

# 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 the 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 business days of receiving the grievance.

All complaints and appeals will be reviewed and a decision communicated in writing within 30 business days of receiving the written complaint or appeal. Assessment appeals will be reviewed and a decision communicated within 15 business days.

Quality keeps a Quality Notification Register which documents all complaints and appeals; as well as their resolution. Outcomes and recommendations from complaints, grievances and appeals will feed into the College's continuous improvement processes.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES

**1.1** There are three types of complaints/grievances within the scope of this policy:

(1) Complaints/grievances of an academic nature:

- [For example]: complaints/grievances about course material, certification, the training methods and progression, and assessment decisions carried out by 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 a third party representing or affiliated with Australis College or another student(s), personal information held by the College or course enrolment.

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

## GRIEVANCES.

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

**1.4** Australis College does not charge fees to submit a grievance.

**1.5** All grievances will be heard, and a decision provided within five 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** 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 (available on the Australis College website)/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.

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 to [quality@australiscollege.edu.au](mailto:quality@australiscollege.edu.au). Quality will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and will forward onto the appropriate staff member to investigate. Student Support will also be provided with a copy of the correspondence.

**1.8** Each party of the complaint may wish to be accompanied by another person throughout the complaint process. Where this occurs, the party that sourced another person to assist will be liable to pay any costs associated.

**1.9** Received complaints will be internally investigated and a decision communicated in writing within 30 business days of receiving the written complaint. Should there be cause to extend this timeframe, the complainant will be advised in writing. 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.

- 1.10** If dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, the complainant may wish to commence the appeal process (refer to [6. Appeals](#)).
- 1.10.1** Students are asked to advise the College within 10 business days of receiving their complaint outcome, of their intention to accept the decision or escalate to the appeal process.
- 1.11** In the event that the College instigates a cancellation of a student’s enrolment under the VET Student Loans scheme; students will have 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.
- 1.12** Students will forfeit their right to access the College’s Complaints, Grievances and Appeals processes where they have been found to breach criminal code as specified in the Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure.

## 2. REGULATORY BODIES

A **regulatory body**, for the purposes of this policy may include the National Regulator, Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, Commonwealth and/or Queensland Training Ombudsman, and/or the Queensland Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

### COMPLAINTS RAISED TO/FROM A REGULATORY BODY.

- 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 a regulatory body.
- 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 the regulatory body investigates the complaint.
- 2.2** The regulatory body 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 await the complaint outcome determined by the regulatory body.

### VET STUDENT LOANS OMBUDSMAN – AUSTRALIS COLLEGE OBLIGATIONS.

- 2.3** The College will comply and cooperate with the VET Student Loans Ombudsman in all matters under their investigation, and in accordance with the Ombudsman Act 1976.
- 2.4** All information and documentation requests will be actioned within communicated timeframes; and any rectifications/recommendations put forward to the College will be acted upon promptly.

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

- 4.1** Under the Standards; 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 Privacy Policy.

## 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, please refer to [9. REVIEW OF A DECISION \(VET STUDENT LOANS AND VET FEE-HELP SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES\)](#).

- 6.2** The College has a three 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 regulatory body 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](mailto: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** Each party of the appeal may wish to be accompanied by another person throughout the appeal process. Where this occurs, the party that sourced another person to assist will be liable to pay any costs associated.

**6.3.3** 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.

**6.4.1** Received appeals will be internally reviewed and a decision communicated in writing (including reasons) within 30 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.

**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** The appellant is not to submit additional evidence to support their competence. The assessment decision will be reviewed against the evidence previously submitted.

**6.5.2** Assessment appeals will be reviewed by an appropriately qualified Assessor(s). Should the issue not be resolved to the student's satisfaction after an 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. Assessment appeals will be internally reviewed and a decision communicated in writing within 15 business days.

**6.6** Students are asked to advise the College within 10 business days of receiving their appeal outcome, of their intention to accept the decision or escalate the appeal process so that the matter can be closed.

**THIRD PARTY/EXTERNAL REVIEW RESOLUTION.**

**6.7** In the event that an external review is being undertaken by a third party; the 30 business day time period may not apply.

