



Supporting education providers
to improve their complaint
handling practices

What the OSO does

We were established in 2011 to hear complaints from international students in the private sector. We investigate complaints and appeals, help private providers improve their internal complaints and appeals processes and report on trends and systemic issues which helps the whole sector.

In 2015–16, the OSO:

- received 874 complaints and appeals
- completed 291 investigations
- 56.7% were resolved in favour of the provider; and 25.7 % in favour of the complaining student

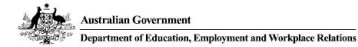
The value of complaints

- Many problems can be identified and resolved early by providers when they have and promote a good internal complaints and appeals process
- Complaints provide free market research to organisations on areas of weakness and possible improvements
- Complaints provide opportunities to re-engage customers who might otherwise go elsewhere

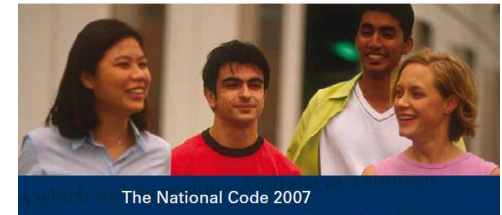
Internal Complaints

- Standard 6 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 places responsibility on education providers to:

- give all overseas students information about the complaints and appeals process during their orientation program



National Code of Practice for
Registration Authorities and
Providers of Education and Training
to Overseas Students 2007



