



## Student Complaints and Appeals

Document # CFU_TO_PP1	Last edited date: 31/03/2025	Authorised by: Chief Executive Officer
Effective date: 31/03/2025	Next review date: 01/06/2026	Page 1 of 6

### 1. Australian Qualifications and Training Framework (AQTF) Standards

The Centre for U is a Registered Training Organisation, committed to meeting the following AQTF Condition and/or Standard:

- 2.7: The applicant has a defined complaints and appeals process that will ensure learner's complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

VRQA Guideline

- Guideline 2.7 An RTO must have a complaints policy to manage and respond to 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.
  - student of the RTO.

### 2. Complaints and appeals

This policy provides a complaints and appeals system for students enrolled at The Centre for U.

### 3. Purpose

- a) To ensure a complaints mechanism exists that is efficient and effective, allowing for student concerns and objections to be handled transparently, fairly and consistently.
- b) To encourage and foster open communication and a fair appeals management process for students.

### 4. Scope

This policy applies to students that are currently enrolled at The Centre for U.

This policy addresses the complaints and appeals resolution procedure.

*Definitions*

- *Complaint* - means a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by.

- *Appeal* - means a request for a decision made by The Centre for U to be reviewed.
- *Services* - means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support.

## 5. Nature of complaints and appeals

### Complaints:

- Complaints may be made in relation to any of The Centre for U's services and activities such as:
  - the application and enrolment process
  - marketing information
  - the quality of training and assessment provided.
  - training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements.
  - the way someone has been treated.
  - the actions of another student
- The Centre for U responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
  - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
  - Any third-party providing Services on behalf of The Centre for U
  - Any student or client of The Centre for U.

### Appeals:

- An appeal is a request for a decision made by The Centre for U to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
  - course admissions
  - refund assessments
  - response to a complaint
  - assessment outcomes / results
  - other general decisions made by The Centre for U.

## 6. Responsibilities

- Centre for U staff have the following key accountabilities to contribute to fair and just processes.
  - Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
    - Manages complaints and appeals and provides the final decision (internally).
    - Where complaints or appeals escalates, the CEO will convene meetings to support the effective resolution for all parties.
    - Review reports, establish trends and make recommendations from the issues arising from complaints.

#### Training Administrator

- Directs students to the complaints and appeals policy and procedure where relevant.
- Administers the complaints and appeals process.
- Receives, acknowledges and logs all complaints and appeals in the relevant register.
- Contributes to documentation, confidential management and storage of complaints and appeals.
- Provide complaints and appeals reports to the CEO and Compliance Manager.

#### Compliance Manager

- Quality assures the handling of complaints and appeals to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant quality standards.
- Contributes to investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals, providing suggestions to the CEO.
- Ensures documentation, confidential management and storage of complaints and appeals.
- Ensures that improvements to systemic issues identified as a result of complaints and appeals are actioned and monitored.

#### Educators

- Directs students to the complaints and appeals policy and procedure where relevant.
- Ensure students feel safe and confident to lodge a complaint or an appeal at any time.
- Participates in relevant meeting assist with effective resolution for all parties.
- May conduct assessment reviews for assessment decisions made by another Educator that are subject to appeal.

### **7. Principles of Resolution**

- The guiding principles when dealing with complaints and appeals at the Centre are, sensitivity, confidentiality and accountability. The Centre commits to procedural fairness, whereby all complaints and appeals are treated fairly and without bias. The Centre ensures that complaints and appeals:
  - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
  - Are dealt with promptly and professionally.
  - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take action to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
  - The Centre for U will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
  - Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, The Centre for U will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaint or appeals handling process is ongoing.

## **8. Formal Internal Complaints and Appeals Process**

- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or another written format and sent to the Training Administrator.
- Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable The Centre for U to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
  - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
  - Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal.
  - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
  - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- Your complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 5 Business days of receipt.

## **9. Timeframes for Resolution**

- Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer.
- In the event of delays to a response or resolution, the Centre will inform the complainant of the delay in writing, outlining the reasons for the delay, and will update the student weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

## **10. Resolution of Complaints and Appeals**

- In the event of an investigation, the complainant and respondent are encouraged to bring a representative or support person to attend face-to-face meetings. Where a complaint investigation takes place, the student is to continue coming to class unless otherwise directed.
- If a complaint poses an immediate risk to an individual or the Centre, it will be dealt with immediately, as much as practically possible.
- Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Where a third-party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO is involved, they will be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task.
- Throughout the complaints process, all correspondence is stored on the shared drive, including, but not limited to, notes concerning phone calls, emails and meetings.

- In the case where an individual is not satisfied with their complaint resolution, they can appeal the decision.
- False, malicious and vexatious complaints will not be tolerated at the Centre. Where a complaint is found to be inappropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.
- At any stage, students may withdraw their complaint or appeal.

### 11. Independent Parties

- The Centre for U acknowledges that in cases where the complaint or appeal can't be resolved internally there may be a need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review the matter.
- Where the complainant or appellant requests an independent review costs associated with this review will be covered the complainant / appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by The Centre for U.
- Complainants and appellants can find an appropriate independent party by calling the Resolution Institute on 02 9251 3366 or by searching the following directory, according to their locality and area of concern:  
[https://www.resolution.institute/Web/Shared\\_Content/Profiles/Member-Directory/Member-Directory.aspx](https://www.resolution.institute/Web/Shared_Content/Profiles/Member-Directory/Member-Directory.aspx)
- The Centre for you will cooperate fully with independent parties involved in reviews.
- The CEO (or delegate) will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

### 12. External Complaint Avenues

- Complaints in relation to nationally recognised or 'accredited' training can also be made via the following avenues:

#### **National Training Complaints Hotline:**

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- Phone: 13 38 73, Monday– Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- Email: [ntch@education.gov.au](mailto:ntch@education.gov.au)
- For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: <https://www.dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline>

#### **Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA):**

Complainants may also complain to The Centre for U's registering body, Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in relation to nationally recognised training, or our 'accredited courses.

