

Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy

Australis College Pty Ltd

RTO Number 31518

PURPOSE

Australis College is committed to providing a fulfilling learning experience that enables students to not only achieve their education potential, but to provide additional services that will enable the students to become job-ready.

Australis College provides the student with appropriate mechanisms for communicating grievances, complaints and appeals and having these addressed appropriately.

Complaints and grievances arise when a student is dissatisfied with any aspect of Australis College and requires action to be taken to resolve the matter.

Appeals arise when a student is not satisfied with a decision or outcome by Australis College. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions, but they may also relate to other decisions made by Australis College.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all current and previously enrolled students of Australis College.

All [complaints](#), [grievances](#) and [appeals](#) are treated professionally and confidentially. Australis College ensures all complaints are dealt with in a fair, equitable, responsive and accountable manner.

All grievances will be reviewed and a decision provided within five (5) business days of receiving the grievance.

All complaints and appeals will be reviewed and a decision communicated in writing within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written complaint or appeal.

Quality keeps a Quality Notification Register (QNR) which documents all complaints, grievances and appeals; as well as their resolution. Any substantiated complaints, grievances and appeals will be reviewed as part of continuous improvement processes.

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

[Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011](#)

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

[Higher Education Support Act 2003](#)

[VET Student Loans Act 2016](#)

[VET Student Loans Rules 2016](#)

[Australian Privacy Principles](#)

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	1
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

POLICY STATEMENT

1. STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

- 1.1** There are three (3) types of complaints/grievances within the scope of this policy:
- Complaints/grievances of an academic nature:
 - [For example]: complaints/grievances about course material, the training methods and progression, and assessment decisions carried out from Australis College. (Note that students may send through an appeal rather than a complaint against an assessment decision. Please see [6. Appeals](#) for more information.)
 - Complaints/grievances of a non-academic nature:
 - [For example]: complaints/grievances about a person (Australis College representative) or third party representing or affiliated with Australis College or another student(s).
 - Complaints/grievances received that constitute a breach of Australian law (e.g. theft; assault) may result in referring the matter onto the authorities after an investigation has taken place.
 - Complaints/grievances about administration, process, and/or access and equity.
- 1.2** This Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy (POL_TA_CA1) is available to students on the [Australis College website](#).
- 1.3** International students are required to read this policy document in conjunction with the CRICOS Complaints and Appeals Procedure (PRO_CRICOS_SC_CA) and Students as Consumers Policy (POL_CRICOS_SC). The CRICOS-specific procedure will detail steps that student will need to take to lodge a complaint or appeal.
- 1.4** Prior to submitting a complaint, students are encouraged to seek resolution to their grievance with the College informally (e.g. in conversation).
- 1.5** All grievances will be heard and a decision provided within five (5) business days.
- 1.5.1** Should the student be dissatisfied with this response, they will be required to lodge a complaint (refer to [1.5](#)). Australis College does not change administration fees to submit a complaint.
- 1.6** [Complaints](#) are to be lodged on the Complaint and Appeal Form or may be communicated via email to quality@australiscollege.edu.au.
- 1.7** The following information should be included with all complaints on the Complaint and Appeal Form/email:
- Description of the complaint.
 - Steps that have been taken to address the issue.
 - What the student would like to occur to fix the issue and prevent it from happening again.
- 1.7.1** The completed form or email should be forwarded onto quality@australiscollege.edu.au; however students may send the form/email onto another area within the company. Should this be the case, the person/team that received the email must forward it onto Quality for recordkeeping purposes on the Quality Notification Register.
- 1.7.2** Quality is to forward a copy of the grievance/complaint to Student Support for their records.

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	2
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

- 1.8** All complaints will be heard, internally investigated and a decision communicated in writing (including reasons) within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written complaint. In the event that an external investigation is being undertaken; this time period will not apply.
 - 1.8.1** The staff member appointed to liaise with the complainant should maintain [regular contact](#) with the complainant to reassure them that their complaint is being investigated.
 - 1.8.2** Quality will update the Quality Notification Register with any updates/communications made between the College and the complainant.
 - 1.8.3** Close out of the item on the Quality Notification Register is instigated by the Root Cause Analysis Owner as outlined in the Quality Notification Register Procedure (PRO_CI3).
 - 1.8.4** Records of these communications are to be entered into the student’s training record in the Student Management System.
 - 1.8.4.1** The Complainant may request and be granted access to these records. (Refer to Australis College Privacy Policy POL_SPP1.)
- 1.9** If dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, the complainant may wish to commence appeal processes (refer to [6. Appeals](#)).
- 1.10** Complaint records must be kept for five (5) years.
- 1.11** Any substantiated complaints will be reviewed as part of the Continuous Improvement Procedure (PRO_CI1).

