

## **A09: Student Feedback and Complaints Policy**

### **1.0 Purpose**

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

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

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

### **2.0 Objectives**

This policy ensures that the NZSEG has in place coherent and consistent processes for gathering regular and timely feedback from students to inform the decisions it makes to improve the learning experience for students.

It ensures that NZSEG uses a range of structured and informed, in person and online methods including:

- Student surveys;
- Evaluations of teaching;
- Small group instructional diagnostic meetings (SGIDs)
- Student representative meetings;
- Formal and informal complaints and concerns mechanisms;

It further ensures that feedback is provided to students on how the feedback provided has been used to inform continuous improvement. The policy applies to all staff and students.

### **3.0 Principles**

#### **3.1 Right to provide feedback:**

All students 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.

#### **3.2 Ethical, honest and transparent practice:**

When receiving feedback from students 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 (where necessary);
- The learning resulting from the feedback is used to inform continuous improvement;
- Communication on actions taken as a result of feedback is provided to students.

### 3.3 Multiple feedback points:

Student feedback will be obtained using a range of formal (structured) and informal (ad hoc) instruments and processes used at different stages of the student's learning journey. Students will be invited to provide structured feedback using mechanisms that include:

- Structured surveys and/or evaluations that will be scheduled throughout the student's learning experience by Head of School/Group Academic Director, 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, student concerns or complaints.

### 3.4 Receipt and use of feedback:

Student 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.

Student 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 students and other relevant stakeholders?
- How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?
- What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Student 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 students through a range of mechanisms including student representatives.

### 3.5 Complaints and concerns:

Students may express concern about anything that they believe breaches their rights as a student 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;
- NZSEG will seek to facilitate the timely, constructive and fair resolution of concerns and complaints to the satisfaction of all parties;
- NZSEG will abide by the provisions of the Privacy Act and maintain an environment in which tolerance, confidentiality, courtesy and mutual respect are fostered at all times.

This policy covers concerns and complaints about NZSEG services in relation to:

- Academic policy and procedures;

- Programme content;
- Programme delivery;
- Employee and student conduct;
- Facilities and equipment – provision, maintenance and access;
- Administrative and student learning support groups.

For academic appeals refer to A10 – Academic Appeals Policy.

### **3.6 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.

## **4.0 Procedure for Complaints**

### **4.1 Communication of Policy**

**4.1.1** Policy is communicated to staff through the QMS.

**4.1.2** Students are advised of NZSEG’s complaints process in the Student Handbook.

### **4.2 Formal Complaints Procedure**

**4.2.1** In the first instance the student making the complaint should be encouraged to clearly define the problem.

**4.2.2** The student may talk informally with their Tutor/Lecturer to resolve the concern or complaint. They are entitled to take a support person with them.

**4.2.3** If the Tutor/Lecturer has not been able to address the concern/complaint satisfactorily, the Tutor/Lecturer should refer them to the most appropriate person.

**4.2.4** Failing a satisfactory resolution, the student (or support person/s) should make a formal complaint in writing using the complaints form, to the Head of School/Academic Manager/Group Academic Director.

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

**4.2.6** The Head of School/Academic Manager/Group Academic Director 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.

### **4.3 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.

#### 4.4 Resolution of Complaints

**4.4.1** The Head of School/Academic Manager/Group Academic Director must make a decision 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 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 Manager/Group Academic Director must arrange for the relevant process or service to be reviewed, with a view to preventing a recurrence.

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

**4.4.3** Should a matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, they will then have the right to bring the matter to the attention of the Risk Team at NZQA (email: [risk@nzqa.govt](mailto:risk@nzqa.govt)) Complaint Officer Quality Assurance Division PO Box 160 Wellington 6140 or Phone 08006987296; or for Financial disputes should be referred to iStudent (complaints@istudent.org.nz, phone 0800 00 6675)

**4.4.4** Should a matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant where the complainant is an international student, they will have the Complaints Officer International Education Appeals Authority, Private Bag 32001, Wellington 6011.

## 5.0 Definitions

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|------------------|--|
| <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, formatting, and branding            | Approved by AB                            | 21 July 2020      | 21 July 2020      |