



Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

This document specifies the complaints and appeals policy and procedure of Australian Ideal College (the College). It sets out guidance for staff and students regarding student complaints and appeals relating to both academic and non-academic matters. This policy ensures that all Complaints appeals are addressed in a timely, respectful and unbiased manner, in alignment with the principles of natural justice and continuous improvement.

2. Policy Statement

The College is committed ensuring students have the right to natural justice protected through access to professional, timely, inexpensive and documented complaints handling and appeals processes, which are publicly available.

This policy applies to and may involve issues concerning the conduct of:

- The College as an organisation, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- Third party's services provided on the behalf of the College, including education agents, or any related party the registered provider has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas student's course or related services
- Its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- A student at the College.

The College's internal Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures provide:

- a process for overseas students to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally.
- a process to respond to any complaint or appeal a student makes about the College or any agent or related party the College engages.
- a process to begin assessing a complaint or appeal within 10 working days of the student lodging it and finalising the outcome as soon as practicable.
- a procedure to conduct the assessment of the complaint or appeal in a professional, fair and transparent manner.
- the opportunity for the student to present their case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person if necessary.
- the student with a written statement of the outcome of the complaint or appeal, including the reasons for the outcome, and keeps a written record of complaints or appeals on the student's file.
- For the College to maintain the student's enrolment during the process

3. Scope

This policy applies to all College staff, including contractors and students. It covers who can make a complaint or appeal, the types of complaints and appeals and specifies timeframes or deadlines for submitting complaints and appeals to ensure timely resolution.

4. Definitions

Academic Matters: refer to all matters directly related to study activities such as training, attendance, assessment, progress, course content, facilities, curriculum, trainers, assessors, course materials such as learning materials.

Non-academic Matters: refer to all matters not directly related to training and assessment activities such as the enrolment process, payment of fees or other financial matters, contractual matters including withdrawals and refunds, interpersonal matters when interacting with other students or College staff or stakeholders, student services matters, data management and its privacy and all other matters.



Complaint: A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an act, omission, decision, or a service provided by the College. It can be made by a student, staff member or a third party that provides services on behalf of the College.

Complainant: The person making the complaint

Appeal: A request to review and reconsider a decision made by Australian Ideal College

Appellant: The person lodging the appeal.

Internal Appeal: Australian Ideal College internal process to review a decision.

External Appeal: An independent body review after internal avenues are exhausted.

Natural Justice: The right to a fair and unbiased process.

Support Person: A person chosen by the student to provide assistance throughout the appeal process.

5. Responsibilities

CEO: Ensures independence, fairness and adequacy of the appeals process.

Compliance Manager: Manages appeal investigations, communications and recordkeeping.

Trainers/Assessors: Cooperate in appeal reviews and supply requested information.

Academic Manager: is responsible for academic complaints and appeals

Administration Manager: is responsible for non-academic complaints and appeals

Students and Clients are encouraged to use the complaints and appeals process if they experience dissatisfaction. Formal complaints are required to be submitted according to the process outlined by the College.

All staff receive training on the complaints and appeals process. Respond to complaints or queries in a professional manner, providing guidance on how to escalate issues if necessary.

6. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

This policy aligns with the following legislative and regulatory frameworks:

National Code 2018 Standard 10: Documented internal complaints and appeals processes; advise students within 10 working days of right to external processes if unsatisfied; immediately implement any decision/recommendation in favour of the student.

Standards for RTOs 2025

2.7 Feedback and complaints: Accessible system; procedural fairness; timeframes; avenues for further action; documented outcomes; informs continuous improvement.

2.8 Appeals: Accessible appeals system; procedural fairness; timeframes; independent review at no/low cost; documented outcomes; informs continuous improvement.

DEWR Policy Guidance (Mar 2025): Processes must be clear, transparent, timely, fair, and allow external review.

Australian Consumer Law (Schedule 2 of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010): Guarantees the rights of students as consumers of education services, including access to fair dispute resolution processes.

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth): Requires that all appeal documentation is handled securely and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth): process be accessible and inclusive to students with disability.

