



Mastery Institute Australia

**Complaints and Appeal
Policy and Procedure**

Version 3.9

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1. Terms and Meaning

Institute Name	Mastery Institute Australia
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
RTO standards 2015	Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.7 and 2.8
Complaint	A complaint means a formal expression of dissatisfaction or disapproval about something through verbal or written communication. It's a way for an individual to voice their concerns and work towards finding a solution to the issue/problem.
Complainant	The party (as a plaintiff or petitioner) who makes the complaint in a legal action or proceeding.
Appeal	When a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, s/he has an option to get make an appeal to get the decision reviewed.
Appellant	An appellant is a party (usually the primary applicant) that disagrees with a decision made by the organisation and submits an appeal.
Grievance	Students informally communicate their concerns to the institute via verbal means. These concerns may pertain to training and evaluation, procedures, support services, situations, or individuals within the institute.
Formal appeal	An appeal is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an academic body in charge of making decisions on student progress, assessment, and awards.

2. Purpose

This policy provides a clear description of the complete process that a student or complainant must follow to express their concerns and issues to the institute. The purpose of the institute's complaints and appeal policy and procedure is to show that the institute is committed to addressing any concerns raised by students or staff. This policy provides fair and confidential complaint and appeal processes for all students and helps to manage and respond to allegations relating to the institute's trainers, assessors, staff members, students and/or third-party providing services on the RTO's behalf.

This policy is developed and reviewed following the Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.7 and 2.8, and standard 10 of National Code, 2018 which provides guidelines for how to handle complaints and appeals fairly and effectively. The policy aims to create a positive learning and working environment by allowing issues to be raised and resolved fairly and transparently, while also promoting ongoing improvement.

3. Scope

The scope of complaints and appeal policy and procedure is comprehensive enough to cover a wide range of issues while remaining specific to provide clear guidance on how to handle issues. This policy is flexible to adapt to changes in the organisation or the external environment, such as changes in regulation, laws and emerging risks or new technologies.

The types of issues that can be addressed are complaints, grievances, appeals against decisions, compliance, safety, security, etc. The process of complaint or appeal includes the documentation required, the channels for communication, and the timeline for resolution.

4. Policy Statement

This policy statement is adhered to with the aid of the institute and follows all stages of the complaints coping with the procedures.

- All institute students have the rights to challenge the outcome of a problem and lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the resolution of the informal complaint that they undertook in the first instance.
- Even though the institute offers quality resources and aims to provide all its activities to the students with quality learning experiences; the institute recognises that there are occasions when a student may feel dissatisfied.
- This policy focuses on the vision and values of the institute and should be read and understood in the context of a statement.
- This policy outlines clause 6 of the RTO Standards 2015, in its approach to managing complaints, and the process of handling student grievances.
- Students will be made aware of this policy prior to the enrolment completion.
- As part of this policy, all the complaints of the institute's students will be answered in a confident, prompt, fair, and objective manner.
- The institute ensures that complaints and appeals are covered and handled and are used to find practical options for continuous improvement and the establishment of a system to prevent the occurrence of such issues in the future.
- As part of the institute's dedication to supplying a truthful and fair student experience, the following complaint handling, and appeals device has been developed and is freely and readily reachable and certainly defined to all institute students and potential institute students.
- The institute will acknowledge students' complaints and will guide them to the external appeal if the students are not satisfied with the decision or outcome of the internal appeal.
- In this policy, the institute handles all complaints following the principles of fair, constructive justice, in a prompt manner. Before the institute makes any decision about the complaint, the complainant and any respondent will be allowed to present their case.
- The institute will provide in writing the most favourable outcome of the complaint and appeal as soon as is practicable.



5. Procedure

1. Informal Complaints

The complainants and staff members will resolve the complaints through the process outlined for informal complaints.

a. Filling an informal complaint

- Complainants will directly notify the staff member(s) whom they have an issue or grievance with (relevant staff members). The notification can be in various forms such as verbal communication and/or written communication.
- The relevant staff member(s) who receive the notification will inform all relevant parties who are affected and related to the issue of a meeting time when they can discuss and present their case. This includes complainants.
- In the meeting, the staff members will discuss the issue verbally with the relevant parties involved to resolve it at an initial stage. All relevant parties will be given equal opportunities to present their situation.
- The relevant staff member(s) will provide a decision to all relevant parties which is fair, equitable and impartial.

b. Informal complaint's decision or escalation

The complainant may refer to the relevant staff members (as stated above) based on the nature of their complaints and appeals within a timeframe of seven (10) working days of the issue coming into existence. ¹The complainant may choose to notify the relevant authority verbally or in writing.

