

POLICY	COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS
ASQA Standards 2025	Compliance Standards, Outcome Standards and Credential Policy ASQA Practice Guide
Purpose	This Policy and Procedure ensures AACI manages feedback, complaints and appeals in a way that is accessible, fair, timely, objective, confidential, well documented and used to support continuous improvement of services.
Statement	<p>AACI will operate a feedback, complaints and appeals management system that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is publicly available and easy to access • allows concerns to be raised through multiple channels • affords procedural fairness to all parties • specifies reasonable timeframes • documents and communicates outcomes • provides avenues for escalation and independent review <p>uses complaint and appeal outcomes to inform continuous improvement</p>
Scope	<p>This Policy and Procedure applies to feedback, complaints and appeals made by or about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prospective students • current students • former students • staff • employers • clients • third parties • any person affected by AACI's training and assessment services or related operations. <p>It applies to complaints and appeals about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AACI services • training and assessment • staff conduct • learner support • administrative decisions • assessment decisions • enrolment decisions <p>decisions made by AACI, its third parties, or persons employed or contracted by AACI where those decisions adversely affect a student.</p>
Principles	<p>AACI will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all parties are treated respectfully and fairly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complaints and appeals are managed impartially and without victimisation • all parties have the opportunity to present their information and respond • matters are handled confidentially on a need-to-know basis • records are maintained securely • students may be supported by a support person at any relevant meeting <p>feedback, complaints and appeals are used to identify trends, root causes and improvement actions.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>Feedback means comments, concerns or suggestions about AACI services that may or may not amount to a complaint.</p> <p>Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction about AACI, a third party, or a person employed or contracted by AACI, requiring acknowledgement, review or response.</p> <p>Appeal means a request for review of a decision made by AACI, a third party, or a person employed or contracted by AACI, where that decision adversely affects a student.</p> <p>Procedural fairness means a fair process in which relevant parties are informed of the issue, given an opportunity to respond, and the matter is decided impartially.</p>
<p>Responsibilities</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer / RTO Manager Approves this Policy and Procedure, oversees complaints and appeals governance, reviews escalated or high-risk matters, and appoints an alternate decision-maker where a conflict of interest exists.</p> <p>Administration Manager / Student Administration Receives, acknowledges, logs and tracks feedback, complaints and appeals, maintains the Complaints and Appeals Register, and coordinates communication with the parties.</p> <p>Relevant Manager / Delegate Investigates or coordinates investigation of complaints and appeals, ensures procedural fairness, gathers evidence, and prepares outcome recommendations.</p> <p>Independent reviewer / alternate senior officer Reviews matters on appeal where independence is required or requested and where the original decision-maker should not determine the review.</p> <p>All staff and third parties Must cooperate with complaint and appeal processes, escalate matters promptly, and not victimise any person who raises a concern.</p> <p>Public access to the process Information about how to provide feedback, make a complaint, or lodge an appeal will be publicly available and easily accessible through AACI's</p>

	<p>website, student handbook, enrolment information and student administration channels. AACI will provide clear information about how to lodge a matter, the expected timeframes, and available review options.</p>
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PROCEDURE	COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS
Steps	<p>STAGE 1 – Informal Complaint Resolution</p> <p>Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue and the student’s complaint (subject to satisfying legal obligations under Australian Legislation and any material contracts entered into by AACI in the operation of the RTO). Any staff can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a student has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed.</p> <p>STAGE 2 – Formal Complaint Resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All complaints and appeals are submitted to the Administration Manager, who has the responsibility to record the complaint in the first instance in the ‘Complaints & Appeals Register’. Complaints are to include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submission date of complaint ○ Name of complainant; ○ Nature of complaint ; ○ Date of the event which lead to the complaint ○ Attachments (if applicable); • The complaint is entered into the ‘Complaints & Appeals Register’ by the Administration Office in the following format, and is monitored and updated by the Administration Manager on a regular basis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submission date of complaint ○ Name of complainant; ○ Description of complaint / appeal ○ Determined Resolution; and ○ Date of Resolution. • In the case of a student, once a complaint has been filed and logged in the ‘Complaints & Appeals Register’ the Administration Manager shall notify the CEO/RTO manager of the complaint and provide any further documentation related to the matter • Complainants and/or appellants may be assisted or accompanied by a support person at all meetings regardless of the nature of the complaint.

- Acknowledgement of application given by CEO within 10 business days.
- CEO will consider the formal complaint within 21 business days by reviewing, clarifying, investigating and discussing the matter with other relevant staff. All documentation to be provided by Student. The student will be given all opportunities to respond.
- Once a decision has been reached the CEO shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing.
- Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' by the Administration Manager and on the student's file.
- In the case of staff and client complaints, the process is managed by the Administration Manager, whose responsibility is to ensure a similar process to student complaints is followed.
- Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint, complainants and appellants shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal. To appeal a decision AACI must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal.

STAGE 3 – Appealing a complaints decision

- All students have the right to appeal decisions made by the AACI reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by the AACI include:
 1. Assessments conducted
 2. Reported breaches of academic performance or attendance requirements
 3. Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment
 4. Or any other conclusion that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by AACI in the first instance.
- To activate the appeals process the student is to provide a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the student feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained and help and support with this process can be obtained from Student Administration section.
- The CEO shall organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.

- The process for all formally lodged internal appeals will begin within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.
- Where an appeal has been lodged it will be defined into one of the following categories and the appropriate procedures followed.

Formalising Appeals

- Where a student has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify AACI in writing within 20 working days of the grounds of their appeal. Any supporting documentation should also be attached to the appeal.
- The Appeal shall be lodged through the Student Administration Office and the Administration Manager shall ensure the details of the appeal are added to the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.
- The CEO shall be notified and shall seek details regarding the initial documentation of the complaint and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated.
- Appeals lodged by staff and clients will be managed by the Administration Manager in lieu of CEO, in accordance with the above processes.

