

6.0 Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure

1. Policy

This policy/procedure supports the RTO to provide a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned. This includes any allegations involving the conduct of

- the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- a learner of the RTO

All complaints and appeals received by Western Polytechnic Institute Pty Ltd trading as Australian Pacific Institution of Technology ("APIT") will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.

Despite all efforts of APIT to provide satisfactory services to its students and clients, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The following procedures provide students and clients the opportunity to have any issues relating to a substantiated complaint or appeal resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties involved. This complaints and appeals process will be at no cost to the student or client (unless referred to a third party; see procedure for more details).

2. Procedure

The complaints and appeals policy and procedure and applicable form is made available to all students, potential students, and clients by directly contacting the RTO, through the RTO's reception, and within the student information handbook.

2.1 General Complaints

Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the issue. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue and the complainant's issue. Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a complainant has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed:

- Any student, potential student, or third party may submit a formal complaint to APIT with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for accessing the internal complaints and appeals process.

- Complainants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies / persons at any point of the complaint and appeals process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's costs unless authorised by the CEO.
- Any person wishing to submit a formal complaint or appeal can do so by completing the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' and state their case providing as many details as possible. This form can be gained by contacting Student Administration at the RTO, or through the RTO website.
- All formally submitted complaints or appeals are submitted to the Student Administration. Complaints are to include the following information:
 - Submission date of complaint
 - Name of complainant;
 - Nature of complaint ;
 - Date of the event which lead to the complaint
 - Attachments (if applicable)
- Once a formal complaint is received it is to be entered into APIT's 'Complaints and Appeals Register' which is monitored by the CEO regularly. The information to be contained and updated within the register is as follows:
 - Submission date of complaint
 - Name of complainant
 - Description of complaint / appeal
 - Determined Resolution
 - Date of Resolution
- A complainant may be assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the issue or complaint throughout the process at all times.
- Training Manager will acknowledge the receipt of complaint and will notify the complainant in writing within 10 working days from receiving the complaint.
- Training manager will contact the parties involved to record the events details in complaints and appeals form.
- The Training Manager shall then refer the matter to the appropriate staff to resolve, or make a decision on the complaint within 10 working days and keep the complainant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint. In the unlikely event that the complaint is not finalised within 60 calendar days, the RTO shall ensure that the complainant shall be provided reasons for the delay, and will be regularly kept informed and updated of the progress of the matter.

- Once a decision has been reached the Training Manager shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing. Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the complainant shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal. To appeal a decision the RTO must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal. Complainants are referred to the appeals procedure.
- The Training Manager shall ensure that the RTO will act immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, the registered provider must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required, and advise the complainant of the outcome.
- Copies of all complain/ appeals documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' by Student Administration and on the students file / complainants file. All records for complaints will be secured in filing cabinet with restricted access. Complaints and appeals registers will also be kept securely in filing cabinet. Records relating to complaint handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.
- All complaints should be dealt in a professional and ethical manner. Outcome of complaints and appeals will be recorded in complaints and appeals register. All corrective actions where applicable will be recorded in complaints and appeals register.
- A systematic record of complaints and appeals and their outcomes is maintained to enable APIT to monitor the progress of complaints and appeals and to identify issues about which there are repeated complaints or appeals. APIT will ensure that enough detail about each complaint or appeal is captured to allow an appropriate level of analysis. Information about complaints is recorded in the student complaints register and information about appeals is recorded in the student appeals register.
- Register of issues subject to complaints and appeals is maintained by training manager Information about each issue subject to complaints and appeals is recorded in the register of issues subject to complaints and appeals. This register will contain information about the issue, the parties involved, and the resolution. There is provision in the register for multiple entries for each issue.
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- Training manager will ensure the currency of the complaints, appeals and issues registers. The Student Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that the complaints, appeals and issues registers are current. All three registers are considered at each meeting of the APIT senior management and form an important part of APIT's continuous improvement program.

- APIT Endeavour to Improve policies and procedures in response to complaints or appeals received by the training organisation. Recommendations of actions to be taken in response to complaints or appeals are recorded in the minutes of the APIT's management meetings. The CEO will issue instructions for actions to be taken to improve policies and procedures in response to the recommendations.
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- Training Manager will maintain Policies and procedures improvement register. Information about all improvements to policies and procedures is recorded in the policies and procedures improvement register. Improvements resulting from responses to complaints or appeals are identified as such.
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- Systemic problems are defined as being caused by failures in the course structure, delivery and assessment systems or organisational policies or procedures. Complaints or appeals will be categorised so that systemic and recurring problems can be identified and rectified. This information is available from the register of issues subject to complaints and appeals.
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- Student Services Manager will prepare Complaints and appeals monthly summary report. The Student Services Manager is responsible for producing a monthly summary report of complaints and appeals for consideration by the quarterly compliance meeting
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- Following Information about complaint or appeals management will be included:
 - number of complaint or appeals received
 - amount of time taken to resolve the complaint or appeals
 - Service improvements made as a result of the complaint or appeals received.
- There is direct relationship of complaints and appeals to continuous improvement of training organisation policies and procedures. Frequently, the complaints handling process will expose weaknesses in the training and assessment or administrative system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that complaints received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement.