The relevant staff members will be required to gather the details of the issues and investigate the points of concern of the parties involved. Hence, the relevant staff members will be required to provide a decision to the complainants within ten (10) working days of receiving the informal complaint unless there is any special circumstance. If the complainant is satisfied with the decision, then the relevant staff members will be required to retain the evidence of the complaints and its decision for future reference. If the issue cannot be resolved or the complainant is not satisfied with the decision, then the complainant will be given the option to follow the procedure of "Formal Complaints".

2. Formal Complaints

- The relevant staff member(s) will assist complainants in filing formal complaints and appeal form if the complainants are not satisfied with the decision. The submission of the form will be at support@mastery.edu.au
- After the institute receives submission of the formal complaints and appeals form, the institute will provide the complainants with the appropriate medium or personnel who will

¹ If the complainants notify the staff members later than 10 working days of the issue coming into existence, the staff members may reject the informal complaints and refer to the formal complaint process.



assist them in resolving the problem as per the decision. The appropriate medium and personnel are listed below:

- If the complainants have issues regarding the qualification including enrolment, they will be referred to the Student Support Officer.
- If the complainants have issues regarding students at the institute, they will be required to contact the Support Officer.
- If the complainants have issues regarding trainers and assessors, they will be required to contact the Academic/Training Manager.
- If the complainants have issues regarding their personal safety, well-being, and/or personal issues, they will be required to contact the Student Support Officer. In cases of serious complaints, they will be referred to the MIA nominated Counsellor.
- If the complainants have issues regarding the institute staff, they will be required to contact the General Manager.

The list of staff members (e.g., registrar, academic/training manager, general manager) above is referred to as the administration team in formal complaint process.

a. Filling a formal complaint

In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the informal complaint, then the complainant will have the option to file a formal complaint in writing. The complainant will be required to complete and submit the COMPLAINT AND APPEAL FORM ²to the contact details provided above.

The complainant will be required to provide some necessary information such as:

- The main issue or concern for which the formal complaint is filed.
- The relevant parties are involved and affected by the issue.
- The supporting individual with the complainant if required.
- The decision of the informal complaint (if applicable).

b. Processing a formal complaint

- Once the formal complaint is received, the administration team will, within ten (10) working days, will be required to send a written notification to relevant parties for a meeting to discuss the issues in detail and the proposed solution (if applicable).
- All the parties will be given equal opportunities to justify their situation within the meeting. The administration team will note all the important points which may assist in deciding.
- The administration team will further investigate the issue and will be required to provide the decision formal complaint submission. Once the decisions are made, the outcomes of **the formal complaint** case are required to be communicated in the

² Refer to the complaint and appeal form.



written form within ten (10) working days.

- The administration team will check that the necessary adjustments have been made as per the decision provided to the complainant. If not, then they will follow up with relevant parties to ensure the implementation of the required adjustments as per the decision.
- The written evidence of the decision provided to the complainant will be retained with the institute for future reference. The administration team will be required to record the records of all details in formal complaint cases including their outcomes in the complaint and appeal register. The general manager is expected to ensure that the institute maintains records of all formal complaint and appeal forms including their outcomes.³
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of formal complaints, the administration team will provide the option of "Internal Appeal".

3. Internal Appeal

a. Filing an internal appeal

In cases where the complainant's issue cannot be resolved or does not provide a satisfactory solution through the decision of the formal complaint, then the complainant will be provided with an option to file an internal appeal. The complainant will be required to file an internal appeal within 20 working days ⁴of the formal complaint's decision to the CEO and/or to the general manager.

The complainant will be required to provide the following information:

- The Complaints and Appeal Form was completed by the complainant at the formal complaint process.
- A copy of the formal complaint's decision is to be attached to the form.
- Reason for filing the internal appeal.
- Supporting evidence.

b. Processing an internal appeal

- The CEO, general manager or personnel delegated by the CEO (delegated staff) will review the internal appeal filed by the complainant.
- The CEO, general manager or delegated staff will check if any new relevant evidence related to the issue has been found or not; if any relevant fact/evidence/situation has been ignored during the formal complaint's decision-making process; any unfair, partial decision has been provided for the previous formal complaint or not.

