ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Policy

Please also refer to the Prime and ACTE Policy and Procedure manual

Evocca College ("Evocca") is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system which is easily accessible to all complainants.

Evocca aims to:

- Develop a culture that views grievances as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
- Set in place a grievance handling system that is client focussed and helps Evocca to prevent grievances from recurring;
- Ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

A grievance can be defined as a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of Evocca’s services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:

- the enrolment, induction/orientation process;
- the quality of education provided;
- academic issues, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study;
- handling of personal information and access to personal records;
- the way someone has been treated.

These grievance procedures are designed to ensure that Evocca responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

2. Definitions

**EVOCCA** refers to Evocca College

**COMPLAINANT** refers to the person(s) who formally instigates a grievance.

Prime Learning and ACTE
Academic and Non Academic Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure
Version 4A
16/01/14
RESPONDENT refers to the person(s) or institution against whom the grievance is lodged.

INFORMAL GRIEVANCE refers to a range of processes, such as a discussion, a request or a query lodged with a staff member.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE refers to the formal lodging of a written grievance.

3. Policy coverage

This policy is designed to cover all complainants including:

- Individuals who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance (Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders who are resident in Australia for the duration of a VET unit of study);
- Individuals who are not eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance (permanent residents who are not permanent humanitarian visa holders and New Zealand citizens).

In relation to non-academic grievances, the term “complainant” applies to both current students of Evocca and persons seeking to enrol with Evocca.

These grievance procedures will be made available to complainants regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

4. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level. Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting Evocca in person or by phoning 1800 838 333, and asking to speak to the State Manager.

5. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that Evocca holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure Evocca will take all steps to ensure that:

- the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against;
• the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
• a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
• where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, Evocca will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
• there is no cost to the complainant to utilise this grievance procedure.

5.1 Stage one – Formal grievance:
Formal grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the State Manager as follows:

State Manager
3 Westmoreland Blvd
SPRINGWOOD, 4127 QLD

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

The State Manager, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The State Manager, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

5.2 Stage two – Internal appeal:
If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance they may lodge an appeal with the COO (who is senior to the original decision maker) within 20 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The Chief Operating Officer will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.
Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the COO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

5.3 Stage three – External appeal:
If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may lodge an external appeal. If you wish to further appeal this decision you may lodge an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The current fee to lodge an application with the AAT for the review of a decision is $682 (GST exempt). The contact details for the AAT are:

   Level 4, Commonwealth Law Courts  
   Corner North Quay & Tank Street  
   BRISBANE QLD 4000  
   Phone: 07 3361 3000 / 1300 366 700

Where a student is unsatisfied with the reviewed decision they may apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for consideration of Evocca’s decision to refuse to re-credit their FEE-HELP balance. The student may supply additional information to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal which they did not previously supply to Evocca either in the original application or the request for review.

The Secretary of DEEWR, or the Secretary’s delegate, will be the respondent for cases that are brought before the AAT. Upon DEEWR’s receipt of a notification from the AAT, DEEWR will notify Evocca that an appeal has been lodged. Upon receipt of this notification from DEEWR, the Review Officer will provide DEEWR with copies of all the documents they hold that are relevant to the appeal within five (5) business days.

5.4 Publication

6. Further action
If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external appeal, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to the National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73.
The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia’s Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual’s rights to pursue other legal remedies.

7. Enrolment status
Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, Evocca will maintain that person’s enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

8. Record keeping & confidentiality
A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Privacy Manager. These records will be maintained at Unit 21, 8 Riverland Drive, Loganholme, Qld, 4129.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by Evocca’s Privacy and Personal Information Procedures.

9. Approval, publication and training
This Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the EvoccaCollege Board of Directors on 14th January 2014, and is reviewed annually.

This Policy and Procedure will be made available to complainants through publication in the Student Handbook and on Evocca website (www.evocca.com.au).

For the purposes of communicating to training staff, this Policy and Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process (which will facilitated by the Human Resource Manager).