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Legislation (State/Territory-based)

7. Procedure

a. Complaints overview

Students are entitled to make a complaint about their learning experience at any time should the need arise. A complaint can be about any aspect of the College's operations and includes issues regarding the conduct of:

- a) The College, its trainers, assessors, or other staff,
 - b) A third-party providing services on the College's behalf, its trainers, assessors, education agents or other staff,
- OR

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c) A student of the College

The College encourages students to attempt to resolve their grievances informally prior to submitting a formal complaint. Complaints may be submitted by completing the Complaints Form available on the website or from reception. The College will ensure the complaints processes will begin within a reasonable timeframe of within 5 days of receiving the formal written lodgement of the complaint.

b. External Complaints Procedure

Students are also entitled to access the external complaints process at minimal or no cost if not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling and appeals process. Students can lodge an external complaint about the College to the Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO). [International student complaints | Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The OSO may not be able to investigate a student complaint if they have not already exhausted the College's formal internal complaints process.

Complainants may also complain to the regulator, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). However, it should be noted that ASQA is not a consumer protection agency and cannot act as an advocate for individual students.

[How ASQA uses feedback | Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#)

Step	Action	Person Responsible
1. Lodging a Complaint	Complaints can be submitted verbally, in writing, or using the Complaints Form on the Australian Ideal College website.	Student/ Complainant
	Complaints are recorded in the Complaints Register within the Student Management System.	Administration Manager
	A written acknowledgment is provided within one (1) business day, confirming receipt, outlining the process, and advising the complainant of their rights and obligations and that they will receive a written response within 14 days.	
	The complaints policy and procedure must be publicly available on the Australian Ideal College website.	
2. Investigation	The complaint handling process must commence within 5 working days of receipt.	Administration Manager
	If a complaint involves allegations against another person, they must be informed and given a chance to respond via meetings or email. A record of discussions must be kept, and all information handled confidentially. Parties should act professionally and respectfully.	
	The accused party has the right to: - Present their case and provide evidence - Deny allegations and present an alternative explanation - Show cause why a proposed action should not be taken - Call for evidence to disprove allegations - Provide mitigating circumstances where applicable	
	Australian Ideal College must fully consider all responses before making a decision and ensure procedural fairness.	
	The complainant is provided the opportunity to formally present their case at no cost and may be assisted by a support person.	
	If necessary, escalate to the CEO for further assessment.	
	Complaints must be handled with natural justice and procedural fairness, ensuring the complainant is heard, has access to relevant information, and can respond. Decisions must be made based on logical evidence.	
3. Response	A written response must be provided within 14 working days, detailing the outcome and reasons.	Administration Manager
	If the complaint involves alleged criminal conduct, the complainant is advised to refer the matter to the State or Territory Police Service.	



	Complaints should be resolved within 30 calendar days wherever possible. If additional time is required, the complainant is informed in writing, including the reason. The complainant is provided with regular progress updates at least every 14 days.	CEO
	Enrolment of the complainant must be maintained during the complaint handling process.	Administration Manager
	Complaints are to be handled with strict confidentiality. Information is not to be disclosed without permission, using an Information Release Form where required.	
	Where a complaint is upheld in favour of the student, the decision is implemented immediately.	
4. Continuous Improvement	Complaints and appeals investigations must identify root causes, preventative and corrective actions, and any opportunities for improvement.	Administration Manager
	Findings must be recorded in the Complaints Register and Appeals Register and addressed at monthly RTO management meetings. Some cases may also be documented in the Continuous Improvement Register.	
5. Third-Party Review	If a complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint, they may request an independent review.	Administration Manager
	The Chief Executive Officer appoints an independent person to review the complaint outcome and handling process.	Chief Executive Officer
	Independent third-party must provide recommendations within 14 working days. The decision is final and must be implemented without prejudice.	
	Australian Ideal College bears the full cost of facilitating an independent review where required.	
6. External Review	If dissatisfied, the complainant may escalate to external agencies:- National Training Complaints Service (13 38 73) - ASQA – How ASQA uses feedback Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) - Overseas Students Ombudsman – International student complaints Commonwealth Ombudsman In relation to matters relating to privacy, the person may refer their complaint to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner via the following details: Privacy complaints OAIC or call on 1300 363 992	Student /Complainant
	External review is free of charge for students as Australian Ideal College will meet all costs.	Administration Manager

