

A09: Learner Feedback and Complaints Policy

1.0 Purpose

NZSEG is committed to using evidence-based continuous improvement practices to ensure a high-quality experience for learners.

NZSEG analyses the information provided through learner survey feedback systems, using it to develop action plans to support continuous improvement in teaching, learner guidance and support, and facilitation of successful learning.

This policy requires that learners are kept informed of developments resulting from their feedback.

2.0 Policy

NZSEG will be guided in its policy by the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (referred to as “the Code” or “the Code of Practice” henceforth) and will implement policy to ensure NZSEG understands and responds to diverse learner voices and wellbeing and safety needs in a way that upholds their mana and autonomy (*Outcome 2*), and meets the requirements for *Process 1: Learner Voice* and *Process 2: Learner complaints*.

3.0 Objectives

This policy ensures that NZSEG has in place coherent and consistent processes for gathering regular and timely feedback from learners to inform the decisions it makes to improve the learning experience for learners. It ensures that NZSEG uses a range of structured and informed, in person and online methods including:

- Learner surveys;
- Evaluations of teaching;
- Small group instructional diagnostic meetings (SGIDs)
- Learner representative meetings (including for diverse learner groups);
- Formal and informal complaints and concerns mechanisms;

It further ensures that feedback is provided to learners on how the feedback provided has been used to inform continuous improvement.

4.0 Scope

The policy applies to all staff and learners. It covers concerns and complaints about NZSEG services in relation to Academic policy and procedures; Programme content; Programme delivery; Employee and learner conduct; Facilities and equipment – provision, maintenance and access; Administrative and learner learning support groups.

For academic appeals refer to A10 – Academic Appeals Policy.

5.0 Principles

5.1 Right to provide feedback:

All learners and stakeholders have the right to provide feedback, both positive and negative, about any aspect of their experience with NZSEG and/or raise concerns where they believe standards in teaching, learning, guidance and support or pastoral care have not been met.

5.2 Ethical, honest and transparent practice:

When receiving feedback from learners, NZSEG shall ensure:

- Procedures are fair, ethical, transparent, equitable and timely and result in appropriate action;
- People are dealt with respectfully and ethically;
- Information collected, analysed and used, protects affected person's privacy and confidentiality (in accordance with privacy rules and laws);
- The learning resulting from the feedback is used to inform continuous improvement;
- Communication on actions taken as a result of feedback is provided to learners.

5.3 Multiple feedback points:

Multiple feedback points are used to ensure learner feedback is representative of the diverse range of learners and their concerns, including using a range of formal and informal instruments and processes used at different stages of the learner's learning journey.

Learners will be invited to provide structured feedback using mechanisms that include:

- Structured surveys and/or evaluations that will be scheduled throughout the learner's learning experience by Heads of School/Academic Director (Seafield), Tutors/Career Services and administration teams;
- Graduate tracking from the time of graduation for two years
- Informed processes will address any issues that arise from student representatives, learner concerns or complaints.

5.4 Receipt and use of feedback:

Learner Course Evaluation reports will be collated from the data obtained at the end of the course and will be provided to Programme Committees/Results Committees to assist them with their self-assessment deliberations and to identify areas for improvement and/or immediate action.

Learner feedback will be used as one source of information to answer the following Key Evaluative Questions (KEQs):

- How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of learners and other relevant stakeholders?
- How effectively are learners supported and involved in their learning?
- What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

Learner Tutor Evaluation will be collected and the data obtained will be made available to tutor(s) and will be provided for inclusion in annual Performance Appraisals. The data will also inform ongoing professional development and be summarised in Annual Programme Evaluation Reports.

Changes made as a result of feedback will be reported to learners through a range of mechanisms, including student representative meetings.

5.5 Complaints and concerns:

Learners may express concern about anything that they believe breaches their rights as a learner or where they believe the standards of teaching or other services offered under their contract with NZSEG are not met.

NZSEG will:

- receive, acknowledge, register and act upon concerns and complaints;

- seek to facilitate the timely, constructive and fair resolution of concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties;
- abide by the provisions of the Privacy Act (2020) and maintain an environment in which tolerance, confidentiality, courtesy and mutual respect are fostered at all times.
- abide by the provisions of the Code of Practice, including:
 - considering complaints from a cultural perspective and providing culturally responsive approaches that consider traditional processes for raising and resolving issues (e.g. restorative justice);
 - addressing barriers to accessing information (e.g due to lack of internet access, language barriers, desire for anonymity);
 - providing an opportunity for a support person or people of the learner's choice to guide and support the learner through the complaints process;
 - providing the opportunity for groups of learners to make joint complaints;
 - reporting annually on the number, nature and outcome of complaints (summarised and by diverse learner groups).

