Policy	Student Complaint and Grievance Policy
Purpose	This policy explains how learners can tell Emerald Cultural Institute about a problem or make a complaint. If learners tell us their concerns, it helps us to improve and give the best care and service. Our goal is to give students a positive experience, where they can learn, grow, and reach their goals. We want all learners to feel comfortable raising concerns or making complaints, whether to Emerald or an outside organisation, knowing they will always be treated fairly and with respect.
Responsibility	The School Directors, including the Academic Director, make sure this policy is followed. All staff must respond to complaints fairly and quickly.
Scope	This policy applies to: ● Our learners ● Our academic team ● Our administration team ● Our accommodation Team ● All programmes, activities, services and events offered by Emerald Cultural Institute (all centres, on and off-site) ● All services offered by Emerald Cultural Institute, for example accommodation, learners welfare, and any other aspect of the learner's experience This policy also covers learners who have booked a course but have not arrived yet. They can complain about bookings, payments, accommodation or other services.

Implementation and review	**Communication and implementation:** This policy will be shared with our staff, students and other stakeholders (such as agents and partners) through relevant handbooks and websites. **Review:** Regular reviews will ensure the policy remains relevant to our context. Feedback from staff, learners, and stakeholders will guide ongoing improvements **Updates:** Any changes will be approved by the relevant team and communicated promptly to all affected parties, ensuring the interests and rights of staff and learners are considered. See below for record of updates. You can read this policy on our website or ask Emerald for a copy. You can do this before you arrive or while you are studying with us.
Definitions	A complaint is when a learner has a problem or feels something needs to be fixed. This can be about any part of their experience at the school.

Area 1 of policy	**Feedback and Communication** We encourage learners to share their feedback often. Every month, learners are asked to fill out a feedback form to write about their experience and to let us know of any problems. Separate Academic feedback forms are also sent out monthly. At the end of week 1 learners are also asked for feedback. Mentor meetings are arranged with learners to discuss all aspects of the programme.

Area 2 of policy	How to Raise an Issue: Informal Process **Talk About the Problem:** Students should try to solve the problem by talking to the person involved. For example, talk to your teacher about classroom issues or the Accommodation Officer about housing problems. **Response and Help:** The person you speak to must reply within three working days and try to help solve the problem. Other staff may also help if needed. **What Happens Next:** If the problem is solved, no further action is needed. If the problem is not solved, you can use the formal process

Area 3 of policy	**How to Make a Complaint: *Formal Process*** **Send Your Complaint in Writing:** Send your complaint to the Academic Director or Operations Manager. Choose the person you feel most comfortable speaking to. If you need help writing in English, please ask either person. Explain the problem clearly and include any evidence, if possible. Please try to send your complaint within five working days after you have tried to solve the problem. You can still complain after this time. **Investigation**: The Academic Director or Operations Manager will look into the complaint. They may ask another staff member to help. The person your complaint is about will be told and asked to give their side of the story. The investigator will look at all the evidence. **Decision and Communication:** The decision will be shared in writing with everyone involved, including the person who made the complaint. The decision may: ● Suggest ways to fix the problem ● Offer recommendations ● Reject the complaint We will confirm that we have received your written complaint within three working days. We aim to give you a written decision within ten working days. If we need more time, we will tell you why and when you can expect a reply. If you are not happy with our decision, you can write to the School Director to ask for an appeal. The Director will aim to reply in writing within five working days. If more time is needed, we will tell you.

	We may offer a way to put things right. This can include a refund if our terms and conditions allow it. We will explain any refund decision in writing.
Area 4 of policy	**Independent Process:** If we cannot solve your complaint at Emerald, we can help you contact Eaquals or English Education Ireland (EEI), where appropriate. These organisations have their own rules and timelines. We want all learners to feel comfortable raising concerns or making complaints, whether to Emerald or an outside organisation, knowing they will always be treated fairly and with respect.
Area 5 of policy	**Additional Rights and Responsibilities:** People making a complaint can bring a friend, family member, or colleague to meetings. Lawyers cannot act as legal representatives in these meetings. The person the complaint is about has the right to know the details of the complaint and to respond. Complaints must follow Emerald Cultural Institute's Code of Conduct.
Area 6 of policy	**Confidentiality** All complaints will be kept private. Information will only be shared with staff who are helping to solve the problem.
Record keeping	All complaints are recorded, checked, and kept securely. This helps us stay responsible and keep improving.
Key contacts	Student Welfare: studentwelfare@eci.ie Academic: Eithne Kelly — eithne@eci.ie Accommodation: accommodation@eci.ie Operations: Aideen Murphy — Aideen@eci.ie

Updates

Date	Summary of changes	Approved by
2022	Policy updated to include contacts	Senior Management Team
December 2024	Realigned to our mission Statement and to our new standard policy template (expanded to include purpose summary, scope, implementation and review SOP, summary of record keeping and appeals process). Modified to be easily read by a typical learner at A2 level.	Senior Management Team
October 2026	Updated for QQI IEM: non-retaliation, pre-arrival access, internal appeal, decision timelines, refunds and independent external routes.	Senior Management Team