

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1** To describe a formal policy, procedure and the complaint management system for dealing with student feedback, complaints and appeals, both academic and non-academic, fairly and consistently.
- 1.2** To inform students, visitors and interested parties the route by which they can express a complaint and appeal or provide feedback.
- 1.3** To inform staff (employees and contractors) of this policy and procedure so that staff know what to do if a complaint, appeal or feedback is received.
- 1.4** To ensure that all complaints and appeals are managed in accordance with principles of procedural fairness, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1** This policy and procedure applies to all staff, employees, contractors and students (domestic and international).

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Complaint – An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service provided by the Provider.

- Informal complaint – refers to an unofficial complaint.
- Formal complaint – refers to an official complaint.
- Academic complaint– related to course content, assessment tasks or judgments, results or grades, teaching quality, or academic staff.
- Non-academic complaint – related to facilities, administration, support services, or the conduct of Provider staff.

3.2 Appeal – A request to overturn a decision made by the Provider. It includes the following issues but not limited to:

- Outcome of assessment marks/course credit;
- Refusal of leave of absence/release letter/refund request;
- Intention to Report (ITR) for unsatisfactory course progress/non-payment/misbehaviour; or
- Decisions related to late enrolment.

3.3 Resolution – Plans or actions developed and mutually agreed-upon by the Provider and the complainant to address and resolve the complaint.

3.4 Commonwealth Ombudsman (CO) – An independent and impartial body that provides a free service to help resolve complaints about specific types of administrative actions or decisions, made by agencies, education providers, or organisations that fall within its jurisdiction.

3.5 Student Management System (SMS) – a platform used by the Provider to manage and maintain student-related information and administrative processes, including but not limited to student admission and enrolment, attendance, academic records, course progress, communication, compliance reporting, and personal details.

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 All Staff** – Responsible for understanding this policy and procedure and knowing what to do when a customer feedback, complaint or appeal is received.
- 4.2 Course Coordinator (CC)** – Responsible for the coordination and academic management of specific VET courses. CCs implement the course progress policy, monitor students' academic performance, and work closely with trainers and assessors to ensure timely intervention when required. CCs are the first point of contact for academic-related complaints and may be involved in reviewing and resolving such matters in line with this policy.
- 4.3 Department Head (DH)** – Responsible for ensuring that all feedback, complaints, and appeals are managed fairly, promptly, and in accordance with policy. For the purpose of this policy, DH includes all relevant leaders across departments, such as designated heads of Student Services, Marketing, Finance, IT, Admissions, and academic departments.
- 4.4 Student Services (SS) Department** – Responsible for communicating progress and outcome to students and logging and maintaining all records in the student file and also in the Complaints Register.
- 4.5 Designated Head (DH) Student Services** – Responsible for ensuring that student concerns are managed in a supportive, timely, and confidential manner and liaise with relevant departments to facilitate resolution and implement agreed actions.
- 4.6 Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Responsible for ensuring that the organisation maintains a transparent and fair complaints and appeals process. Reviews and investigates the complaints and appeals.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Complaints Process

This procedure outlines the steps for handling student complaints. Students should contact the appropriate staff member depending on the nature of the issue:

- a) For **academic matters**, students should speak with their Trainer or the CC.
- b) For non-academic matters, students should contact SS.

5.1.1 Informal Complaint Resolution

- Students are encouraged to seek early resolution by raising their concerns directly with the relevant staff member. Open and respectful communication often leads to a prompt and satisfactory outcome without the need for a formal process.

5.1.2 Formal Complaint Submission

- If the student is not satisfied with the response or the matter is more serious, the student can raise a formal complaint by completing the Student Complaint Form available on the Provider website and submitting it to the SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable).
- Upon receipt of the formal complaint, SS will:
 - a) Log the complaint in the Complaints Register; and
 - b) Forward the complaint to the relevant DH within one (1) working day.
 - c) For academic complaints, the student may also be required to book an appointment with the CC.

5.1.3 Complaint Assessment and Outcome

- Within ten (10) working days of receiving the formal complaint:
 - a) The DH-SS or CC (as appropriate) will review the complaint and supporting information.
 - b) They may request further information from the student and/or staff involved.
 - c) A written outcome will be provided to the student, outlining the decision, reasons for the outcome, and the student's right to access an independent external appeals process if not satisfied.
- If the CC conducts the investigation, a copy of the written outcome must be forwarded to the DH-SS.
- If the student accepts the outcome and does not wish to escalate the complaint further, the matter is considered resolved. The DH-SS will finalise the Provider's decision and record the outcome in the SMS.

5.1.4 Internal Review by the CEO (if escalated)

- If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a further internal review by the CEO.
 - a) The request must be submitted to SS within **five (5) working days** of receiving the written outcome.

- b) SS will refer the complaint to the CEO as soon as practicable, preferably within one (1) working day of receiving the student's request.
- The CEO will review the complaint and provide a final internal decision within ten (10) working days of receiving the complaint. The DH-SS will communicate the outcome to the student in writing, including reasons for the decision.

5.2 Internal Appeals

5.2.1 Lodging an Appeal

- The student must submit a completed Appeal Form to SS **within 20 working days** of receiving the official notification of the decision.
- For appeals against the Provider's intention to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress, the Appeal Form must be submitted to the CC within the same timeframe.