³ Refer to Appendix.

⁴ If the student files an internal appeal after 20 working days of the formal complaint's decision, then the relevant staff member may refer the student to the external appeal process mentioned in section (4) below.



- The CEO, general manager or delegated staff may enquire more information from the relevant parties if required and investigate the issue thoroughly again. The relevant parties may be required to provide additional evidence and/or documents if required. If The CEO, general manager or delegated staff feels that a meeting is required with the relevant parties, then a notification for the meeting will be required to be sent with meeting details to the relevant parties for investigation.
- After investigation, the CEO, general manager or delegated staff will provide the final decision in writing to the complainant within ten (10) working days of receiving the outcomes of the internal appeal. The CEO, general manager or delegated staff will provide a written outcome of decision. The decision may have changes as compared to the previous formal complaint's decision or no further action might be required (the previous formal complaint's decision will be effective, when no more actions are required for the internal appeal).
- The administration team will inform the relevant parties about the decision, so that they can make necessary adjustments as per the decision provided to the complainant.
- The written evidence of the decision provided to the complainant will be retained with the institute for future reference. The general manager is expected to ensure that the institute maintains records of all information regarding internal appeal cases including their outcomes.⁵
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the internal appeal decision, then the administration team will inform the complainant about the option of "External Appeal", which they can access within 10 working days of the decision of the internal appeal.

4. External Appeal

a. Filing an external appeal

In cases where the complainant's issue cannot be resolved through formal complaints and internal appeal or does not provide a satisfactory decision, then the complainant will be provided with an option to file an independent external appeal. The complainant can appeal the previous decision (of internal appeal). The details will be provided by the institute.

b. Details of external body

The details of the external body are as follows:

1. For Domestic Students:
Queensland Ombudsman
Phone: (07) 3005 7000
Website: <https://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au/>
2. For International Students:
Commonwealth Ombudsman

⁵ Refer to appendix



Phone: 1300 362 072

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

The institute will be required to implement the decision provided by the external body within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

6. Monitoring the complaints and appeal process

- The CEO, general manager, administration manager and/or delegated staff once every year will review the complaint and appeal process.
- Based on the problems occurred during complaint and appeal process, the CEO, general manager, administration manager and/or delegated staff will propose necessary modifications in the process and policy. They will review many factors such as:
 - the number of pending complaints and appeals with the institute,
 - the recurrence of similar cases,
 - number of staffs deployed for handling the complaints and appeals,
 - the number of students enrolled at the institute.

The hey will discuss the proposed changes. The necessary changes will be implemented after approval from the CEO.

- The CEO, general manager, administration manager and/or delegated staff will inform the registrar, student support officer, trainers and assessors, and students about any modification in the process of handling the complaints and appeals. In case of any changes in the process, the compliance team will provide relevant authorities with a new copy of the Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedures which will have the updated information.
- The administration manager will also inform about the date from which the new process and policy will be effective.

7. Continuous improvement

In the event that the outcomes and corrective actions of formal complaint and internal appeal can be used for eliminating or mitigating the likelihood of reoccurrence and lead to continuous improvement, general manager is expected to record such corrective actions in the continuous improvement register⁶. This will assist the institute in making necessary adjustments and avoiding the issue from becoming persistent.

The registrar, compliance team, students, trainers and assessors, student support officer, administration team, administration manager, and other institute staff members can provide feedback for complaints and appeal system to the CEO. The suggestions will be evaluated by all

⁶ Refer to the MIA Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure V3.9

relevant parties and the best possible outcome will be utilised in improving the complaints and appeal system of the institute.

Appendix

If any staff member delegated to resolve the complaint and appeal is not able to process or finalise it within 60 working days, then after the completion of the timeframe, they must:

- a. Inform the complainant in writing with reasons of why the complaint could not be finalised within 60 working days.
- b. Notify the complainant or appellant on a regular basis of the progress of the complaint or appeal.

P&P Version Control	
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Responsibility	CEO and Compliance Team
Reference	Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.7. Effective feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement. Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.8. Effective appeal processes are available where decisions of the RTO or a third party adversely impact a VET student.