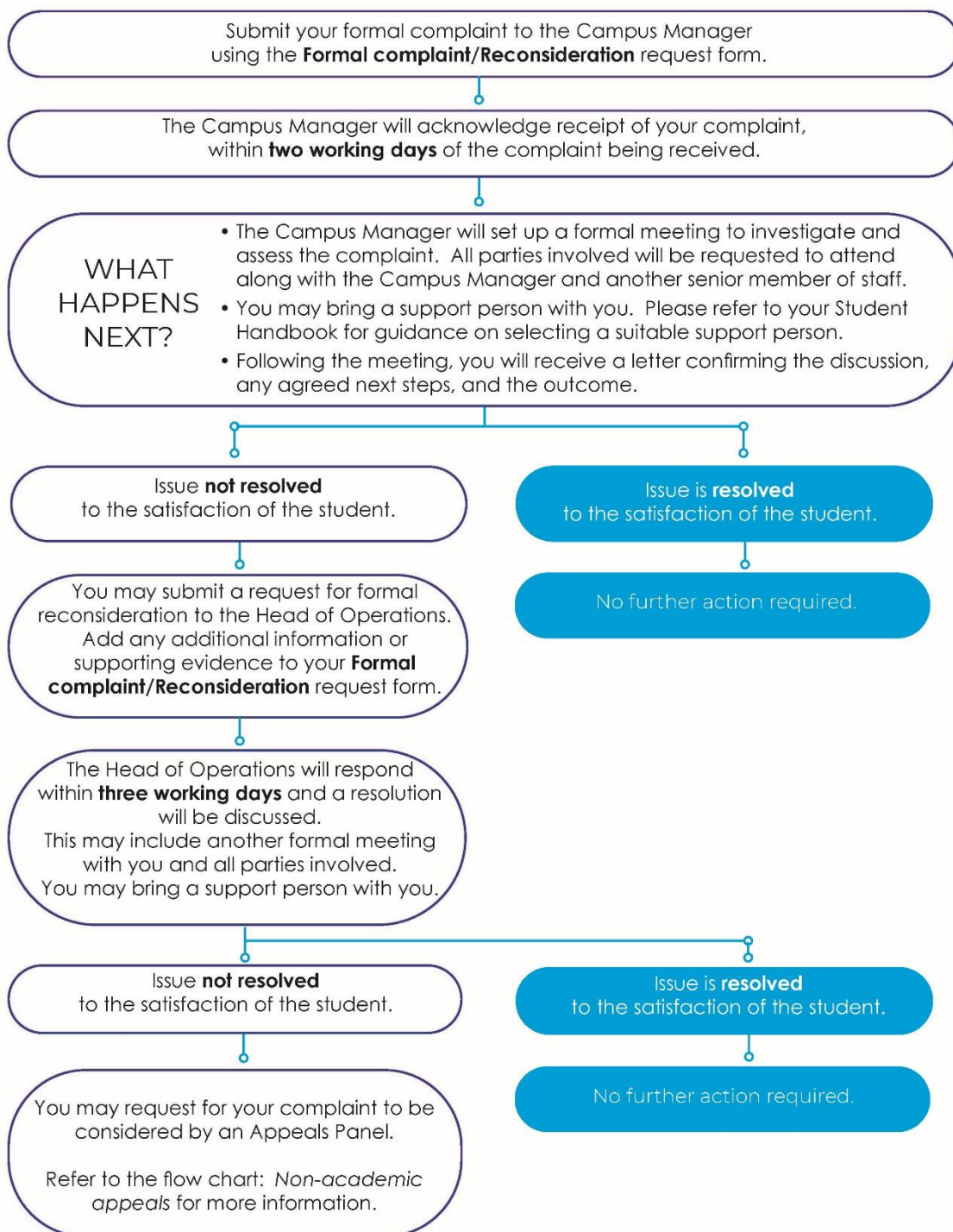
- Upon receiving such a complaint, the Campus Manager must advise The Head of Operations **before** any written correspondence is sent to any parties (being student/parent/guardian etc).
- The Campus Manager must then provide the student with written acknowledgement of receipt of their formal complaint, within **two working days** of the complaint being received.
- The Campus Manager will then set up a formal meeting with all the parties involved, along with another senior member of staff, to investigate and assess the complaint. Students may bring a support person to this meeting if they wish to do so. Students under 18 years of age, should have their parent/legal guardian present, or written communication outlining their absence. Student who are identified as having a disability/impairment should have a support person present, if this is not possible, the Learner Success Coordinator is able to function as the student's support person.
- If further investigation or action is required following this meeting, the Campus Manager must ensure to provide regular and clear communication to the complainant. It could be that additional time is required to gather evidence or discuss potential solutions with different departments – whatever is needed, be clear about the next steps, give realistic timeframes, and ensure you follow through.
- During the meeting, the Campus Manager must ascertain what the student needs to resolve the complaint. Following the meeting, the Campus Manager must provide a letter to the student confirming the discussion and any actions agreed to.

