

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.

The 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 which documents all complaints, grievances and appeals; as well as their resolution. Outcomes and recommendations from complaints, grievances and appeals will feed into the College's 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](#)

[VET Student Loan Manual for Providers](#)

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POLICY STATEMENT

1. STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

1.1 There are three (3) types of complaints/grievances within the scope of this policy:

(1) 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.)

(2) 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.

(3) Complaints/grievances about administration, process, and/or access and equity.

1.2 This policy is available to students on the [Australis College website](#).

1.3 Prior to submitting a complaint, students are encouraged to seek resolution to their grievance with the College informally (e.g. in conversation).

GRIEVANCES.

1.4 The College encourages its learners to discuss their grievances with its staff before lodging a complaint.

1.5 All grievances will be heard and a decision provided within five (5) business days. If the grievance is received in writing, it will be responded to in writing. Where the grievance was received verbally, the College will ensure that notes are kept within the Student Management System.

1.5.1 Should the student be dissatisfied with this response and wish to escalate their grievance to a complaint, they are able to lodge a written complaint (refer to [1.7](#)).

COMPLAINTS.

1.6 Complaints are to be lodged on the Complaint Form (available on the website) or may be communicated via email to quality@australiscollege.edu.au.

Australis College does not charge fees to submit a complaint.

1.7 The following information should be included with all complaints on the Complaint Form/email:

- A description of the complaint; which should include at least:
 - Date, time and place of the event(s).
 - The person(s) involved.
 - Background information of the event(s).
- Steps that have been taken to address the issue.
- What outcome(s) the complainant would like to achieve through the complaint process.

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Note that where the complainant does not record what outcome they would like from the complaint, the College will ensure that their complaint is acknowledged and that their feedback is taken on board for continuous improvement purposes. Unless the College believes that any of the allegations made in the complaint require a response; the complaint will be closed without further communication with the complainant.

1.7.1 The completed form or email should be forwarded onto quality@australiscollege.edu.au.

Where students send the form/email onto another area within the company, the recipient must forward the email onto Quality to record on the Quality Notification Register.

1.7.2 Quality is to forward a copy of the grievance/complaint to Student Support for their records.

1.8 Received complaints will be internally investigated and a decision communicated in writing within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written complaint. The response will include the reason(s) that determined the outcome of the complaint, and will also inform the complainant that there is an appeal process.

Note that in the event that an external investigation is being undertaken; the fifteen (15) day time period may not apply.

1.8.1 Quality will update the Quality Notification Register with any updates/communications made between the College, the complainant, and any other party involved with the process.

1.8.2 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).

1.8.3 Records of these communications are to be entered into the student's training record in the Student Management System.

1.8.3.1 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 the appeal process (refer to [6. Appeals](#)).

1.9.1 Students are to advise the College within five (5) business days of receiving their complaint outcome of their intentions to accept the decision or escalate to the appeal process.

1.10 In the event that the College instigates a cancellation of a student's enrolment under the VET Student Loans scheme; students will have twenty-eight (28) days from the date of notification to lodge a complaint. The College will not finalise the cancellation process until the grievance process has been finalised.

2. REGULATOR/DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING/OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS RAISED TO/FROM THE REGULATOR/DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING/OMBUDSMAN

2.1 Should a student/industry body/client/other external party be dissatisfied with any aspect of Australis College; they may lodge a complaint to the Regulator, Department of Education and Training, or Ombudsman (where applicable).

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2.1.1 The student/industry body/client/other external party may be instructed to commence the College’s complaints process in the first instance before they investigate the complaint.

2.2 The Regulator, Department of Education and Training, or Ombudsman may contact Australis College in response to any complaints received about the College or any of its third parties.

2.2.1 Where this occurs, Australis College will investigate the complaint based on the information provided within any communicated timeframes; and will accept the complaint outcome determined by the relevant authority.

3. CORPORATE 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 Regulator that they may be called upon to provide evidence and may be contacted directly by the 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).

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6. APPEALS

6.1 The College has two main appeal forms for students to use depending upon the nature of their appeal.

6.1.1 The Assessment Appeal Form:

- Appeal against an assessment/competency decision by a Trainer/Assessor.

6.1.2 The Appeal Form:

- 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.
- Appeal against course fee; or debt incurred under a loan* or funding agreement.

