

Yarm Gwanga Complaints Guideline

Section 1 - Overview

(1) Yarm Gwanga aims to develop strategies for improved customer service delivery, by identifying and meeting the needs of families, staff and visitors to the Service. Yarm Gwanga staff will employ a professional approach to all aspects of their work, and in interactions with children, families, visitors and the wider community.

(2) This Guideline outlines the process and for receiving and consistently managing informal and formal complaints at Yarm Gwanga, and aligns with steps provided in the University of New England's [Student \(Related\) Grievance Handling Policy](#) and its associated [Student \(Related\) Grievance Handling Procedures](#).

(3) For the purposes of clause 168 (2)(o) of the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) this Guideline is considered to be the policy and procedure.

(4) This Guidelines also satisfies the following [National Quality Standards](#):

- a. Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities.
- b. Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership.

Section 2 - Scope

(5) This Guideline applies to all UNE Representatives, children and families, and all visitors to the Yarm Gwanga Services.

Section 3 - Guideline

(6) Yarm Gwanga will ensure:

- a. All families and customers are well informed about the process for raising concerns or complaints;
- b. Feedback and/or complaints are accepted in whatever format is most comfortable for the person providing it (eg. via informal or formal discussions, email, written correspondence, the UNE Student Grievance Unit). Yarm Gwanga may also actively seek feedback via surveys, focus groups, or other means;
- c. Service users will not be adversely affected by raising and lodging feedback or complaints;
- d. Confidentiality and respectful interactions are maintained at all times;
- e. Families and customers are thanked for raising concerns or complaints;
- f. Feedback and complaints are considered and managed well, leading to positive, ongoing change and quality improvement; and
- g. Investigations arising from feedback or complaints and are conducted safely and in a secure environment.

(7) If past, present or future service users (or a third party acting on their behalf) wishes to provide feedback or complain and be heard on any issue, they have the right to:

- a. Discuss their complaint with their child's Educator;
- b. Discuss their complaint with the Nominated Supervisor;
- c. Submit a complaint to the Student Grievance Unit (SGU), via the [SGU Complaints Form](#);
- d. Refer the complaint to the Director UNE Life as the Service's Approved Provider nominee; and/or
- e. Refer the complaint to [NSW Education – Early Childhood Education](#).

(8) Reportable Complaints by Service

- a. All reportable complaints are completed and logged through the online portal of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority by the Nominated Supervisor.
- b. The Nominated Supervisor enters the reportable complaint into the Yarm Gwanga complaints register.
- c. Where follow up is required, the [NSW Education – Early Childhood Education](#) notifies the service and this follow up is signed off by the Nominated Supervisor.

Complaints Process

(9) Parents and carers with children attending Yarm Gwanga, should raise any concerns directly with the Service, so issues can be resolved quickly and directly.

Informal

(10) The process for attending to informal complaints aligns with the University's [Student \(Related\) Grievance Handling Procedures](#):

- a. Receive:
 - i. Listen openly to the concerns being raised by the person who is raising the complaint.
 - ii. Ask the person who is making the complaint what outcome they are seeking.
 - iii. Provide the person who has raised the complaint with clear advice about the complaints process, the time the process takes and set clear expectations.
 - iv. Be empathetic towards the affected person and action all commitments made.
 - v. Identify if the situation poses an immediate threat or danger which may require a specialised response.
 - vi. Assure the complainant that their matter will be dealt with in confidence, and in accordance with the University's [Privacy Management Rule](#).
- b. Record:
 - i. All relevant information about the complaint, using the words of the complainant wherever possible.
 - ii. All complaints will be documented by the Nominated Supervisor, an educator or staff member, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and if required, the Approved Provider.
- c. Acknowledge:
 - i. The complainant is entitled to remain anonymous, and their wish to do so must be respected.
 - ii. Provide the complainant with a realistic timeframe for a resolution acknowledging that where appropriate, the matter may be referred to another organisation for investigation.
 - iii. Avoid conflicts of interest and appoint a neutral person to investigate the complaint.
- d. Resolve:
 - i. Focus on the complaint at hand, and attend to the complaint by applying an agreed series of actions within an agreed timeframe.
 - ii. Ensure thorough records of meetings and discussions relating to the complaint, are maintained.
 - iii. Ensure the complainant is kept informed of the progress of their matter.

- iv. Request additional information where required and provide a timeframe for this to be completed.
 - v. Where timelines are not able to be met, provide an explanation to the complainant and adjust the completion timeframe accordingly.
 - vi. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement arising from the complaint.
- e. Communicate:
- i. Where possible, discuss the outcome verbally with the complainant before providing written advice, and allow them an opportunity to make further contact following the receipt of the written outcome.
 - ii. Ensure the complainant has been made aware of any support opportunities available to them, or agencies available for further action, should they wish to pursue their matter further.
 - iii. Review the complaint investigation and take into account any new information available.
 - iv. Provide learnings from the complaint investigation and complaints process to other areas of the organisation to improve service delivery.
 - v. Provide the opportunity for the complainant to provide feedback on the complaints process.

Formal

(11) In addition to the steps outlined above, there are four options available to lodge a formal complaint:

- a. Refer the complaint to the Nominated Supervisor.
- b. Refer the complaint to the Director UNE Life as the Approved Provider nominee of the Service.
- c. Submit a complaint to the Student Grievance Unit using the [SGU Complaints Form](#).
- d. Refer the complaint to [NSW Education – Early Childhood Education](#), or the NSW Department of Fair Trading if the complaint is about service fees or business practices.

Staff Training

(12) Yarm Gwanga staff will undertake training in complaints handling through UNE's Organisational Development Unit. Yarm Gwanga staff will be given opportunity's to discuss professional conduct in complaints handling. The purpose of this would be to provide ongoing support to Yarm Gwanga staff in developing their capability's around complaints handling and resolution.

Authority and Compliance

(13) The Guideline Administrator, the Director UNE Life, makes these Guidelines.

(14) UNE Representatives must observe these Guidelines in relation to University matters.

(15) These Guidelines operate as and from the Effective Date.

(16) Previous Policies/Procedures/Guidelines relating to the receipt of feedback and complaints, and any subsequent processes for investigation at the Yarm Gwanga Services are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Guideline.

Section 4 - Definitions

For the purposes of this Guideline the following definitions apply:

(17) Complaint – is 'an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally

required. (Australian Standard AS/NZS ISO 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaints Management in Organisations)

(18) Non Reportable Complaint - is defined as above in the Australian Standard and is not reportable to NSW Education - Early Childhood Education.

(19) Reportable Complaint - is defined by NSW Education - Early Childhood Education, as a complaint where there is a 'Concern that the health, safety and wellbeing of children may have been compromised, or the relevant legislation has been contravened'.

(20) Visitor includes but is not limited to, students on practical placements, volunteers, community members and persons conducting inspections/audits.

(21) Yarm Gwanga refers to both the Yarm Gwanga Preschool & Early Education Centre as well as Yarm Gwanga Vacation Care.

Status and Details

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| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 27th June 2018 |
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| Approval Authority | Director UNE Life |
| Approval Date | 21st June 2018 |
| Expiry Date | To Be Advised |
| Unit Head | Leah Cook Director UNE Residential System |
| Enquiries Contact | Galia Urquhart OIC and Nominated Supervisor (Yarm Gwanga) 02 6773 3173 <hr/> Yarm Gwanga 02 6773 3173 |

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"Effective Date" - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.