

## **4 Appeal and Complaint Process**

The revision of the ECCE Appeals and Complaints procedures outlined below is the result of reflection on the experience gained and documentation provided from the 2015 accreditation appeal experience of ECCE as well as feedback from the ENQA reviews of 2010 and 2015.

### 4.1 Appeals and Complaints Committee:

4.1.1 ECCE has put into place an internal Appeals and Complaints Committee comprised of four members of ECCE and one lay member. The members of the Committee are nominated by ECCE Executive and appointed by the General Council for a four-year term. The members of the Committee will serve continuously a maximum of eight years. A member of the Committee cannot also be a member of the Executive or the CoA, but at least one of the members should normally be a former member of the Executive.

4.1.2 The members of the Appeal and Complaints Committee cannot be involved in any other ECCE matters and must sign a no conflict of interest statement.

4.1.3 The Appeal and Complaints Committee will hear appeals and complaints against CoA decisions and the complaints due to disrespect of ECCE procedures and policies.

### 4.2 Policies and Procedures for filing an Appeal or Complaint.

4.2.1 A written appeal/complaint by the institution, stating the ground(s) for appeal/complaint, must be made within two (2) calendar months from the date of receipt of the CoA's or Executive's decision. The appeal/complaint is normally addressed to the Executive Secretary, and must contain a copy of formal action authorizing the appeal/complaint taken by the institution at a lawfully constituted meeting of its governing body (or equivalent senior authority).

4.2.2 The ECCE Executive Secretary will acknowledge the receipt of Appeals and Complaints within seven days.

4.2.3 In filing an appeal/complaint, the institution agrees to abide by the policies and procedures as set out in the official documentation of the ECCE, and to abide by the decision of the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

4.2.4 An appeal or complaint shall only be considered as official if substantiated and supported by appropriate evidence, references, and examples. An appeal or complaint shall clearly and concisely set forth the grounds for the appeal/complaint referring to specific sections of the ECCE Educational standards or policies.

4.2.5 The evidence supplied should be in plain text or pdf format, in English, and where the original is in another language, a certified copy in English should be submitted. Evidence should be directly relevant and proportionate to the concerns raised.

4.2.6 All appeals and complaints are considered on the basis of documentation only, submitted by the appellant or the complainant. The Committee shall examine the appeal or complaint and undertake any further investigations which it considers necessary, as soon as reasonably practicable. This may involve obtaining documents or papers from the appellant or interviewed (physically or by conference call) members of the appellant institution or the complainant.

4.2.7 On receipt, an appeal or complaint will be reviewed within two weeks by the Chair and one other member of the Appeal and Complaints Committee to determine whether eligible grounds and supporting evidence have been presented. Where this is not the case, the appeal or complaint may either be rejected or a request for further information or evidence made.

4.2.8 The Appeal and Complaints Committee reserves the right to not continue with the operation of appeals or complaints procedures if the appeal or complaint is pursued in an abusive, offensive, defamatory, aggressive, or intimidating manner.

4.2.9 The Chair of the Appeals and Complaints Committee will forward the appeal or complaint to the consideration of the other Committee members. The Committee will submit a report within a month of the receipt of the appeal or complaint.

#### 4.3 Grounds for Appeal or Complaint:

Grounds for Appeal or Complaint do NOT include the decisions of the CoA based on the Final Evaluation Report (and the institution's Response). Grounds are ONE or MORE of the following:

- a. That a procedural error occurred at one or more specified stage(s) of the accreditation process.

- b. That an error of fact was evident in the Final Evaluation Team Report, and that this was not corrected in spite of the institution's response in this matter at the appropriate point in the process.
- c. That due to mitigating circumstances, material to inform the process was not made available either at the time of the institution's report (Self-Study Report), and/or the deliberations by the Evaluation Team (the Final Evaluation Report and the institution's response), and/or the deliberations by the CoA in making its decision on the award of accredited status.
- d. That members of ECCE, the Evaluation Team, or CoA behaved in a discriminatory or unprofessional manner.

#### 4.4 Decisions of the Appeals and Complaints Committee:

4.4.1 After considering the evidence, the Committee may decide:

- To dismiss the appeal or complaint;
- To uphold the appeal or complaint and require the CoA or Executive to reconsider its decision. Taking into account the findings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee the CoA or the Executive will engage in open and transparent discussion with the Appellant institution or the complainant to resolve the issue.

4.4.2 The CoA's decision on the appeal or the Executive's decision on the complaint shall be taken in light of the Committee's report and will be final and non-appealable. The CoA will meet at its earliest convenience after receiving the Appeal and Complaints Committee's decision.

4.4.3 Appellant institutions or the complainant will be notified in writing of the CoA's decision within five working days of the date of its meeting.

4.4.4 The ECCE will only make its decision public when the CoA or Executive has informed and agreed with the institution regarding the result of the accreditation process and should wait until the end of the Appeal/Complaint period to publish the evaluation report with the agreement of the institution. This policy will protect the institution from any potential reputational damage in the case of the Appeal/Complaint with a positive outcome for the Appellant/Complainant.