



PP015 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy and procedure support Austral College's commitment to provide a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned appropriately. All complaints, grievances and appeals received by Austral College will be viewed as an opportunity for continuous improvement.
- 1.2. Standard 6 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 states that organisations must ensure complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged, and dealt with in a fair, efficient, and effective way.
- 1.3. Where Austral College believes that more than 20 (twenty) business days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, it will:
 - Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 20 (twenty) business days are required
 - Regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.
- 1.4. Austral College recognises complaints may occasionally arise that require informal and formal resolution. The following procedure provides students the opportunity to have any issues relating to a complaint or appeal resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties involved.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy and procedure apply to all students, including prospective and current ones as well as those who have completed their studies.
- 2.2. This policy applies to grievances, complaints and appeals arising between parties including student-to-student, student-to-staff member, or students involved in Austral College approved work or practical placement activities.
- 2.3. All staff of Austral College may be required to implement this Policy and Procedure as part of their role.

3. Authority

- 3.1. The Victorian Campus Manager is responsible for effective implementation of this Policy and Procedure.
- 3.2. The Victorian Campus Manager is responsible for the management of this Policy as well as the provision of information on ways to resolve complaints of breaches of this Policy and Procedure.



PP015 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

3.3. This Procedure is issued on the authority of the CEO. The CEO retains overall responsibility for the effective implementation of all policies and procedures.

3.4. Any complaints or breaches in relation to this Policy should be reported to the Victorian Campus Manager for investigation and resolution. In the event of the Victorian Campus Manager breaching the Policy and Procedure the CEO will be notified in by email to: info@australcollege.com.au

4. Definitions

- **Academic Concern** is a concern about academic matters, academic situation or academic process provided by Austral College which the student brings to the attention of Austral College in an informal way, that is, it is spoken about, not written. Examples include, but are not limited to matters related to:
 - Academic progress decisions
 - Attendance procedures, where relevant
 - Application for credit transfer (CT) or recognition of prior learning (RPL)
 - Assessment issues
 - A decision of a member of academic staff that affects an individual student or a group of students
 - Content or structure of education and training programs or quality of teaching
 - Supervision of a Practical Placement; and
 - Issues related to authorship or intellectual property.
- **Appeals** arise when a student is not satisfied with the decision made because of the complaint.
- **Appellant** is a person lodging an appeal to the outcome of a complaint or grievance.
- **ASQA** means Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET regulator and the RTO's registering body.
- **Complaint** is a written or verbal notification of dissatisfaction with any part of the services provided by Austral College. Complaints arise when a student is not satisfied with any of the aspects of Austral College for example:
 - The procedure
 - The quality of a product or service provided by Austral College
 - The trainers, staff, or other students.
- **Complainant** is a person lodging a complaint or grievance.
- **External Appeal** is an appeal to an external agency against a final decision of the College.
- **Final Decision** is a decision made by the member of staff authorised by the CEO to make that decision and communicated to the complainant in writing when all internal appeal avenues within Austral College's Policy and Procedures have been exhausted.
- **Grievance** is a complaint of a behaviour or action which has or is likely to have an unreasonable negative impact on the student in relation to their studies.



PP015 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

- **Internal Appeal** is an appeal against a decision where the appeal is brought under Austral College policies or where there is a process for appeal within Austral College's policies and procedures.
- **Non – Academic Concern** is a concern about non-academic matters, perceived discrimination, a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or a support service provided by Austral College which the student brings to the attention of Austral College in an informal way, that is, it is spoken about, not written down. Examples include, but are not limited to matters related to:
 - Provision of student support services such as those associated with the application and enrolment process, and amenities
 - Suspension or cancellation of enrolment for non-academic matters
 - Use or misuse of personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student
 - Grievances about financial matters, fines, and payments
 - Exclusions from events and facilities
 - Job placement assistance
 - Perceived discrimination
 - Unfairness and injustice
 - bullying
 - Sexual harassment
 - Other forms of harassment
- **Respondent** is a person responding to a complaint or an appeal.
- **SRTOs** means the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

5. Policy Statement

5.1. Austral College will implement an effective Complaints and Appeals Procedure that applies to all complaints, grievances and appeals managed by Austral College, either informally or formally and meets the requirements of SRTOs Clause 6.