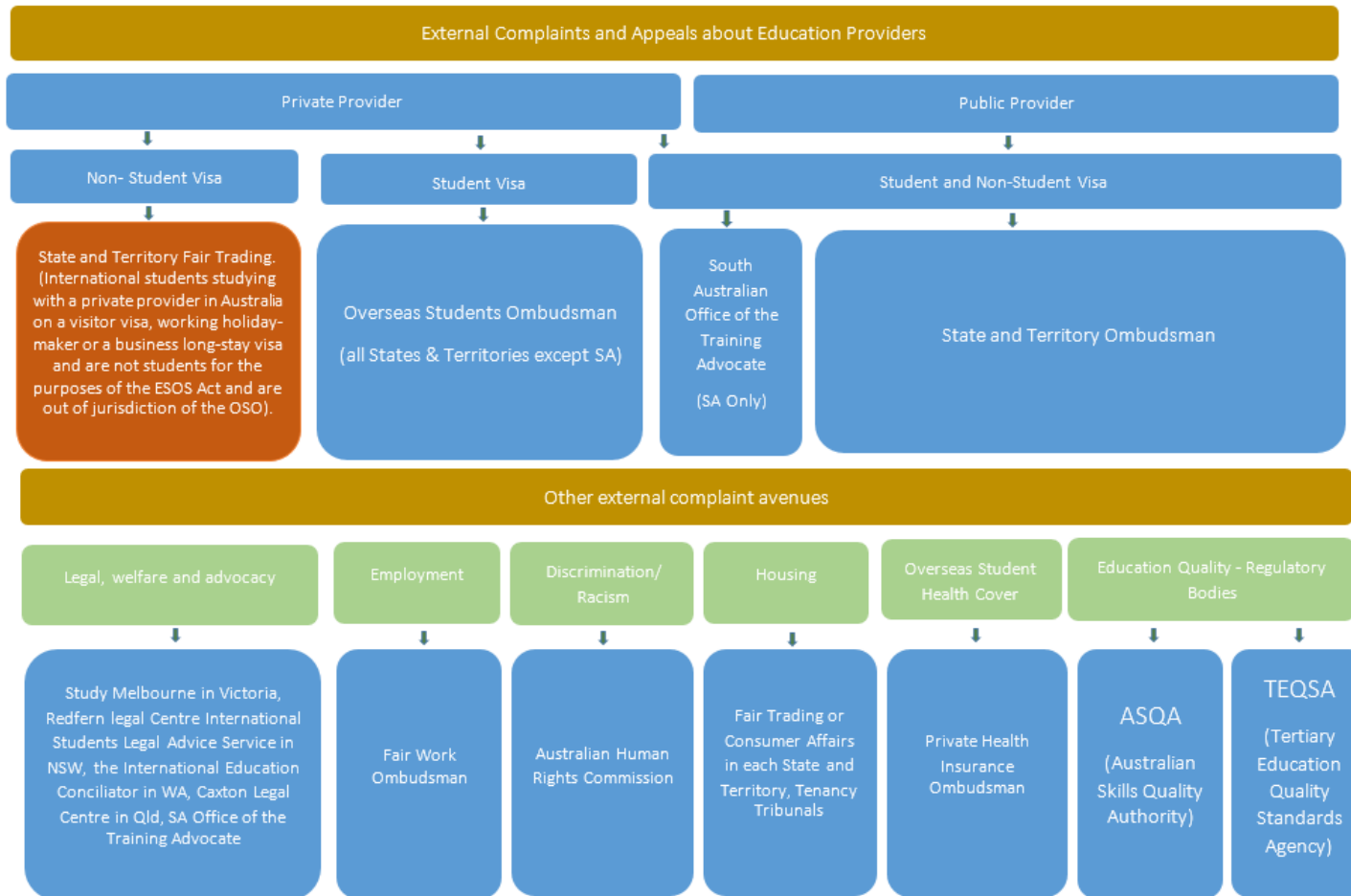
External Complaints

- Standard 8 of the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* places responsibility on education providers to:
 - Provide international students with access to an independent, external complaints handling person or body
 - To direct students to the appropriate external complaints handler

External complaint handling bodies

- In most states and territories there are two external complaint bodies available to international students who wish to complain about, or appeal, a decision made by their education provider
 - The Overseas Students Ombudsman for those in the private sector
 - The relevant State or Territory Ombudsman for those studying with an education provider in the public sector
 - In SA there is the South Australian Training Authority

External complaint handling bodies



Key Resources

ESOS Act

The National Code

The National Code Explanatory Guide

ESOS Enquiry Line & Mailbox

- For questions about how to interpret or comply with the ESOS Act or the National Code
- 1300 615 262

Resources

- Better Practice Complaint Handling for Education Providers
- Complaint Handling at Universities: Australasian Best Practice Guidelines
- Written Agreements Checklist
- Reports
 - OSO Education Provider Reports
- Issues Papers
 - Course Progress and Attendance
 - Overseas Students Health Cover



Overseas Students OMBUDSMAN

Better Practice Complaint Handling for Education Providers

February 2016

Complaint Handlers' Checklist

- Do you have written complaint handling procedures that are easy to understand and apply?
- Do you acknowledge complaints promptly?
- Do you assess complaints and give them a priority?
- Do you resolve complaints as first contact if the complaint is straightforward?
- Where a complaint is more complex, do you prepare a short written investigation plan to direct the handling of the complaint?
- Do you keep written records of oral evidence?
- Do you give the student an opportunity to comment or show cause, before a decision is made that is not in their favour?
- Do you keep the student advised of the progress of their complaint, if there is a delay?
- When the complaint is finalised, do you give the student a detailed explanation of the complaint investigation and the outcome?
- Do you advise students of their right to access an external complaints and appeal process, if they are not satisfied after the internal complaints and appeals process?
- Do you assess individual complaints to see if there are any systemic issues that warrant attention?
- Do you regularly analyse complaint data to see what might be going wrong and what can be improved?

ACKNOWLEDGE all complaints quickly

ASSESS the complaint and give a priority

complex complaints

PLAN the investigation

INVESTIGATE the complaint

RESPOND to the complainant with a clear decision

FOLLOW UP any customer service concerns

CONSIDER if there are any systemic issues

Phone: 1800 963 872 (toll free on the only higher rate from mobile phones) Email: ombudsmen@ombudsman.gov.au Fax: 02 8276 0123 Postal: GPO Box 462, Canberra ACT 2601 Web: www.oso.gov.au

www.oso.gov.au

Resources

- Ombudsman and complaint handling bodies can assist providers by:
 - Collecting and analysing data on complaint trends, common issues
 - Publishing this information on their websites
 - Some conduct workshops and webinars on complaint handling processes
 - Fact Sheets and Videos (can be used at orientation sessions)
 - Some Ombudsman and complaint handlers will respond to individual provider enquiries.

Resources

- Comments, observations and recommendations
 - Ombudsman and other complaint handling bodies will often provide comments, observations or recommendations to providers at the conclusion of an investigation
 - Providers can use this information to identify systemic issues or inform changes to policy and procedures

Current Issues

- Providers can stay abreast of current issues by:
 - subscribing to newsletters such as the OSO ‘Provider e-News’
 - Issues Papers
 - OSO Quarterly and other reports

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/4bEygPNYUoQ?rel=0>

Questions?



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