**6.8** Under VET Student Loans, the appellant is able to be assisted by, or be accompanied by another party during the third party/external review resolution process. Any related costs will be the responsibility of the student.

**6.9** Where Australis College arranges the external party, there will be no cost to the appellant to put their case forward under VET Student Loans. The third party assigned will be an independent person or body with the required expertise to be able to review the appeal.

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

**6.10** Once a decision has been made by the third party, an outcome, including reasons for that decision will be provided in writing. A copy of this decision will be provided to the student unless done so directly by the third party.

**6.11** 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 REGULATORY BODY.**

**6.12** The final stage of the appeal process is for the student to raise a complaint to a regulatory body.

**6.13** The College will fully cooperate with the process undertaken by the relevant regulatory body.

**7. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND DUE CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**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 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**

**QUALITY NOTIFICATION REGISTER**

**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, and appeals are to be recorded on the company’s internal register – the Quality Notification Register for a period of five years. Access and ability to update this register is restricted.

**STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**8.3** Records of complaint, grievance and appeal communications are to be entered into the student’s training record in the Student Management System.

**8.4** The Complainant may request and be granted access to these records. (Refer to Privacy Policy.)

**9. REVIEW OF A DECISION (VET STUDENT LOANS AND VET FEE-HELP SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES)**

**9.1** Applies only to students under the VET Student Loans and VET FEE-HELP who have had their special circumstances application denied.

- 9.2 Please refer to the Special Circumstances and Review Policy for VET Student Loans Students or the VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy.

## 10. ACCESS TO COMPLAINT/APEAL INFORMATION

- 10.1 The College will provide access to records to all parties involved with the complaint, grievance and/or appeal process being undertaken.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 Recordkeeping systems used by the College to record complaints, grievances and appeals are access-restricted.

## 11. COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND RECORDKEEPING

- 11.1 *For internal use only* - refer to the Communication, Training and Recordkeeping Procedure.

## 12. REFERENCES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS/DEFINITIONS

- 12.1 A list of applicable legislation is detailed within the *legislation tab* in the Quality Management Register.
- 12.2 **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.
- 12.3 **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.
- 12.4 **Appeal** – dissatisfaction with a decision made by Australis College.
- 12.5 **Assessment Appeal** – an appeal against a competency decision determined by an Assessor of the College.
- 12.6 **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.
- 12.7 Student Handbook.
- 12.8 Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedure.
- 12.9 Quality Notification Register.
- 12.10 Quality Notification Register Procedure.
- 12.11 Access and Equity Policy.
- 12.12 Privacy Policy.
- 12.13 Continuous Improvement Policy.
- 12.14 Privacy Policy.
- 12.15 Special Circumstances and Review Policy for VET Student Loans Students.
- 12.16 VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy.
- 12.17 Complaint Form.
- 12.18 Appeal Form.

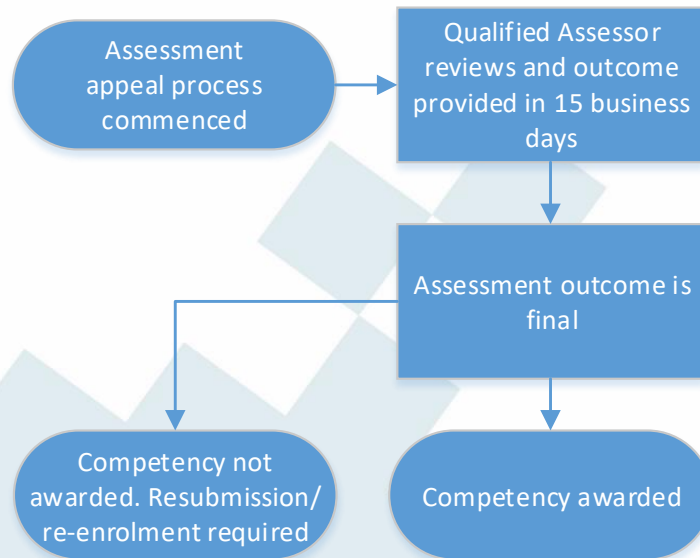
- 12.19 Assessment Appeal Form.
- 12.20 Student Code of Conduct Policy.
- 12.21 Student Code of Conduct Procedure.
- 12.22 Withdrawal, Cancellation and Variation Policy.
- 12.23 Withdrawal, Cancellation and Variation Procedure.