6. Requirements, Process and Procedure

6.1. Complaints about a particular incident should be made within ninety (90) calendar days of the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.

6.2. There are four (4) phases in the Austral College's Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy & Procedure:

- Phase 1: Informal Discussion
- Phase 2: Formal Complaint
- Phase 3: Internal Appeal
- Phase 4: External Appeal.



PP015 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

6.3. All students or potential students can access each of the four phases at any time. However, it is strongly recommended that each phase of the policy is completed before escalating to the next phase.

6.4. Phase 1: Informal Discussion

- The student is encouraged to raise the concern directly with the person/s involved. For example, if the grievance is about fees, the concern should be discussed in the first instance with the Victorian Campus Manager or a grievance about an assessment task should be discussed in the first instance with the Trainer/Assessor.
- An informal discussion should take place directly between the relevant person(s) as soon as possible. The student may choose to be accompanied or assisted by a support person during the informal discussion phase.
- If the student has attempted to resolve the issue directly with the relevant person(s) and is not satisfied with the outcome or does not wish to directly approach the person(s) concerned, the student should discuss the grievance with the Victorian Campus Manager as soon as possible.
- The Victorian Campus Manager will consider the issue and may suggest a course of action to resolve the issue or attempt to mediate between the student and the person(s) concerned.
- The student and other person(s) directly involved will be advised in writing of the outcome within ten (10) working days from the time the grievance was raised with the Victorian Campus Manager.
- A record of the discussion and its outcome will be placed on Austral College's Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register by the Victorian Campus Manager.
- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student can escalate their grievance to Phase 2 under this policy.

6.5. Phase 2: Formal Complaint

- In the second phase, the informal discussion (i.e. Phase 1) escalates to a formal process. The complaint involves the student lodging a written complaint. The complaint will be investigated by the Victorian Campus Manager or CEO if the Victorian Campus Manager is included in the complaint.
 - The student sends an email or submits a letter to the Victorian Campus Manager at Austral College.
 - The student receives written acknowledgment of the complaint within two (2) business days of the Complaint lodgement.
 - To proceed with Phase 2, the student must provide the following information in writing within 10 business days of receipt of the letter from the Victorian Campus Manager detailing outcome of the informal discussion:
 - details of the complaint



PP015 Complaints and Appeals

Policy and Procedure

- supporting information that the student wishes to have considered
- an explanation of the steps already taken to try to resolve the issue informally and why the responses received are not considered satisfactory; and
- what the student thinks needs to be done to address their concerns.
- The Victorian Campus Manager investigates the complaint and seeks to resolve it within twenty (20) business days of it being received by the Victorian Campus Manager.
 - As part of the investigation process, the Victorian Campus Manager will discuss the issues with the person(s) concerned, and if required, may discuss it with relevant staff observing the appropriate level of confidentiality. A meeting with the student may be arranged to enable the student to formally present their complaint. The student may be accompanied or assisted by a support person at any such meeting.
- **Complaint upheld**
 - If the Victorian Campus Manager considers that the complaint should be upheld, the relevant staff will be notified immediately to implement the actions required to resolve the complaint.
 - The student receives written notification of the outcome of the investigation within five (5) business days of finalising the investigation of the complaint.
 - If the complaint is upheld the student will be provided with a written report of the steps taken to address the complaint within twenty-five (25) business days of the commencement of the complaint process.
 - If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student can escalate the complaint to Phase 3 under this policy.
- **Complaint not upheld**
 - If the complaint is not upheld, then the student will be given a written report on the reasons for the decision within five (5) business days of finalising the investigation of the complaint.
 - The student will also be advised of their right to access the Internal Appeals Process if not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint and lodge this within twenty (20) business days of the Phase 2 decision notification.
 - The student is to notify Austral College of their decision not to proceed within 20 working days.
- The Victorian Campus Manager will file a written record of the complaint and its outcome in the Austral College's Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register.