c. Appeals overview

- The College has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the College or a third-party providing services on the College's behalf (if applicable).
- Students are entitled to appeal assessment outcomes, complaints handling outcomes and general decisions if they feel they are unjust for up to 20 working days after they have been informed of the decision.
- The College encourages students to attempt to resolve their grievances informally prior to submitting a formal internal appeal.
- Internal appeals may be submitted by completing the Appeals Form available on the website or reception.
- The College will ensure the internal appeals processes will begin within 5 working days of receiving the formal written lodgement of the internal appeal.
- The College will ensure that the internal appeal decision maker is independent of the decision being reviewed. The student's enrolment will continue throughout this process.
- Students are also entitled to access an external appeals process at minimal or no cost if not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling and appeals process.
- The external independent third party will manage the external appeals process through to completion. The College will not take any further action until the external appeals process has been completed.

d. Internal Appeal Procedure

- Students who are not satisfied with the result of a complaint or the conduct of the complaint handling process, or an assessment or general college decision, are able to appeal the decision.

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- Prior to lodging a formal internal appeal, the student is encouraged to request a meeting with a member of the Management Team to discuss the matter.
- The member of the Management Team will attempt to resolve the appeal informally at the meeting.
- If the attempt to resolve the appeal informally with the assistance of the member of the College Management Team is unsuccessful, or the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the student is invited to lodge a formal internal appeal using the Appeal Form.
- If the student lodges an appeal, they will receive an email confirming that the College has received the appeal request.
- Once an appeal form has been lodged (with any relevant supporting material), the formal internal appeals process will commence within 5 working days from the day it was lodged.
- A member of the college administration team records the appeal in the student's file and on the College Appeals Register.
- A member of the Management Team, one that was not involved in the complaint management stage or the owner of the general decision the student wishes to appeal, will contact the student and provide them with an opportunity to submit additional information relevant to the original complaint. A meeting may also be arranged to discuss matters further. There is no cost to the student for this process.
- Only a member of the Management Team may deal with a formal internal appeal assuming they did not make the decision that led to the appeal.
- If no members of the Management Team are eligible to address the internal appeal, the appeal will be directed to an external body for review at no cost to the student.
- The Resolution Institute, the national association of dispute resolvers, is an appropriate third party. Website: [Resolution Institute | Home](#)
- If a meeting is scheduled, the student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person. This applies to any additional meetings involving the internal appeal.
- The College will aim to resolve the appeal within 10 working days from the commencement of the formal internal appeal process unless all parties agree in writing to extend this time.
- Within 5 working days of the conclusion of the internal appeal handling process, the College will inform the student in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including associated reasons for the outcome, and of their right to an external appeal should they not be satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal appeal handling process.
- A record of the outcome, including reasons for the outcome, will be retained in the student's file.
- If any matter arising from the internal appeal indicates a systemic College issue, the CEO will be informed in writing so the matter can be used to inform the continuous improvement activities of the College.
- If the student elects to access the external appeals process, they must inform the College in writing within 5 working days of being informed of the outcome of the internal appeal so that the student's enrolment may be maintained until the process is concluded.
- A record of the appeal is recorded in the student's file.

e. External Appeal Procedure:

- Students that are dissatisfied with an outcome of an internal appeal, are invited to lodge a formal request for an external appeal using the External Appeals Form.
- If the student lodges a request for an external appeal using this form, they will receive an email confirming that the College has received the external appeal request.
- The external independent third party will manage the external appeal process through to completion and the College will abide by its decision.



- The Resolution Institute, the national association of dispute resolvers, is an appropriate third party. Website: [Resolution Institute | Home](#)
- The College must maintain the student's enrolment until the external appeal process is complete.
- Following the receipt of the outcome of the external appeal by the independent third party, the College will immediately implement the decision, convey the outcome to the student, place a copy of the documentation on the student's file, and undertake any continuous improvement actions arising from the decision.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits a student's rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
- The College must only report an overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS after:
 - the internal and external complaints processes have been completed, and the breach has been upheld.
 - the overseas student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 20-working day period.
 - the overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process; or
 - the overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process, by notifying the registered provider in writing.

