STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES (ACADEMIC & NON-ACADEMIC)

Definitions
For the purposes of this policy the following applies:

The Act refers to the Higher Education Support Act 2003

Student/s refers to all persons enrolled with Conwal and Associates Pty Ltd t/as Conwal Institute including persons enrolled in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act who are, or would, be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act. For the purposes of non-academic grievances the term Student also refers to a person seeking to enrol with Conwal Institute including persons seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act who are, or would, be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

Complainant refers to Students (as defined above) who have lodged a grievance with Conwal Institute.

1. Overview
Conwal Institute is committed to providing an effective, efficient, timely, fair and confidential grievance handling procedure for all Students. This policy covers both academic and non-academic grievances and appeals.

Academic matters include those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a VET course of study.

Non-academic matters include those matters which do not relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a course and include grievances in relation to personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student. Non-academic grievances tend to arise from events occurring at a provider or from decisions made by a provider.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures regardless of the location at which the grievance has arisen, the Complainant’s place of residence or mode of study.

This policy does not replace or modify policies or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Also, the dispute resolution procedures outlined below in this document do not circumscribe an individual’s rights to pursue other legal remedies.

If a Student chooses to access this grievance handling procedure, Conwal Institute will maintain the Student’s enrolment while the grievance and appeals process is ongoing.

2. Responsibility
The Head of Delivery is responsible for implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation during staff induction and Students and Complainants are made aware of its availability through student orientation and our website.
3. **General principles**

These principles, which will be adhered to by Conwal Institute, apply to all stages of this grievance procedure:

- Conwal Institute will ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the grievance and appeals process.
- The Complainant and any respondent will have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the grievance and appeals procedure.
- The Complainant and any respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.
- The Complainant and any respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.
- At all stages of the process, discussions relating to grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or any respondent if requested.
- Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored at Conwal Institute, 130 Commercial Rd, Newstead, QLD 4006. Access to these records may be requested by writing to the Head of Delivery at the aforementioned address.
- A Complainant shall have access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost. Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by Conwal Institute and the Complainant.
- Conwal Institute will analyse all grievances and appeals to determine any underlying causes and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

4. **Informal Grievance Procedure**

Students are encouraged initially to attempt to resolve a grievance informally by talking directly with the person concerned to resolve the problem. Alternatively, a student may contact Student Services to discuss the issue.

This step is not mandatory and a Student may proceed directly to the Formal Grievance Procedure.

5. **Formal Grievance Procedure**

5.1 **Tier One**

Formal grievances should be submitted in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form* and sending it to support@conwalassociates.com.au.

The Student Support Officer will notify the Complainant of receipt of the grievance within 2 business days.

The Student Services Manager will then assess the grievance, determine the outcome and advise the Complainant in writing of their decision within 10 business days.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to access Tier Two of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Tier One.

5.2 **Tier Two**

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Tier One they may lodge an appeal in writing with the Head of Delivery by emailing support@conwalassociates.com.au.

The Head of Delivery will notify the Complainant of receipt of the appeal within 2 business days.
The Complainant’s appeal will be determined by the Head of Delivery who will conduct all necessary consultations with the Complainant and other relevant persons and make a determination of the appeal. The Complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision within 10 business days.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to progress to Tier Three of the grievance procedure if they consider the matter unresolved.

5.3 Stage Three

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal then an independent mediator can be requested, by contacting support@conwalassociates.com.au

Costs of such mediation will be shared equally by Conwal Institute and the Complainant. As a guide mediator’s costs would be $100 per hour for the first three hours and $50 per party. Subsequent hours would be $100 per hour. It is common for most disputes to be resolved within the initial three hour allocation.

Conwal Institute will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review of the grievance within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations and the Head of Delivery will ensure that they are fully implemented.

At any stage where Conwal Institute considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the compliant or appeal, Conwal Institute will inform the student in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and regularly update the student on the progress of the matter.

5.4 Further action

If the Complainant has been through all stages of this grievance handling process and remains unsatisfied with the outcome of their grievance, then they may:

- contact the National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73 (Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally) or by email: skilling@education.gov.au
- contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). For contact details and information please see: www.asqa.gov.au
- ACT www.ombudsman.act.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- NSW www.ombo.nsw.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- NT www.ombudsman.nt.gov.au/ (opens in a new window)
- TAS www.ombudsman.tas.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- WA www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- QLD www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- VIC www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au (opens in a new window)
- SA www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au (opens in a new window)
6. Publication

This Student Grievance Policy and Procedures (Academic and Non-academic) will be made available to students and those seeking to enrol with Conwal Institute through publication on the website: www.conwalinstitute.edu.au.

7. Approval

This Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the company’s director on 14 July 2016.