### Potential resolutions for formal complaints could be, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Reviewing, revising or rescinding a prior decision;
- Taking action on a request previously not followed up;
- Offering an apology and/or a commitment to ensure the action/behaviour is not continued;
- Taking action to make an improvement to a process, service or facility;
- Refunding fees/charges associated with the complaint, or part of these

# FORMAL COMPLAINTS

## WHEN AN INFORMAL COMPLAINT IS NOT RESOLVED



### Complaints Register

All formal complaints must be recorded on the Complaints Register. Access to the Complaints Register is restricted to Senior Management only, and can be accessed in the SLT page on Sharepoint [here](#).

The Senior Manager dealing with the formal complaint – such as the Campus Manager or Head of Operations - must complete all fields when entering a formal complaint into the Complaints Register. These include:

<b>ID Reference</b>	Student's Selma ID number. No names are to be entered into the complaints register
<b>Date</b>	Date the complaint was received
<b>Campus</b>	Select from the drop down
<b>Details of complaint</b>	Include a brief description
<b>Outcome</b>	Select from the drop down. For example:  <b>Resolved:</b> The complaint was resolved to the complainant's satisfaction <b>Response provided:</b> A response to the initial complaint was provided by Yoobee but following that, the complainant never responded <b>Closed:</b> The complaint was resolved but the complainant was not satisfied with the outcome <b>Ongoing:</b> The complaint is not yet resolved
<b>Student Ethnicity</b>	Select from the drop down
<b>Type of complaint</b>	Select from the drop down
<b>Status</b>	Select from the drop down. For example:  <b>Ongoing:</b> This is still being addressed <b>Closed:</b> This is no longer being looked into

Any attachments, notes, copies of any/all letters issued to the student should be loaded into Selma under 'formal complaint' in the event log and set as **confidential**. These should not be loaded into the complaints register.

### Reconsideration requests

If the formal complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, the student may request for formal Reconsideration. The student must update their *Formal complaint/Reconsideration request* form with any additional information or evidence and submit this to the Head of Operations.

Upon receiving such a complaint, the Head of Operations will respond to the complainant within **three working days** and a resolution will be discussed. This may involve repeating steps in the Formal Complaints process above.

It is very unlikely that a complaint cannot be resolved by the Head of Operations, however if following this meeting the student feels that the matter is still not resolved to their satisfaction, they may request for their complaint to be considered by an Appeals Panel.

*Refer to the Non-academic appeals flow chart for more information.*

An Appeal is the last opportunity for us to resolve the complaint, prior to the student submitting their complaint to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). If the student does submit a complaint to NZQA, part of NZQA's investigation will be to establish whether we have followed our internal processes. For this reason, it is imperative that you have followed and documented all steps in this process.

### TERMINOLOGY

**Complaint:** We define a complain to be an expression of dissatisfaction or concern raised by ākonga/learner, staff member or other stakeholder about an aspect of Yoobee Colleges, its programmes, services, or policies.

**Critical incident:** We define a critical incident to be an event outside of the normal experience that poses an actual or perceived threat of damage to property, natural disaster or injury, illness, or exposure to death of a person or people.



**Informal complaint:** Where a student has approached a staff member directly with a concern. Resolution can usually be found by solving, explaining, clearing up or settling the matter directly with the complainant, without using a formal procedure.

**Formal complaint:** If an informal approach does not resolve the issue, the student may choose to escalate the matter to management, as a formal written complaint. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a formal complaint will not be considered unless the correct process has been followed.

## RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

- **POLICY** Student complaints
- **FLOW CHART** Informal complaints
- **FLOW CHART** Formal complaints
- **FLOW CHART** Non-academic appeals
- **FORM** Formal complaint\_Reconsideration request