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Introducing the Overseas Students Ombudsman



Dear

Welcome to the first edition of the Overseas Students Ombudsman education and training provider e-newsletter.

I became the Overseas Students Ombudsman in August 2012. I have a long-standing commitment to consumer protection and previously served as the Chief Ombudsman of the Financial Ombudsman Service and as the Australian Banking Industry Ombudsman.








For more information, see my [Biography](#)

I am pleased to send you our first newsletter full of information we hope you will find useful.

Our next edition will include case studies highlighting complaint issues and outcomes for providers and students.

We also plan to produce an overseas students e-newsletter in the near future to share our complaints experience with overseas students too.

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What does the Overseas Students Ombudsman do?

The Overseas Students Ombudsman has been assisting overseas students and private registered education and training providers by providing an external complaints and appeals process since April 2011. Our services are free, independent and impartial.

We help private providers and overseas students by:

- encouraging overseas students to use their provider's internal complaints and appeals process for most problems
- investigating complaints from overseas students to determine if a private provider has followed the ESOS Act, the National Code and their own policies and procedures correctly
- deciding the complaint or appeal in support of the provider where it has followed the legislation and policies correctly
- identifying appropriate remedies for students where we identify substantive errors or non-compliance by a provider
- making recommendations and suggestions to help providers improve their policies, practices and staff training
- giving providers advice on best practice complaints handling to help providers resolve complaints directly with overseas students

See our [Better Practice Complaints Handling for Education Providers](#) guide

More information about who we are and what we do is available in our [Frequently Asked Questions for Private Providers](#)

You can also see the [Australian Education International \(AEI\) Fact Sheet](#)

[FAQs for Providers](#)

[FAQs for Students in English](#)

[FAQs for Students in 21 other languages](#)

[OSO Publications](#)

[Better Practice Complaints Guide](#)

[Feedback](#)

How can I tell my students about the Overseas Students Ombudsman?

All overseas students of private registered providers have the right to contact the Overseas Students Ombudsman to make a complaint. It is best practice to tell your students about our service.

You can order brochures to distribute to your students and use our wording on your website to do this.

If you want to use the Overseas Students Ombudsman as your Standard 8 external complaints and appeals process, you can use our suggested wording in your complaints policy and in your internal appeal letters.

[Read more](#)

How does the Overseas Students Ombudsman investigate?

When we commence an investigation, we notify the Principal Executive Officer by email that we are investigating the complaint and request relevant information, to be provided within two weeks.

[Read more](#)

Are you making any of these mistakes?

The main issues we have identified in our investigations are:

[Read more](#)

Who investigates complaints about providers not paying refunds?

The Overseas Students Ombudsman transfers straightforward complaints about providers not paying a refund within the required provider obligation period to the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

However, if there is a dispute about whether a refund is owed or not, the Overseas Students Ombudsman may investigate instead.

[Read more](#)

Overseas Students Ombudsman 2011-2012 Annual Report

Do you know what sort of problems overseas students complain about? Want to know what we found?

Read case studies, statistics and more in our first [Annual Report](#).
For more recent statistics, see our [Quarterly Reports](#):

Complaints at a glance: 1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012

Complaints received	588
Investigations commenced (including complaints received prior to 1 July 2011)	262
Investigations completed	211
Complaints resolved without the need to investigate by	360

contacting the provider	
Total finalised complaints	571

External appeals about course progress & attendance

The Overseas Students Ombudsman provides a free external appeal service for overseas students wishing to appeal against their provider's intention to report them to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance under s 19 of the ESOS Act.

What does the Ombudsman consider?

What documents does the Ombudsman request from providers?

Do providers have to wait for the Ombudsman complaint process to be completed, before reporting a student?

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