

THE IIE PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT COMPLAINTS

2019



This manual enjoys copyright under the Copyright Act, 1998 (Act No. 98 of 1978). No part of this manual may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any other information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the proprietor.



The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher education and training institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (reg. no. 2007-HE07-002).

Table of Contents

THE IIE PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT COMPLAINTS 2019.....	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Formal complaints from DHET, CHE, SAQA, lawyers or media	4
3. E-mail, fax or post (not from the above).....	5
4. Phone complaints	6
5. Anonymous complaints or Ethics line	6
6. Repeat complaint on same issue or complainant not satisfied with response	7
Annexure A: Format of report from campus	8

THE IIE PROTOCOL FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT COMPLAINTS 2019

1. Introduction

- (1) When the Central Academic Team (CAT) of The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE) receives complaints related to students, the protocol established in 2009 (as amended) below will be followed. For this to result in effective student complaint resolution it is critical that Brands and The IIE CAT apply this protocol efficiently.
- (2) The principles are:
 - a) The Brand is the custodian of the relationship with the student.
 - b) CAT will therefore always engage with the brand before engaging with the student or his or her family or any other party.
 - c) CAT will forward a complaint received to the designated person at the national office and the campus principal in order to expedite resolution.
 - d) The office of the Registrar accounts for The IIE to the DHET and others (formally) for the manner in which complaints are dealt.
 - e) The risk associated with the complaint determines the level of the role of CAT – all Council on Higher Education (CHE) and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) complaints and those from lawyers or the media are answered ONLY by the Office of the Registrar or the Director as needed.
- (3) When we are able to do so, the complainant should be requested to log the General Campus Concern on the Student Hub. possible, The campus should have followed the dispute resolution mechanisms that exist and have kept meticulous records so that if a matter is escalated that it can be done quickly and efficiently with all the history intact.
- (4) Should the complainant not have access to the Student Hub, the contact details provided to potential complainants should be registrar@iie.ac.za and iiedirector@iie.ac.za rather than anyone's named mail.
- (5) The Registrar is ultimately responsible for managing student complaints, but this will normally be handled by the Deputy Registrar: Legal, Governance and Student Services assigned to this task or in his absence, the Deputy Registrar: Records and Student Administration – under the direction of the Registrar or ADvTECH Group Legal division or The Director as needed.

2. Formal complaints from DHET, CHE, SAQA, lawyers or media

- (1) When a complaint comes from the DHET, CHE, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), a lawyer or any other formal source other than directly from the student or his or her parents/ guardians and sponsor the following process apply.
 - a) The Student Hub/Office of the Registrar acknowledges the complaint to the complainant in writing and undertakes to get back to them within 7 days (no more than 5 working days).
 - b) The complaint is then logged onto the Student Hub and assigned to the designated Campus Principal concerned with a request for a reply within no more than three working days (maximum of five days in total).
 - c) As follow up information is almost always needed the campus is required to try and respond within two working days to enable time for consultation.
 - d) The Campus Principal, after consultation with the National Office replies in writing via the Notes section on Student Hub with supporting documentation, attached to the notes, which includes detailed response to all elements of the complaint. Please see the required format of the response (Annexure 1).
 - e) Unless requested not to do so by the Registrar's office the campus may make a further attempt to contact the student but should log all the details of this attempt. If this attempt succeeds to resolve the issue the campus needs to write to the student concerned with the agreed outcome and copy that to the Registrar (or her nominee) on the Hub so that the letter can be sent to the originator of the complaint.
 - f) The reply to the complaint is drafted by the Deputy Registrar: Legal, Governance and Student Services and goes under the signature of the Registrar. The brand is given time to respond (on the Hub) to the draft. At the discretion of the Deputy Registrar or the request of the brand the draft can be considered by the Registrar or Director before being sent.
 - g) The Office of the Registrar formally answers the complaint via e-mail and copies the response to the campus principal as well as the student.
 - h) The mail as well as proof of receipt and delivery notifications are loaded on the Hub by the Registry Clerk. The SAM record of the student is also annotated with a copy of the complaint and the formal response.

