

Policy Name:	Complaints Handling and Appeals Policy
Document Number:	HR5.1.06
Approved by:	College Management Committee
Last Approval Date:	September 2019
Review Date:	September 2021
Audience:	All UQ College Staff UQC Students
Contact Officer:	Manager Business Development
Related Policies:	RTO Management Policy; Records Management Policy; Continuous Improvement (VET) Policy
Related Documents:	Have Your Say Form Have Your Say Register Have Your Say Completion Form Records Management Procedure Continuous Improvement (VET)
Legislation	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 RTO Standards 6.1-6.6

1. Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that complaints are recorded and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.

The policy and procedures reflect, practically and philosophically, the expectations and responsibilities of both the College and its students when dealing with grievances or appeals.

2. Policy Scope/Coverage

This complaints policy will manage allegations involving the conduct of:

- UQ College Staff, its teachers, lecturers, trainers, assessors, and other staff
- Stakeholders and others
- a third-party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff (where this may be relevant to its operations)
- students of the UQ College.

3. Definitions

Complaint - is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action or service of the Registered Training Organisation.

Grievance - is a level of complaint handled informally at the local level. The information and level of documentation about the grievance should be such to ensure all parties have a record of the nature of the grievance and its agreed resolution and the record is safely stored.

4. POLICY

UQ College will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaints and appeals process. All formal complaints and appeals will be heard and decided on within 60 calendar days of receiving the written complaint or appeal. If UQ College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter. If the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal, a review by an independent party will be provided if requested.

The policy will be provided on the UQ College website with information about how to submit a complaint and/or Appeal and will be supported by clear procedures for handling complaints and appeals.

A student who lodges a grievance that is frivolous and/or vexatious, will have their grievance dismissed or discontinued. Such conduct may be considered as misconduct and investigated under the College's Student Integrity & Misconduct Policy.

The Manager, Business Development will maintain a secure Complaints and Appeals Register which documents all formal complaints, appeals and their outcomes.

Note: If the complaint is regarding student misconduct, refer to the Students Integrity & Misconduct Policy

4.1 Principles

The following principles guide the grievance resolution processes:

- a. natural justice and procedural fairness will be adopted at every stage of the complaint process.
- b. grievances will be addressed as close as possible to the source of the dissatisfaction.
- c. if the complainant is a student, their enrolment will be maintained while the complaint and appeal process is ongoing. However, this does not entitle a student to enrol in units or qualifications for which they are not eligible.
- d. a complainant will not suffer any reprisal as a result of lodging a grievance or an appeal.
- a. a student attending an interview associated with resolving their grievance or appeal may be accompanied by a support person. This person must not be a legal representative or a currently practicing solicitor or barrister.
- b. a complainant may choose to have their grievance reviewed by an external complaint handling process. The College will not continue further consideration of matters where the process options have been exhausted or where the student has taken their grievance to an external agency.

4.2 Procedural Fairness

With regard to complaint resolution at UQ College, procedural fairness (natural justice) requires that a respondent to a complaint must be provided with:

- a. sufficient details of the complaint to enable the respondent to formulate a response.
- b. information about the process by which the matter is to be resolved, and
- c. opportunity to put their case and respond to the complaint.

In addition:

- a. any decision-maker must act impartially and without bias.
- b. all relevant submissions and evidence must be considered.
- c. irrelevant matters must not be taken into account; and
- d. the complaint must be dealt with in a timely manner.

4.3 Complaints

UQ College will record and acknowledge complaints and ensure they are dealt with fairly, efficiently and without bias.

These complaints may involve the conduct of the College staff, teachers, lecturers, trainers, assessors or other staff; a third party providing services on the College’s behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff or a learner of the College.

All formal complaints will be heard and decided within 60 calendar days of receiving the written complaint. If UQ College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

If the processes fail to resolve the complaint, a review by an independent party will be provided if requested. In the case of a student enrolled in a UQ course, the independent party will be from UQ.

4.4 Appeals

A complainant has the right to appeal a complaint decision which must be submitted in writing to the College within 20 business days of the appellant being notified of the decision (including assessment decisions) made by UQ College. All appeals are lodged in writing to the Manager, Business Development. Staff may assist an appellant in lodging an appeal.

All formal appeals will be heard and decided within 60 calendar days of receiving the written appeal. If UQ College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the appeal, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

If the processes fail to resolve the appeal, a review by an independent party will be provided if requested. In the case of a student enrolled in a UQ course, the independent party will be from UQ.

4.5 Continuous Improvement

Any substantiated complaints, as well as the complaints and appeals policy, will be reviewed as part of the continuous improvement processes and appropriate corrective action taken to prevent or reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence.

4.6 Confidentiality

All matters pertaining to complaints and appeals will be securely protected and treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Version History				
Review Period:		2 years from date of last approval		
Version Number:	Approved by:	Approval Date:	Effective Date:	Sections Modified:
D1				New policy developed August 2016
1.0	CMC	10/10/2017	10/10/2017	Modified to make more succinct and remover ‘Responsibilities’ section Approval of new policy
1.0	CMC	10/10/2019		Reviewed
2.0		September 2019		Reviewed Policy to legislation and regulator