5.2.2 Appeal Review

- The staff member responsible (as outline in the table below) must:
 - Review the Appeal Form and any supporting evidence submitted by the student.
 - Access and review the student's records in the SMS.
 - Conduct interviews if additional information or clarification is required.
 - Finalise a decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.
 - Inform the student of the outcome in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

Types of Appeal	Person Responsible
Late Enrolment	DH-SS
Assessment Marks	CC
Decisions related to Course Progress	CC
Refusal of Leave of Absence	CEO
Refusal of Release	CEO
Refusal of Refund	CEO
Decisions related to Fees	DH-SS
Decisions related to Misconduct/Behaviour	CEO
Decisions related to Attendance	DH-SS
Course Credit (RPL/ CT)	CC

5.2.3 Outcome

- If the original **decision is overturned or varied** in favour of the student, the Provider will immediately implement any required changes, corrective or preventative actions, and initiate a continuous improvement process, where appropriate.
- If the original **decision is upheld**, the Provider may proceed with the decision (including cancellation of the electronic Confirmation of

Enrolment (eCoE)) and, where applicable, implement any necessary actions or improvements. The student will also be informed of their right to access the external appeals.

Note: For international students, the Provider will not report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS until both internal and external appeals processes are complete.

- If the **student is not satisfied** with the appeal outcome, they have the right to lodge an external appeal with an external appeals body listed in ***Schedule 1: External Appeals***.

5.2.4 Communication, Documentation and Record Keeping

- All communication must be recorded in the SMS
- The student is provided a written statement of the appeals outcome, including the reasons of the decision.
- Records of the complaints or appeals must be kept in the student's file and/or SMS.

5.3 External Appeals

- If the student chooses to access the external appeals process, they must do so within **five (5) working days** of receiving the appeal outcome.
- The student must inform the Provider once they have lodged an external appeal. This ensures that their **enrolment is maintained** during the external review process.
- The student is entitled to access **one external appeal process** related to the matter. The Provider is not required to wait for the outcomes of **multiple external processes** that the student may choose to pursue. After the conclusion of the external appeal, the Provider may proceed to report the student to the relevant authorities, if applicable.

5.4 General Guidelines

- If the Provider considers that more than 60 calendar days is required to process and finalise student complaint or appeal, the Provider will inform student in writing the reasons as why more than 60 calendar days is required and will regularly update student on the progress of the matter.
- The Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure does not, in any way, inhibit the student's rights to pursue other legal remedies under the Federal or State law. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
- The Provider will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.
- Students must maintain their enrolment during the complaints and/or appeals process.
- There is no cost to the complainant and/or appellant for utilising this complaint and/or appeal process.

- At all meetings, the student may have a support person present (at the student's cost). If the student is under the age of 18, the parent or guardian must also be present.
- Student has the right to appeal a decision made by the Provider to report their unsatisfactory course progress based on the following grounds:
 - the Provider's failure to record or calculate a student's marks accurately,
 - compassionate or compelling circumstances, or
 - the Provider has not implemented its intervention strategy and other policies according to its documented policies and procedures that have been made available to the student.

5.5 Withdrawal of Complaint/Appeal

5.5.1 The student may withdraw a complaint or appeal at any time during the resolution process. The student must make the withdrawal in writing and submit it to the SS. This will then be forwarded to the DH (SS). Alternatively, the student may send an email to the DH (SS) using their email address that is registered with the Provider.

5.5.2 The DH (SS) will send a written acknowledgement of the withdrawal to the student. The matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved.

5.6 Documenting Complaint/Appeal

5.6.1 The DH must keep records of the following, where applicable:

- actions taken to address the root cause of the complaint/appeal;
- minutes of meetings at which actions arising from complaint/appeal were agreed on;
- changes to systems and/or processes to address the inadequacy that led to the complaint/appeal or to improve operations.

5.6.2 The DH (SS) will record the complaint and its resolution in the Provider's Complaints Register that will allow identification and detail of the following:

- submission date of complaint;
- nature and description of complaint;
- date/s when cause of complaint occurred;
- attachments (if applicable);
- determined resolution including reasons for any decision;
- date of resolution; and/or
- date written statement of outcomes was sent to student.

5.6.3 The outcome of the complaint/appeal and the reasons for the outcome will be placed in the student file and in the SMS.

The DH (SS) will monitor and annually review the complaints and appeals as part of their continuous improvement process.

5.7 Forms of Feedback

5.7.1 Students may provide feedback or lodge complaints through any of the following methods:

- By submitting a Student Complaint;
- Via email to the relevant department or staff member; or
- In person, by making an appointment through SS.

6.0 References

6.1 National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025

6.2 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Student Complaint Form

7.2 Appeal Form

7.3 Complaints Register

REVIEW HISTORY				
Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1.0	J.Rushton CEO	26/02/2020	26/02/2020	Moving to new Policies and Procedure format and review of new policies.
2.0	Joanna Kelly CEO	27/06/2025	27/06/2025	Scheduled review integrating academic and non-academic complaints procedures.

Schedule 1: External Appeals

Appeals Body	Contact Details
Commonwealth Ombudsman	Tel: 1300 362 072 +61 2 5117 3600 (For enquiries made from outside of Australia) Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au Website: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/ Online Complaint Form: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints
To understand what types of complaints the Ombudsman can review, please visit their website. The process may differ depending on the nature of your complaint and your enrolment type. For International Student Complaints: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints For VET Student Loan Complaints: https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/vet-student-loan-complaints For Other Complaints (including domestic students): https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/how-to-make-a-complaint	
Note: Before contacting the Commonwealth Ombudsman, students must first lodge a formal complaint with the education provider and allow time for a response. The Ombudsman will generally not accept a complaint unless this step has been completed.	