### 13. FLOW CHART

#### 13.1 Key



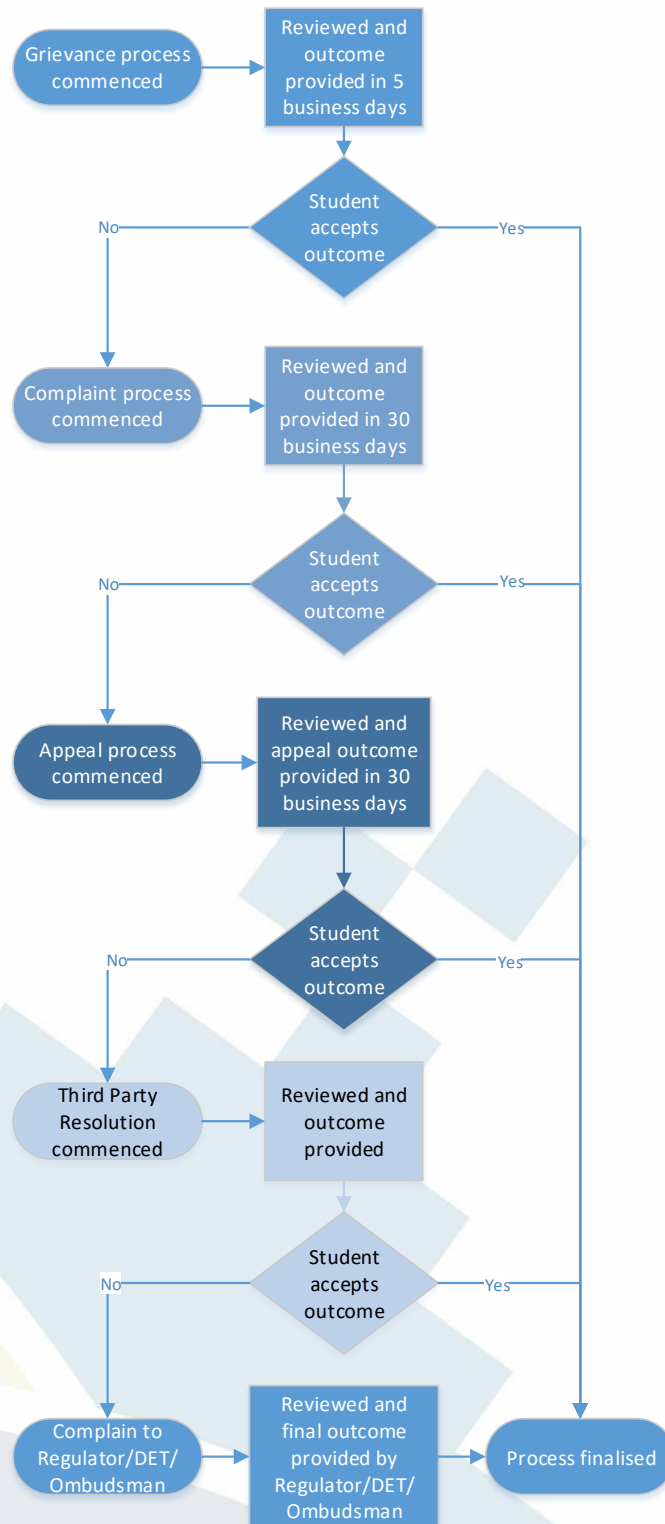
13.2 The following depicts the assessment appeals process.



13.3 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 and VET FEE-HELP Special Circumstances and Review Policy), and as such is not depicted in the flow chart.





## 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 Quality Management Register.

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

Effective 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
07/05/2018	Sharleen Ejlertsen	Quality Officer	5.0
22/08/2018	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	5.1
31/01/2019	Lisa Street	Quality Auditor	5.2