2.2 Appealing a Decision

All complainants have the right to appeal decisions made by APIT where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a complainant may appeal a decision made by APIT may include:

- Assessments conducted
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment
- Or any other conclusion / decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by APIT in the first instance.

- To activate the appeals process the complainant is to complete a 'Complaints and Appeals Form' which is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the complainant feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained and help and support with this process can be gained from Student Administration Department.
- The Training Manager shall then determine the validity of the appeal and organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.
- The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.
- The Training Manager shall ensure that APIT acts on any substantiated appeal.
- Where an appeal has been lodged it will be defined into one of the following categories and the appropriate procedures followed:

General appeals

- Where a complainant has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify APIT 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 Student Administration and they shall ensure the details of the appeal are added to the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.
- The Training Manager 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 complainant shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. The complainant shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The complainant is required to notify APIT if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

Assessment appeals

- Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment they are required to notify their Trainer & Assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate the Trainer & Assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The Trainer & 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 by submitting a written letter outlining their reasons for the appeal. They shall lodge this with student administrations department and the appeal shall be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register.'
- The Training Manager shall be notified and shall seek details from the Trainer & 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 Trainer & Assessor appointed by APIT.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. The student shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify APIT if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process

2.3 External Appeals and Further Information:

External Appeals:

In addition to the above internal processes, if students enrolled with APIT are still dissatisfied with the decision of the RTO, they may wish to seek legal advice or submit an application with an external dispute resolution process by a relevant body appointed for this purpose (See below for contact details).

Where the RTO is informed that the student has accessed external appeals processes:

- The RTO will maintain a student's enrolment until the external appeal process is finalised.
- The RTO will comply with the findings of the external appeals process.
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the complainant APIT shall follow the required action and recommendation from the relevant external appeals organisation to satisfy the student's grievance as soon as practicable. The decision of the independent mediator is final and any further action the student wishes to take is outside the RTO's policies and procedures. The student shall be referred to the appropriate government agencies and this information can be gained from the CEO.
- All records and correspondence in relation to an external appeal shall be maintained with the initial complaint and internal appeal documentation within the 'complaints and appeals register' and the student file for a minimum of 5 years.

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) is a free dispute resolution and mediation service funded by the Victorian Government and may be able to assist resolve any outstanding complaint or issue with the complaint handling process. Further details and office locations for this service are available from <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>

Organisation:	Disputes Settlement Centre of Victoria (http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/)
Contact Point:	Islamabad Campus: Plot No.359, Street No.05 1-9/3 Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 44000

Further information

If, after the RTO's internal complaints and appeals processes have been completed, you still believe the RTO is breaching or has breached its legal requirements, you can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the online complaint form:
<https://rms.asqa.gov.au/registration/newcomplaint.aspx>
 (ASQA website: www.asqa.gov.au)

Except in exceptional circumstances, you must attach evidence to your complaint form showing:

- that you have followed your RTO's formal complaints procedure, and
- The RTO's response.

ASQA's processes require you to identify yourself to ASQA as a complainant, although you may request that your identity is kept confidential throughout any investigation that ASQA undertakes.

6.1 Complaints and Appeals Form

The following is a cover sheet to support your complaint/ appeal. It is to outline your complaint / appeal and you are to attach any supporting documentation.

Please indicate what your grievance is (tick the appropriate box below):

Complaint

Initial notification of your dissatisfaction or an issue that has occurred

Appeal

Application to have the outcome of a complaint reviewed due to dissatisfaction with the process that has been followed in dealing with the initial complaint or to have an assessment decision reviewed.

Date of submission:	
Name of Complainant:	
Detailed Description Of Complaint / Appeal: (Include an outline of your complaint/appeal with details of dates and people involved)	
Signature:	
Date:	

6.2 Complaints and Appeals Register

The Complaints & Appeal Register may be kept in hard copy (per the table below) or through APiT's online cloud based VETnet.

Date of complaint or appeal	Complainant's name	Complainant relationship with RTO	Description of complaint	Staff member managing complaint	Outcome and Date complaint resolved