3. E-mail, fax or post (not from the above)

- (1) The office receiving the complaint via e-mail forwards it to the Senior Academic Operations Co-ordinator who will log the concern on the Student Hub.
- (2) The Student Hub acknowledges the communication (whether it comes to a Faculty, the Director's or the Registrar's addresses) in the following manner:
 - a) Indicate that a complaint has been received on a particular date through a particular mechanism.
 - b) Sends the complainant a copy of the dispute and grievance resolution protocol from the Student Code of Conduct or sends the whole code.
 - c) Informs complainant that the complaint will be forwarded to the Campus Principal who after consultation with the National Office concerned will make contact with the student within no more than a week – invite person to come back to them if they do not receive a reply in that time period (clearly if the matter is more urgent the communication will be adjusted accordingly to a lesser time period).
- (3) The Senior Academic Operations Co-ordinator loads the item on the Student Hub and assigns it to the relevant Campus Principal. The Campus Principal then handles the matter in consultation with the National Office and loads the process and outcome on the Hub. Every effort is made to use the resolution mechanisms in the policy.
- (4) The Hub then contacts the complainant indicating that the matter has, according to their information, been resolved and asks for confirmation from the complainant. If the complainant disputes this the matter is escalated by the Hub to the Deputy Registrar who then proceeds as for formal complaints.
- (5) If the campus has indicated that they have not been able to resolve the matter, then the Hub confirms that with the complainant and escalates the matter to the Deputy Registrar who deals with it as for formal complaints.
- (6) In both these cases (escalation to the Deputy Registrar) the Deputy Registrar will consult with the campus and national office to familiarise himself with the detail of the matter and any possible solutions prior to contacting the student/complainant.
- (7) All interactions are recorded on the Hub and not on e-mail.

4. Phone complaints

- (1) If any member of the CAT team receives a phone call about a complaint it is directed to the Office of the Registrar for the Deputy Registrar and if s/he is not available, it is redirected to the Director's Personal Assistant (PA). Failing that any Deputy Registrar or the Registrar or other senior member of that team can take the call.
- (2) The relevant person listens without expressing opinion, then logs the complaint on the Student Hub and asks for the complainant to submit concerns in writing on the Hub if they are a current student or to the email address registrar@iie.ac.za.
- (3) The following information should be recorded and logged on the Student Hub
 - a) Name and student number of student
 - b) Brand and campus
 - c) Qualification
 - d) At least two contact details – phone and e-mail – for complainant
 - e) Brief summary of the problem.
- (4) The complainant is told that they will receive a response within 7 days of logging the concern in writing. The complainant is told that because of the risk of getting details wrong the matter cannot be taken forward if not logged in writing.
- (5) If a complaint is then received in writing, the Student Hub record is updated and the same process as for a written complaint is followed. If no complaint is received in writing the record on the Hub is annotated accordingly but no follow up is made.

5. Anonymous complaints or Ethics line

- (1) If a complaint is lodged on the Ethics line it is sent by the Group Internal Audit team to the Registrar who will decide if it needs to be handled as a formal complaint or just escalated to the campus. Irrespective of the decision taken the outcome needs to be reported back to the GIA office. The timeframes cannot exceed the time taken to handle formal complaints.
- (2) If an anonymous phone call is received as much information as possible must be requested. If no contact information or student information is provided (in order to log this on the Hub) then the information is simply forwarded to the campus with a request that they provide information if the complaint seems familiar. Depending on the campus response to this request the Registrar or Deputy Registrar will decide how to proceed if at all. A record of this complaint is kept by the office of the Registrar.

- (3) As soon as information identifying the student is received then the above processes are followed, and above records are kept.

6. Repeat complaint on same issue or complainant not satisfied with response

- (1) If a complainant indicates that a matter has not been addressed or resolved, the Office of the Registrar will contact the National Office concerned to get an update and consult on the way forward.
- (2) A mail is then sent from the Office of the Registrar (and attached to the Hub record) copied to the National Office or, by agreement, from the National Office copied to the Deputy Registrar.
- (3) This mail offers a further attempt to resolve such as a meeting.
- (4) If this is declined or the Deputy Registrar and the Brand, consider the matter closed and a formal letter will be written by the Deputy Registrar “closing” the matter. This will only be a last resort response as we will always seek to resolve concerns.

Annexure A: Format of report from campus

Name of student:

Name and contact details of campus contact person for additional information:

Date of report:

The campus must then provide a chronological account of the matter – in the third column all supporting mails or documents should be listed. They need to be filed with a number and name that makes the process of consideration easier. An example is provided below. It must be possible for the Deputy Registrar to understand the full sequence of events without opening the attachments and he needs to be able to open the right attachment in the right sequence without trawling through a full set.

Date of event	Detail	Supporting evidence
11/12/2017	Tweets identified by national office	See attached “Doc 1 Tweets Jones 11 Dec”
13/12/2017	Letter received from parents of Smit claiming that Jones tweets are defamatory. Principal phoned Jones to ask him to come in	See attached “Doc 2 letter from Smit”
14/12/2017	Meeting between Principal and Ms Jones – outcome not satisfactory as Ms Jones believes tweets to be true.	“Doc 3 – minutes of meeting with Jones”