

**Best practice  
written agreements  
course progress and attendance  
complaints handling**



**StudyNSW/ACPET  
Provider Workshop**  
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# Overseas Students Ombudsman

- We investigate complaints from overseas students about private schools, colleges and universities
- We work with education providers to help them improve their internal complaints and appeals processes
- We report on trends and systemic issues we see through our complaints investigations

# Written Agreements

- Best practice:
  - Clear written agreement with course name, study periods, itemised list of fees signed or otherwise accepted by student, parent or legal guardian
  - Refund policy included (not a link or reference to it elsewhere, such as the student handbook)
  - Cancellation fee policy included if charging cancellation fee
  - Clear terms and conditions
  - Fees paid concurrently with or after agreement signed
  - Refunds owed paid within provider obligation period either under the written agreement or s



# Course Progress

- Best practice:
  - Having a course progress policy that clearly defines
    - satisfactory and unsatisfactory course progress
    - when the student is deemed to be ‘at risk of not meeting satisfactory course progress’
    - the point at which the student will be determined to have failed to meet satisfactory course progress
  - The course progress policy includes an intervention strategy designed to assist students to improve to satisfactory levels



# Course Progress

- Best practice:
  - The intervention strategy is implemented as soon as the student is identified as being 'at risk'
  - If the student still fails to meet satisfactory course progress, the provider sends the notice of intention to report with appeal rights
  - The student has the opportunity to lodge an internal and external appeal, and the provider awaits the outcomes, before reporting the student



# Attendance

- Best practice:
  - A clear attendance policy that states the attendance requirements (80% or higher)
  - Policy states the period over which the provider will monitor and report on attendance (one study period, length of course or Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)?)
  - Policy states when and how the provider will contact the student to warn them if they are at risk of falling below 80% projected attendance or absent for 5 consecutive days



# Attendance

- Best practice:
  - Policy states how attendance will be recorded and calculated including how the provider counts absences covered/not covered by a medical certificate; e.g. lateness or early departures from class etc.
  - Attendance policy available to students and explained at orientation
  - Provider keeps accurate attendance records and calculations which can be replicated by an external appeal body



# Attendance

- Best practice:
  - Provider records attendance over stated reporting period
  - Provider sends warnings/counsels students as soon as identified as being 'at risk' and before below 80%
  - Provider contacts student if absent for 5 consecutive days
  - Parents/legal guardian involved if under 18 years
  - If student never commences at all, reported under s19(1)(c) rather than poor attendance





# Attendance

- Best practice:
  - Notice of intention sent at right time to correct address
  - Provider advises student of their internal appeal rights
  - Provider considers at appeal if it has followed its policy and Standard 11 correctly at each step
  - Provider gives written internal appeal outcome with details of reasons for decision and external appeal rights
  - Provider awaits outcome of the external appeal before reporting on the intended grounds

# Internal Appeal & Complaints

- Best practice:
  - Provider's internal complaints and appeals policy readily available e.g. on its website
  - Provider helps students access the appeal process when problems/disagreements arise
  - Provider deals with complaints/appeals objectively based on relevant facts and applicable policy/legislation
  - Provider identifies any errors made and remedies them
  - Internal appeal written outcome details reasons for the decision and external appeal rights

# OSO Better Practice Complaint Handling Guide



## Better Practice Complaint Handling for Education Providers

February 2011

### Complaint Handlers' Checklist

- ☐ Do you have written complaint handling procedures? Are they easy to understand and apply?
- ☐ Do you acknowledge complaints promptly?

**ACKNOWLEDGE**  
all complaints quickly





# Publications and resources

- Annual report and quarterly statistical reports
- Issues papers and submissions
- Presentations on a range of topics
- Brochures in English and 21 other languages
- Provider e-newsletter twice a year
- Student e-newsletter twice a year
- Subscribe on our website:

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# Questions ?