Where possible AACI shall ensure that any reviewer of an appeal decision was not involved in the original decision, and if the CEO is implicated, appoint an alternate senior officer.

Appealing Assessments

- Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment they are required to notify their assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate the assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The assessor shall complete a written report regarding the re-assessment outlining the reasons why assessment was or was not granted.
- If this is still not to the student's satisfaction the student shall formally lodge an appeal in writing to the Manager of the Assessment Centre, outlining their reasons for the appeal. The appeal shall be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.

- The CEO shall be notified and shall seek details from the assessor involved and any other relevant parties. A decision shall be made regarding the appeal either indicating the assessment decision stands or details of a possible re-assessment by a 'third party'. The third party shall be another assessor (ie. a person that meets current Credential Policy requirements for assessment) appointed by AACI.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated.

Appealing Decisions to Report Breach of Academic or Attendance Requirements

- Where a student wishes to appeal the decision of AACI for a breach of academic or attendance requirements the student shall lodge, in writing, a letter outlining the details of their appeal. The student should have extenuating circumstances as to why they have breached their requirements and must be able to provide evidence of these circumstances.
- The appeal shall be lodged with the Student Administration Office and the appeal entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.
- The CEO shall be notified and shall seek details regarding the initial documentation of the breach and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated.
- Where a student has decided to access the appeals process in relation to a reportable breach, AACI will not report the breach until the appeals process has been undertaken. AACI is required to maintain all relevant responsibilities until the breach has been resolved.

Appealing Deferrals, Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment Decisions

- Where a student wishes to appeal a decision relating to deferment, suspension, or cancellation of their enrolment they are required to lodge an Appeal, outlining the details of their appeal. Students should have extenuating circumstances as to why the decision should be reviewed and any supporting documentation supporting their appeal.

- The appeal shall be lodged this with Student Administration Section and the appeal shall be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.
- The CEO shall be notified and shall seek details regarding the initial documentation of the decision and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated.
- Where a student has decided to access the appeals process in relation to deferment, suspension or cancellation of their enrolment, AACI will not update the student's status until the appeals process is completed. AACI is required to maintain all relevant responsibilities until the change in enrolment status has been resolved.
- If a student has emailed or informed AACI that they wish to withdraw from a course they shall be referred to pay the course Withdrawal Fee to AACI and complete the ***Student Initiated Withdrawal Form***.

STAGE 4 – External Arbitration

- If the matter is still unresolved after the above procedures have been implemented and the internal appeals process exhausted, it may require an external independent / third party mediator¹. Where this is the case, the matter shall be referred to an appropriate person / organisation, e.g. Department of Justice, Consumer Affairs, ACCC).
- At any relevant meeting, the complainant, appellant, respondent or student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person.
- The decision of this independent mediator is final (but AACI does recognise that the learner has ongoing legal rights under law and regulators) and any further action the student wishes to take is outside AACI's policies and procedures.
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student AACI shall follow the required action to satisfy the student's complaint as soon as practicable.

¹ If the student is dissatisfied with the internal appeal outcome, or requests independent review, AACI will provide information about the available avenue for review by an independent party at no or low cost to the appellant, where applicable to the matter. AACI will advise the student of any known costs or practical steps involved

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a decision or outcome is in favour of AACI, the student may exercise his/her rights to appeal under Australia’s Consumer Protection Laws.
Confidentiality and records	<p>AACI will handle complaints and appeals confidentially and on a need-to-know basis, consistent with procedural fairness, privacy requirements and proper recordkeeping.</p> <p>All records relating to feedback, complaints and appeals will be stored securely. Outcome documentation, correspondence and supporting evidence will be retained in AACI’s records system and, where relevant, on the student file.</p>
Continuous Improvement	<p>AACI will review feedback, complaints and appeals data regularly to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recurring issues systemic risks root causes required corrective actions opportunities to improve training, assessment, administration and learner support. <p>Trend analysis and improvement actions will be reported through AACI’s continuous improvement and governance processes.</p>
Third-party obligations	<p>If AACI engages a third party, AACI will ensure the third party is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inform students how to raise concerns escalate complaints and appeals to AACI promptly cooperate with investigations and reviews <p>provide records relevant to the matter</p>
Attached Documentation	<i>(if applicable)</i>
Related Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 ASQA Practice Guide – Feedback, complaints and appeals Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and applicable consumer protection laws <p>National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 Quality Area 2 – VET Student Support Standard 2.7 – Feedback and complaints management Standard 2.8 – Appeals management ASQA Practice Guide – Feedback, complaints and appeals.</p>

<p>Related Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AACI Privacy Policy and Procedure <hr/> • Enrolment Policy and Procedure • Compliance with Legislation Policy and Procedure • Pre-Training Review Policy and Procedure • Material Contracts Policy and Procedure (Third Party Arrangements Policy and Procedure) <hr/> • Privacy Policy and Procedure • Enrolment Policy and Procedure • Assessment Policy and Procedure • Student Support Policy and Procedure • Compliance with Legislation Policy and Procedure • Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure
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VERSION CONTROL

Review / amendment history

Policy Approved by: Chief Executive Officer / RTO Manager

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer / RTO Manager

Next Policy Review Date: 1 September 2026

Version	Date	Details
1.0	4 August 2021	Policy approved and issued
2.0	1 March 2022	Minor Changes
3.0	1 September 2022	RTO Registration TOID and contact details
4.0	1 May 2024	No material change
5.0	1 September 2024	Updates – Reference to ASQA 2025 Standards
6.0	1 September 2025	Updates in reference to ASQA Standards released in 2025 - Compliance Standards, Outcome Standards and Credential Policy