

International students who are in higher, vocational or school education and on a student visa who have a problem they cannot fix with their education provider can make a complaint to an Ombudsman:

- Go to the **National Student Ombudsman** for complaints about **Universities and Higher Education Providers**: www.NSO.gov.au
- Go to the **Commonwealth Ombudsman** for complaints about **private schools and VET courses**: www.ombudsman.gov.au
- Go to the **Western Australian Ombudsman** for complaints about **Western Australian public schools and VET courses** (primary schools, secondary schools and TAFE colleges). This Information Sheet provides further information for complaints to the Western Australian Ombudsman.

MAKING A COMPLAINT TO THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN OMBUDSMAN

Are you an international student who has a problem with your Western Australian public education provider? You can ask for an internal and external review.

Step 1 - Complain to your public education provider (Internal Review)

What you can complain about

You can make a complaint about an education provider's decision that affected you and you believe is unfair or wrong.

The Australian Government has put in place the [*National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*](#) (the **National Code**). The National Code sets the standards all education providers must follow in delivering courses to international students. You can complain or appeal against an education provider's decision or action where you believe these standards have not been followed.

The National Code requires all education providers to have an internal complaint handling and appeals process. You can use the appeals process to make a formal complaint. You will need to act quickly as there will be a time limit to lodge your complaint and have it considered under the National Code.

Contact the international student advisor for help

You can contact your education provider's international student advisor for help to make your complaint.

Your education provider should assess your complaint

When you make your complaint, your education provider should look at the information you provided. The education provider will decide if they will fix the problem you have raised. The education provider should tell you the reason for its decision in writing.

Step 2 - Complain to the Western Australian Ombudsman (External Review)

If you are still unhappy and believe something went wrong with the original decision after completing the internal review process, you can ask the Ombudsman for an independent external review. You can make a complaint using our [online complaint form](#), or by email or letter. Go to www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

When you complain to us, you need to tell us what you think your education provider has done wrong. Tell us if you think your education provider has:

- Failed to follow a policy or process
- Not followed the standards in the National Code
- Done something which is unfair.

You can talk to us before you make a complaint. Please see our contact details below.

What happens when you make a complaint?

We will tell you that we have received your complaint, usually by email. We are impartial and do not take sides. If we assess that we can investigate your complaint, we will contact the education provider to get more information about your complaint. We may also contact you for more information and will listen to both you and your education provider.

What can the Western Australian Ombudsman do?

We can see if the education provider followed a fair process when making its decision about you. We can check if the education provider has followed the standards in the National Code. We see if they followed the right policies or processes. We look at problems like delays, not following policy, unfair procedures and improper behaviour of staff.

We can decide if the education provider's decision or action was reasonable.

The length of time it takes to investigate can vary. We use an informal process to make decisions as soon as we can. For more complex matters, it can take some time for us to collect all the relevant information. We will determine the outcome of your complaint after we have received a response from the education provider and had the opportunity to consider all the information.

Outcome of your complaint

We will advise you and the education provider of the outcome of your complaint in writing. We may recommend that the education provider do something to fix your problem, like review the decision, change its practices, apologise to you or give you a refund. The Ombudsman can only make recommendations to education providers. We cannot make them do something. However, education providers generally accept and implement our recommendations.

Contact Ombudsman Western Australia

Call us 08 9220 7555 or **Freecall** 1800 117 000 (free from landlines)



Interpreter 131 450



National Relay Service Quote 08 9220 7555

TTY 133 677 Voice-only (speak and listen) 1300 555 727 SMS Relay Text 0423 677 767

Email us at mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au **Website** www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Visit us at Level 2, Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street Perth WA 6000

Write to us at PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace Perth WA 6831

Translations This Information Sheet is available in other languages on our website.