2. COMPLAINTS RAISED TO/FROM THE NATIONAL REGULATOR

2.1 Complaints raised to the National Regulator

- 2.1.1** Should a student/industry body/client/other external party be dissatisfied with any aspect of Australis College; they may lodge a complaint to the National Regulator.
 - 2.1.1.1** The National Regulator may instruct the student/industry body/client/other external party to undertake a formal complaints process through the College (unless already undertaken).
 - 2.1.1.2** The Regulator investigates complaints depending on the risk assessment assigned (focusing on the most serious complaints received); so any complaints received by the Regulator may not be acted upon in a timely manner.

2.2 Complaints raised from the National Regulator

- 2.2.1** The National Regulator may contact Australis College in response to any complaints received about the College or any of its third parties.
 - 2.2.1.1** Where this occurs, Australis College will investigate the complaint based on the information provided within any communicated timeframes outlined by the National Regulator.

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	3
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

3. CLIENT COMPLAINTS

3.1 Clients may lodge a complaint where they are dissatisfied with a service that Australis College is providing. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Not meeting the terms of a training agreement.
- Unsatisfactory/poor student or client service.
- Unacceptable behaviour or attitude of Australis College representative(s).
- In response to their own internal complaints processes, where an employee has lodged a complaint against the College to the client.

4. THIRD PARTY COMPLAINTS

Australis College enter into written agreements with persons/organisations deemed as a 'third party' under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. This written agreement and any subsequent training provided by the College outlines the responsibilities that the third party has to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and that their actions and operations must adhere to our compliance requirements.

- 4.1** Under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015; Australis College is responsible for all actions/operations undertaken by its third parties.
- 4.2** All third parties are made aware that in the event of a complaint made by a student or the National Regulator that they may be called upon to provide evidence and may be contacted directly by the National Regulator.
- 4.3** Third parties will typically have their own process for documenting and dealing with complaints, grievances and appeals.
- 4.4** Third parties conducting training and assessment services on behalf of the College are to follow Australis College processes.

5. PRIVACY COMPLAINTS

5.1 Refer to the Australis College Privacy Policy (POL_SPP1).

6. APPEALS

6.1 This policy covers the following appeals:

- Appeal against an assessment/competency decision by an Australis College Trainer/Assessor.
- Appeal against course fee or debt incurred under a loan or funding agreement.
- Appeal against a process or other decision regarding enrolment, cancellation or variation of enrolment status.
- Appeal against a previously closed complaint or against the outcome of a complaint.

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	4
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

- 6.2** The College has a three (3) step appeal process that students may elect to follow. This process must be followed in sequential order. Should the student forgo third party resolution (item [2](#)), and move onto item [3](#), they will no longer have the opportunity for a third party to review their appeal.
- (1) The student lodges an appeal to the College which is internally reviewed and a response provided (refer to [6.3](#)). Students should always lodge an appeal to the College in the first instance.
 - (2) Third party resolution is instigated where a student is not satisfied with an appeal outcome. The external party reviews the appeal and provides a response to the student and Australis College.
 - (3) The student lodges a complaint to a regulatory body or relevant Ombudsman should they be unsatisfied with the outcome from the appeal and/or from the third party resolution.
- 6.3** The student will be given the opportunity to formally present his or her case to the College. All formal appeals should be lodged by sending either a completed Complaint and Appeal Form or Assessment Appeal Form to quality@australiscollege.edu.au. Students may send the form/email onto another area within the company. Should this be the case, the person/team that received the email must forward it onto Quality for recordkeeping purposes on the [Quality Notification Register](#).
- 6.3.1** Quality is to forward on a copy of the appeal to Student Support for their records.
- 6.4** The following information should be included on the form by the student:
- Description of the appeal.
 - Steps that have been taken to address the issue.
 - What the student would like to occur to fix the issue and prevent it from happening again.
 - Whether the student wishes to formally present their case.
- 6.5** All appeals will be heard, internally reviewed and a decision communicated in writing (including reasons) within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written appeal. Should the issue not be resolved to the student’s satisfaction after internal review, Australis College will make arrangements for an independent external person to resolve the issue if requested by the student.
- 6.6** In the event that an external review is being undertaken by a third party; this time period will not apply.
- 6.7** Where Australis College arranges the external party, there will be no cost to the appellant to put their case forward (under VET Student Loans). Learners under VET FEE-HELP may incur a cost for third party resolution. International students may incur a cost where an external party is involved (refer to the CRICOS Complaints and Appeals Procedure (PRO_CRICOS_SC_CA) and Students as Consumers Policy (POL_CRICOS_SC)).
- 6.8** Appeal records must be kept for five (5) years.
- 6.9** Quality will update the Quality Notification Register with any updates/communications made between the College and the appellant as well as the outcome of the appeal.
- 6.10** Any substantiated appeals will be reviewed as part of the Continuous Improvement Procedure (PRO_CI1).