* VET FEE-HELP/VET Student Loan students seeking to have their debt reviewed under special circumstances are to refer to the VET Student Loans Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VSL1) or VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VFH1) available on the website.

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. 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 the 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 Regulator, Department of Education and Training, or relevant Ombudsman should they be unsatisfied with the outcome from the appeal and/or from the third party resolution.

INTERNAL APPEAL.

6.3 The student will be given the opportunity to formally present their case to the College. All formal appeals should be lodged by sending either a completed Appeal Form or Assessment Appeal Form to quality@australiscollege.edu.au. Both documents are available on the website.

Where students send the form/email onto another area within the company, the recipient must forward the email onto Quality to record on the Quality Notification Register.

6.3.1 There is no cost to a student to lodge an internal appeal.

6.3.2 Quality is to forward on a copy of the appeal to Student Support for their records.

6.4 **Appeal Form.** 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.

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6.5 Assessment Appeal Form. The following information should be included on the form by the student:

- The unit(s) of competency that the student is lodging the appeal against.
- The Trainer/Assessor that marked the assessment.
- The first and resubmission assessment dates.
- Full details of the appeal.
- A list of any documents/attachments submitted with the Assessment Appeal Form.

6.5.1 If lodging an appeal against an assessment decision, the appellant is not to submit additional evidence to support their competence. The assessment decision will be reviewed against the evidence previously submitted.

6.6 Received appeals will be internally reviewed and a decision communicated in writing (including reasons) within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the written appeal. The College will ensure that the appeal is reviewed by an independent senior staff member or an internal committee with the appropriate level of expertise. Assessment appeals will be reviewed by an appropriately qualified Assessor(s). Should the issue not be resolved to the student’s satisfaction after internal review, the College will make arrangements for an independent external person to resolve the issue where the student has requested escalation of their appeal.

6.6.1 Under VET Student Loans, the appellant is able to be assisted by, or be accompanied by another party during the appeal process. Any related costs will be the responsibility of the student.

6.6.2 Students are to advise the College within five (5) business days of receiving their appeal outcome of their intentions to accept the decision or escalate the appeal process.

THIRD PARTY RESOLUTION.

6.7 In the event that an external review is being undertaken by a third party; the fifteen (15) day time period may not apply.

6.8 Where Australis College arranges the external party, there will be no cost to the appellant to put their case forward under VET Student Loans.

Students under the Certificate 3 Guarantee, Higher Level Skills, VET FEE-HELP, and fee-for-service may incur a cost for third party resolution.

6.9 Should the issue not be resolved to the student’s satisfaction after third party resolution, they will be required to further their issue to the relevant authority.

ESCALATION TO A REGULATOR, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING OR OMBUDSMAN.

6.10 The final stage of the appeal process is for the student to raise a complaint to a Regulator, Department of Education and Training, or Ombudsman.

6.11 The College will fully cooperate with the process undertaken by the relevant authority.

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7. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 7.1 The College is committed to the continuous improvement of every aspect of its operation as a Registered Training Organisation.
- 7.2 The College uses outcomes and recommendations from internally and externally-reviewed complaints, grievances, and appeals to continually improve upon its processes and practices.
- 7.3 Outcomes from the assessment appeal process will be reviewed as a part of the validation process.

8. COMPLAINT/APPEAL RECORDKEEPING

- 8.1 Quality will update the Quality Notification Register with any updates/communications made between the College, the complainant/appellant, and any other party involved; as well as the outcome of a complaint, grievance or appeal.
- 8.2 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. Access to this register is limited to senior staff members.

9. ACCESS TO COMPLAINT/APPEAL INFORMATION

- 9.1 The College will provide access to records to all parties involved with the complaint, grievance and/or appeal process being undertaken.
- 9.2 The College will not distribute complaint, grievance and/or appeal records to those that are not a part of the process unless written consent is obtained by the appellant/complainant.

10. COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND RECORDKEEPING

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

11. REFERENCES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS/DEFINITIONS

- 11.1 **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.
- 11.2 **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.
- 11.3 **Appeal** – dissatisfaction with a decision made by Australis College.
- 11.4 **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.
- 11.5 [Student Handbook](#).
- 11.6 [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#).
- 11.7 Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure (PRO_TA_CA1).
- 11.8 Quality Notification Register.