VRQA can investigate complaints about The Centre for U's nationally recognised training, or 'accredited courses only. In relation to:

- the quality of our training and assessment
- our marketing and advertising practices
- an alleged contravention by the RTO of this Act or the regulations
- an alleged contravention by the RTO of the RTO Standards.

If the complaint does not fall within VRQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you contact the agency responsible as listed on their website below.

Please refer to the following webpage below before making a complaint to VRQA:

<https://www2.vrqa.vic.gov.au/make-complaint>

Note: VRQA may not be able to investigate complaints if they do not include evidence that they have already exhausted our formal internal complaints and appeals process as mentioned above.

## 13. Procedures

### 13.1 Complaints and Appeals Resolution Process

- The following steps must be taken when handling complaints and appeals:
  - Prior to making a formal complaint, The Centre for U encourage students to try and resolve the issue by approaching the person and/or the Centre staff to discuss the situation first, however if the student is not comfortable doing this, they will be supported in lodging a formal complaint.
  - A formal complaint is submitted and received by the Training Administrator using a *Complaints or Appeals Form*.
  - Within 5 business days, the Training Administrator is to:
    - Email the complainant that the complaint or appeal has been received and will be reviewed and assessed, with a response within 30 business days of lodging the complaint
    - Log the complaint in the *Complaints and Appeals Register*.
    - Forwards the complaint form to the CEO and Compliance Manager
  - The CEO and Compliance Manager will assess the complaint or appeal and investigate the matter with a view to finding a suitable resolution as soon as practicable. This may be in writing, over the phone, or face-to-face. Complainants or Appelants may have a support person assist them in this process.
  - Further details may be requested during this stage from the complainant, respondent or other involved parties. If the matter is in relation to a third-party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO, the third party should be involved in the resolution of the appeal.
  - Assessment Appeals:
    - In the case of appeals against assessment decisions, the original assessment decision will be reviewed by having an assessor independent of the original decision, mark the assessment task again.
    - The assessment decision made during the appeals process will be considered the actual assessment outcome for the task.

- The CEO will respond in writing to the complainant (and other party/s if relevant) with the outcome/resolution to the matter. The written response to the complainant will outline:
  - The RTO's understanding of the complaint
  - The steps taken to investigate and resolve the complaint
  - Decisions made about resolution, with reasons for the decisions made
  - Areas that have been identified as possible causes of the complaint and improvements to be recommended
  - Their right to independent review and or to access the appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the process.
  - External agencies where they can escalate Complaints (as above)

### 13.2 - Update and Review Records and Processes

- For all internal and external the CEO will provide details so that the Compliance Manager can:
  - Update the Complaints and Appeals Register so it includes the outcome of the complaint and any improvements to be made as an outcome..
  - Keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student or staff file (where relevant).
  - Discuss the complaints process and its outcome at the next management meeting to consider whether there are any improvements to be made to prevent recurrence.
  - Ensure improvement actions identified are carried out and their impacts on quality monitored.

### 14.1 Responses to external complaints or appeal

- Where an external party is reviewing the matter The Centre for U will respond and fully cooperate with the external party, providing information requested in accordance with the Centre for U's Privacy Policy.
- The complainant/appellant may request for an independent party (mediator) to be involved in the process. Where this is requested by the appellant, they will bear the costs associated. Additionally, The Centre for U may decide to call upon an independent mediator to assist in resolving the issue where a decision cannot be reached internally. This will be at The Centre for U's cost.
- The independent person/organisation will inform the appellant in writing of their resolution.
- The independent person/organisation decision will be final. Any further action taken by the student is at the student's expense.

### 15. Update and Review Records and Processes

- For all internal and external appeals, the CEO will provide details so that the Compliance Manager can:
  - Update the *Complaints and Appeals Register* so it includes the outcome of the appeal and any improvements to be made as an outcome.
  - Keep a copy of the appeal and supporting documents in the Appeals file and in the student or staff file (where relevant).

- Discuss the appeal and its outcome at the next management meeting to consider whether there are any improvements to be made to prevent recurrence.

## 16. Publication

This policy and procedure will be published on the Centre for U's Website.

## 17. Related Documents/Forms

Document/Form	Storage
Complaints Form	SharePoint
Appeals Form	SharePoint
Complaints and Appeals Register	SharePoint
Continuous Improvement Policy	SharePoint
Continuous Improvement Strategy	SharePoint
Code of Conduct - Students	SharePoint
Privacy Policy	SharePoint

## 18. Document Control Table

Version	Description	Date
v0.1	First draft developed	21/08/18
v1.0	Authorise document and made effective	06/03/20
V2.0	Reviewed and updated	17/03/20
V3.0	Reviewed policy and made significant changes (BLG)	01/08/2022
V4.0	Reviewed policy as a result Audit findings . Combined Assessment appeals and refined wording(JH)	31/03/2025

End of Document