6.6. Phase 3: Internal Appeal

- General Complaints



PP015 Complaints and Appeals

Policy and Procedure

- If the student is not satisfied with the outcome from Phase 2, the student can escalate the complaint to Phase 3 under this policy. This phase is referred to as an Internal Appeal and it will be investigated through a formal process at no cost to the student. The Internal Appeal will be investigated by the CEO.
- The CEO will acknowledge in writing within two (2) business days of receiving the appeals notice.
- The CEO may:
 - make a determination based on the information already provided
 - decide that there are insufficient grounds to take any further action, thus concluding the consideration of the matter under this Internal Appeal Phase; or
 - establish an Internal Appeal Review Panel.
- The student submits a written request for an internal appeal via email or submits a letter to the CEO within twenty (20) business days of receipt of the written report from Phase 2;
- The CEO will acknowledge in writing within two (2) business days of receiving the appeals notice.
- The CEO may:
 - Make a determination based on the information already provided
 - Decide that there are insufficient grounds to take any further action, thus concluding the consideration of the matter under this Internal Appeal phase; or
 - Establish an Internal Appeal Review Panel
 - If the decision is made to establish an Internal Appeal Review Panel, the CEO convenes the Panel within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Appeal Request Form.
 - The Internal Appeal Review Panel meets within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Appeal Request Form.
 - The student is given at least five (5) business days of notice in advance of the Internal Appeal Review Panel meeting.
 - The student receives a written notification within ten (10) business days of the Panel 's decision.
 - If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student can escalate the complaint to Phase 4 under this Policy.
 - The Internal Appeal Process will consider all relevant information. The student may attend and be accompanied by a support person who may speak on the student's behalf. If the complaint which is the subject of the appeal involves



PP015 Complaints and Appeals

Policy and Procedure

- other person(s), they will also be invited to present their case to the Panel. A written record of the meeting must be taken.
- The student will be notified in writing within ten (10) business days of the decision of the Internal Appeal Review Panel. If the appeal is upheld, the student will be informed of the action to be taken to resolve the matter. Austral College will immediately implement any decision and/or action required.
 - If the Complaint is not upheld, the student will be given a written report including the reason/s for the decision and advising the student of their right to access the External Review Process.
- The CEO will file a written record of the Complaint and its outcome in the Austral College Complaints, Grievances and Appeals.

6.7. Phase 4: External Appeal

- If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Phase 3, they may request the matter to be referred to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by Austral College.
 - National Training Complaints Hotline: 13 38 73
 - www.dese.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline
 - Dispute Assessment Officer
Disputes Settlement Centre of Victoria
Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: 1300 372 888
Email: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au
www.disputes.vic.gov.au or
 - The Victorian Ombudsman
www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au
Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.gov.au
Phone: 03 9613 6222
- If an appeal is against Austral College's decision to defer, suspend or cancel a student's enrolment due to misbehaviour, Austral College only needs to await the outcome of the internal appeals process (supporting Austral College) before implementing its decision to change the student's enrolment status.
- If any student (Complainant) is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint and appeal process they can escalate the complaint to ASQA at:
Web: <https://asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/>
- Email: asqanet@asqa.gov.au
- Call: ASQA info line on 1300 701 801



PP015 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student Austral College shall follow the required actions and recommendations from the Ombudsman to satisfy the student's complaints as soon as practicable.
- The decision of the independent mediator is final; however, it does not limit the rights of individuals to act under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws. Also, this policy and procedure does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6.8. Record Keeping

- A register of all Complaints and Appeals lodged is maintained confidentially by the relevant Austral College staff includes:
 - Names of relevant parties.
 - The complaint being made/decision being appealed.
 - Outcome of the complaint/appeal (including reasons, in the case of an appeal).
 - The name and position of the person/s making the decision.
- All stages of the complaints and appeals process, including any discussions, will be recorded in writing and available to the complainant or respondent if requested.
- All records relating to complaints and appeals will be kept for a period of five (5) years. Any records or documentation is to be kept strictly confidential and stored securely in the MS Teams.

7. Review Date

12 months from the date of this version, or as required.

8. Version History

Version	Date	Action	Prepared by	Approved by
V1.0	22.10.24	Initial review	Candice Taylor	Desi Kasimiotis