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- 11.9 Quality Notification Register Procedure (PRO_CI3).
- 11.10 Access and Equity Policy (POL_TA_AE1).
- 11.11 Australis College Privacy Policy (POL_SPP1).
- 11.12 Continuous Improvement Policy (POL_CI1).
- 11.13 Continuous Improvement Procedure (PRO_CI1).
- 11.14 Australis College Privacy Policy (POL_SPP1).
- 11.15 VET Student Loans Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VSL1).
- 11.16 VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VFH1).
- 11.17 Complaint Form.
- 11.18 Appeal Form.
- 11.19 Assessment Appeal Form.

12. FLOW CHART

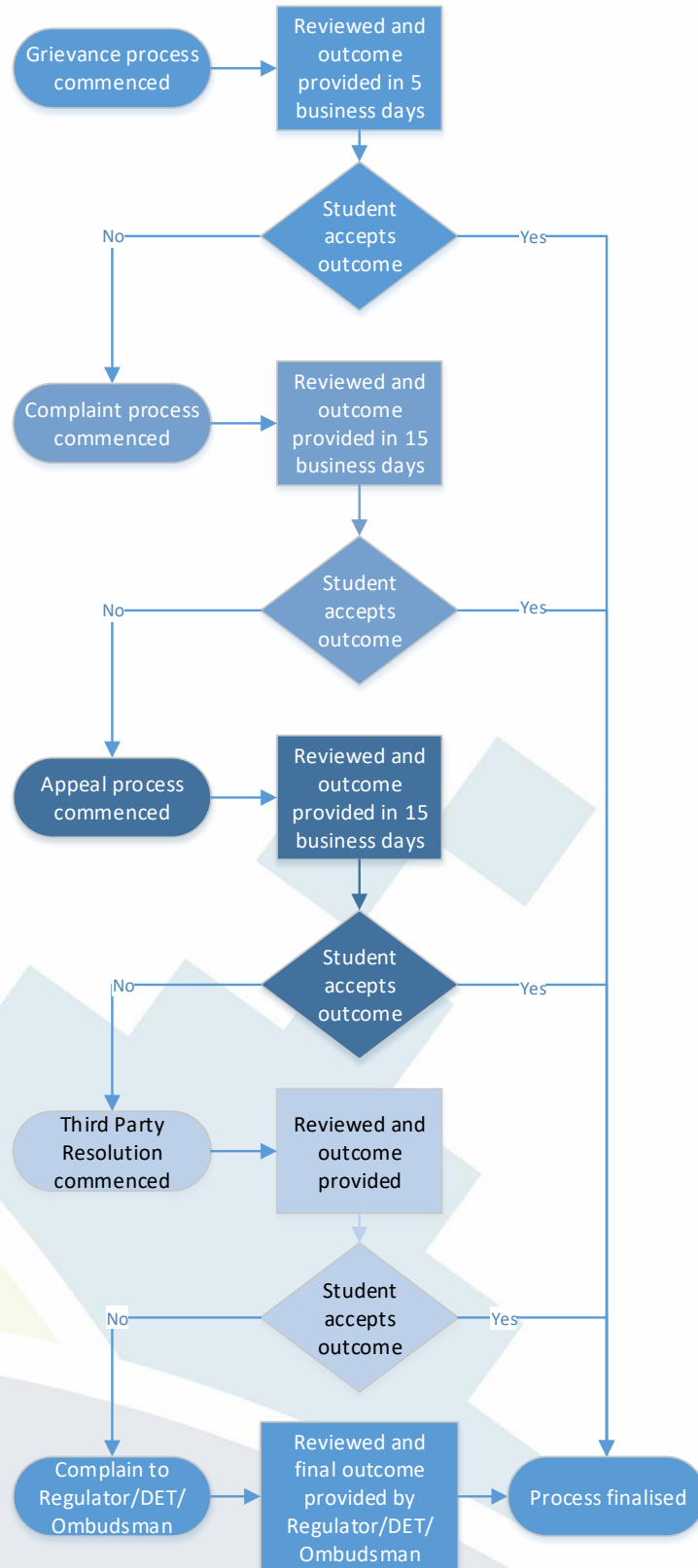
12.1 Key



12.2 The following depicts the grievances, complaints and appeals process if followed in order.

The special circumstances process for debt reversal is a separate process (refer to the VET Student Loans Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VSL1) and VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy (POL_TA_VFH1)), and as such is not depicted in the flow chart.

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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
15/08/2017	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	4.0