7. COMPLAINT/APPEAL RECORDKEEPING

- 7.1** All complaints, grievances and appeals are to be recorded on the company’s internal register – the Quality Notification Register for a period of five (5) years.

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	5
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

8. COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND RECORDKEEPING

8.1 *For internal use only* - refer to the Communication, Training and Recordkeeping Procedure (PRO_SM6).

9. ABBREVIATIONS

9.1 ASQA – the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

9.2 QNR – Quality Notification Register.

10. REFERENCES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS/DEFINITIONS

10.1 **Grievance** – a constructive conversation or communication between the College and a student/client/third party where resolution may be reached without escalating the issue. A grievance may or may not have been received in writing.

10.2 **Complaint** – is a written complaint that outlines the history of the dissatisfaction with a service or process provided by Australis College seeking to be resolved.

10.3 **Appeal** – dissatisfaction with a decision made by Australis College.

10.4 **Third party** – means any party that provides services on behalf of the RTO but does not include a contract of employment between an RTO and its employee.

10.5 **Regular contact** – for the purposes of this procedure is considered anywhere between three (3) and five (5) business days. Contact may be made in person, over the phone, via an online communication forum/system and/or via written communication (e.g. email).

10.6 [Student Handbook](#).

10.7 [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#).

10.8 Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure (PRO_TA_CA1).

10.9 Quality Notification Register.

10.10 Quality Notification Register Procedure (PRO_CI3).

10.11 Quality Notification Form.

10.12 Access and Equity Policy (POL_TA_AE1).

10.13 Australis College Privacy Policy (POL_SPP1).

10.14 Continuous Improvement Policy (POL_CI1).

10.15 Continuous Improvement Procedure (PRO_CI1).

10.16 Australis College Privacy Policy (POL_SPP1).

10.17 Complaint and Appeal Form.

10.18 Assessment Appeal Form.

10.19 CRICOS Complaints and Appeals Procedure (PRO_CRICOS_SC_CA).

10.20 Students as Consumers Policy (POL_CRICOS_SC).

Effective date	Review by date	SOP policy number	Version	Page number
09/02/2017	09/02/2019	POL_TA_CA1	3.2	6
Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy_V3.2				

APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Completion of the following signature blocks signifies who is responsible for the creation, implementation, review and approval of this policy.

	Name	Job title	Date
Prepared by	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	07/10/2014
Owned by	Marshall Newton	Chief Operations Officer	07/10/2014
Approved by	Andrew Hetherington	Managing Director	07/10/2014

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

Australis College is committed to maintaining systematic control over its documentation. This includes the accurate recording of amendments and versions of documents through the Version Control Register SmartSheet.

This policy document will be reviewed two (2) years from its effective date or sooner as required.

Date	Name	Job Title	Version Number
07/10/2014	Sharleen Ejlertsen	Quality Officer	1.0
29/01/2015	Sharleen Ejlertsen	Quality Officer	1.1
12/01/2016	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	2.0
13/07/2016	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	2.1
11/01/2017	Sharleen Ejlertsen	Quality Officer	3.0
19/01/2017	Sharleen Ejlertsen	Quality Officer	3.1
09/02/2017	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	3.2