5.6 NZSEG reserves the right not to proceed with a complaint:

- Which is anonymous or based on hearsay; or
- Contains insufficient or incomplete information; or
- Which is made more than ninety days after the alleged incident; or
- Where no response is received from the complainant within ninety days of correspondence regarding the complaint.

6.0 Procedure for Complaints

6.1 Communication of Policy

6.1.1 Policy is communicated to staff through the QMS.

6.1.2 Learners are advised of NZSEG's complaints process during orientation. It is outlined in the Student Handbook, on the website and in posters displayed at each campus.

6.2 Formal Complaints Procedure

6.2.1 In the first instance the learner making the complaint should be encouraged to clearly define the problem.

6.2.2 The learner may talk informally with their Tutor/Lecturer/Learner Support Advisor to resolve the concern or complaint. They are entitled to take a support person with them.

6.2.3 If the Tutor/Lecturer has not been able to address the concern/complaint satisfactorily, the Tutor/Lecturer should refer them to the Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield).

6.2.4 Failing a satisfactory resolution, the learner (or support person/s) should make a formal complaint in writing using the complaints form, to the Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield).

6.2.5 All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days, including an estimated timeframe for response to the complaint.

6.2.6 The Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield) must ensure any employee named in the complaint receives a copy of the complaint as soon as practicable. The complaint must be considered in accordance with the principles of natural justice and ensure all parties to the complaint are accorded the full benefit of those principles. The process may include

meetings with relevant staff and/or the complainant. Where meetings are held, the parties may, if they wish, be accompanied by a support person.

6.3 Documentation

Documentation held relating to complaints comprises:

- Complaints form
- Acknowledgment of the complaint
- Written reports of all meetings and discussions
- Formal communication to the complainant of the resolution.

6.4 Resolution of Complaints

6.4.1 The Head of School/ Academic Director (Seafield) must decide in relation to the complaint and must notify the decision to the parties in writing within 28 days of receiving the complaint. A copy of the letter must be provided to the Group Academic Director.

If the complaint involves a NZSEG process or service, and if, in the opinion of the relevant Head of School, the complaint has substance, the Head of School/ Academic Director (Seafield) must arrange for the relevant process or service to be reviewed, with a view to preventing a recurrence.

6.4.2 Should a matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, they will then have the right to appeal to the Group Academic Director.

6.4.3 For Seafield learners who are not satisfied with the outcome of an appeal to the Group Academic Director, they must contact English New Zealand for resolution of their complaint (admin@englishnewzealand.co.nz, 03 3837153) prior to any notification to NZQA as in 6.4.4.

6.4.4 Should a matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant after an appeal to the Academic Director, they will then have the right to bring the matter to the attention of the risk management at NZQA:

- Download the formal complaint form from the NZQA website and email the completed form to: risk@nzqa.govt. Alternatively, post to: Risk Management, NZQA, PO Box 160, Wellington 6140.

6.4.5 Financial disputes should be referred to iStudent (www.studycomplaints.org.nz, help@istudent.org.nz, phone 0800 00 6675).

6.4.6 Should a matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of a complainant who is an international learner, they can contact iStudent Complaints, (www.studycomplaints.org.nz, help@istudent.org.nz, phone 0800 00 6675).

5.0 Definitions

<i>Concern</i>	A 'concern' is a less serious or minor problem. A situation best resolved by direct and informal contact with the person/people involved.
<i>Complaint</i>	A 'complaint' is a more serious or significant problem submitted through a written statement about a matter that requires formal consideration and resolution by NZSEG. A situation with significant impact requiring a more formal process of resolution. It may even be a 'concern' that has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

6.0 Document Control

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Academic Board/Senior Academic Team is responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy.

Version	Type of Change	AB Reference	Approval Date	Effective from
1	Development of Policy	AB Action Item 54	23 June 2015	23 June 2015
2	Minor Review and Re-format of Policy	Approved by AB	20 October 2015	20 October 2015
3	Inclusion to NZSEG QMS and Policies.	Approved by the Executive Management Team	16 January 2017	31 January 2017
3.1	Small grammatical changes and title changes	Approved by AB	20 September 2018	20 September 2018
3.2	Review and minor changes with titles	To be filled	To be filled in	To be filled in
4	Added 2.0 Policy re Code of Practice requirements, updated contacts for learner complaints	Approved by ELT	February 2025	February 2025