f. Continuous Improvement

- Upon closure of the complaint or appeal, the Director of VET will undertake a root cause analysis to determine if there are any systemic issues that require attention to identify any long-term opportunities for improvement.
- Where an issue is found the Director of VET will raise a Continuous Improvement Form, refer it to the regular management meeting for consideration and acted upon appropriately to prevent the issue from reoccurring and documented in the Continuous Improvement Register

Procedure Summary Table

Step	Action	Responsible Person	Supporting Documents / Systems
1	Inform student of their right to appeal decisions (assessment, complaints, or other College decisions) within 20 working days of being notified.	Administration Officer	Decision Notification, Appeals Policy
2	Encourage informal resolution by offering a meeting with a Management Team member.	Management Team Member	Informal Resolution Notes
3	If unresolved, student lodges formal appeal using the Appeals Form (available online or at reception).	Student	Appeals Form, Supporting Documents
4	Acknowledge receipt of appeal in writing.	Administration Officer	Email Confirmation
5	Log the appeal in the Student Appeals Register and student file.	Administration Officer	Appeals Register, Student File
6	Appoint an independent Management Team member (not involved in original decision) to manage the internal appeal.	CEO or Delegate	Internal Appeal Assignment Record
7	Contact student to gather further information or arrange a meeting (student may bring a support person).	Appeal Reviewer	Interview Notes, Additional Evidence
8	Where no suitable internal reviewer is available, refer appeal to an external body at no cost to student.	CEO / Delegate	Referral Record
9	Resolve internal appeal within 10 working days unless extension agreed in writing.	Appeal Reviewer	Resolution Notes
10	Provide written notice of internal appeal outcome and reasons within 5 working days of conclusion. Include information about external appeal options.	Appeal Reviewer	Outcome Letter, Student File
11	Retain full appeal record in student file.	Administration Officer	Student File
12	Refer systemic issues arising from appeals to the CEO for continuous improvement consideration.	Appeal Reviewer / CEO	Continuous Improvement Form



13	If student proceeds to external appeal, ensure written request is received within 5 working days of internal appeal outcome. Maintain enrolment during the process.	Student Administration Officer	/ External Appeals Form, Email Record
14	Forward external appeal to Resolution Institute (or equivalent third party) for independent handling.	Administration Officer	External Appeal Request
15	Maintain student enrolment while external appeal is in progress.	Administration Officer	PRISMS Record
16	Upon external appeal outcome, implement any decision immediately, notify student, and update student file.	CEO / Delegate	Outcome Record, Implementation Log
17	Only report a student on PRISMS after internal and external appeal rights have been exhausted, withdrawn, or not accessed within 20 working days.	PRISMS Administrator	PRISMS Report, Record Appeal Closure
18	Conduct root cause analysis for all finalised appeals and log any identified issues in the Continuous Improvement Register.	CEO / Delegate	Continuous Improvement Register

8. Policy Implementation

This policy will be made available to all staff members and stakeholders through the internal communication channels, the website and Student Handbook. Students will also be advised of this policy and procedure at Orientation.

9. Recordkeeping

The following CRICOS-specific records must be maintained:

- Complaints and Appeals Register
- Acknowledgement and Outcome Notifications
- Records of External Referrals (if applicable)

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Australian Ideal College maintains a proactive and organisation-wide continuous improvement framework. All policies and procedures are subject to scheduled review as part of the Quality and Governance Calendar. Systematic monitoring and evaluation processes ensure that operations align with the Standards for RTOs 2025 and National Code 2018 are effective in practice.

Feedback from students, staff, and stakeholders, along with outcomes from audits, validation, complaints, and self-assurance activities, is analysed to identify risks and opportunities for enhancement. Improvement actions are prioritised, implemented, and tracked via the Continuous Improvement Register. Significant changes are subject to post-implementation review to ensure they are embedded and effective.

Document Control

Document Title			
Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure			
Approved By	CEO		
Date Approved	17/09/2025		
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Standards/Legislation	SRTO's 2.7, 2.8, NC 10		
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Version #	Changes	Approval By	Approval Date
1.0	Initial version	CEO	01/03/2009
2.0	Minor change	CEO	01/10/2010
3.0	Scenarios added	CEO	23/05/2011
4.0	Scenarios removed	CEO	18/04/2014
5.0	Terminology change	CEO	18/01/2018
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