

GRIEVANCE POLICY

SCOPE

This policy outlines VASS College of Vocational Education approach to managing complaints and appeals and ensures that all clients, students, employers and other stakeholders are aware of the steps to take to have their complaint or appeal addressed appropriately.

This procedure covers allegations involving the conduct of:

- a) VCVE, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- b) A student of VCVE.

Related documents:

- a) Complaints and Appeals Register
- b) Complaints and Appeals Form
- c) Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure
- d) Student Handbook
- e) Staff Handbook

PURPOSE

This policy provides an avenue for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

The word 'complaint' within the following refers to either a complaint or appeal.

PROCEDURE

Informal Procedure

Action	Details	Responsibility
Addressing initial complaint	VASS College of Vocational Education may receive complaints from students, staff or stakeholders and members of the public through a variety of means e.g.: verbally, written documentation, electronically (email). 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. Any staff member can be involved in this	Complainant

Action	Details	Responsibility
	informal process to resolve issues but once an individual has placed a formal complaint /appeal the following procedures must be followed. Once a formal complaint is received, the VASS College of Vocational Education Compliance Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant, and will seek to identify the issue and resolve the concern so as to avoid any further disruption to the complainant (where applicable). The organisation encourages both staff and complainants to approach the complaint openly and honestly so as to resolve problems through fair, unbiased and reasonable means to ensure principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.	
If grievance resolved	No Further action	Complainant

In the event that the informal process has not attained a resolution. The following procedure is to be initiated

Formal Complaint

Action	Details	Responsibility
Make complaint in writing.	<p>Any student, potential student or staff member may submit a formal complaint to VASS College of Vocational Education 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. When a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through informal discussion, the complainant is asked to complete a Complaints and Appeals Form, stating their case and providing as much detail as possible, and submit this to the VASS College of Vocational Education Compliance Officer either by email, post or by hand. The VASS College of Vocational Education Compliance Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant. Complaints are to include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission date of complaint • Name of complainant • Nature of complaint • Date of the event which lead to the complaint; and • Attachments (if applicable) 	Complainant

Action	Details	Responsibility
	<p>The Complaints and Appeals Form is available on the website at www.vasscollege.com.au or can be sent to the complainant on request.</p>	
<p>Acknowledge receipt of complaint and commence process.</p>	<p>Provide receipt of the complaint to the complainant within five working days.</p> <p>Commence the complaints and appeals process within ten days of receipt of the written complaint. All reasonable measures must be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable and within twenty (20) days. If the matter is particularly complex and goes onto stage 2 of the complaints process or further, the matter may take longer to resolve.</p> <p>If the matter takes more than 60 days to resolve, the complainant is notified in writing including reasons/evidence why more than 60 calendar days are required to resolve the matter. The complainant is also regularly updated in writing on the progress on the matter.</p>	<p>Compliance Officer</p>
<p>Investigate and review the complaint.</p>	<p>Upon receiving the complaint, the Compliance Officer may request further details from the complainant. This may be sought by written or verbal request or by face-to-face interview with the complainant and/or respondent(s).</p> <p>When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the persons being interviewed may have another person accompany them.</p> <p>Where a complaint refers to an individual, the individual will be informed by the VASS College of Vocational Education Compliance Officer of the complaint and will be invited to respond to the allegation either through discussion, or (written) correspondence to ensure principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.</p> <p>Investigation into the matter will take place to ensure the College has accurate, complete and relevant information and to provide all parties involved the opportunity to present their side of the matter in order to ensure principles of natural justice.</p> <p>The Compliance Officer will review the information and decide on the appropriate actions to be taken.</p> <p>A separate interview will be held by the VASS College of Vocational Education CEO (or a member of the VASS College of Vocational Education) if the complaint is about the VASS College of Vocational Education Compliance Officer.</p>	<p>Compliance Officer</p>

Action	Details	Responsibility
Recommend resolution and provide report to complainant.	<p>The Compliance Officer will endeavor to resolve the complaint. Within ten working days, the officer will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the complaints and will include their recommendations and reasons for their decision.</p> <p>The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint.</p>	Compliance Officer

Internal Appeal

Action	Details	Responsibility
Escalate complaint – lodge appeal to CEO for review.	<p>If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may lodge an appeal with the CEO (who is senior to the original decision maker).</p> <p>An appropriate person or committee will be appointed to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.</p> <p>Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.</p> <p>Following the consultation, the Manager (or nominee) will provide a written report to the complainant within ten working days, advising the further steps taken to address the complaint, including the reasons for the decision.</p> <p>The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.</p>	CEO

External Appeal

Action	Details	Responsibility
If not satisfied with outcome, refer complaint to external body.	<p>If not satisfied with the decision in either the formal complaints or appeals procedures, the Complainant may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process, by the body appointed by VASS College of Vocational Education for that purpose.</p> <p>The details of this external body are as follows: Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria</p> <p>Contact details are:</p>	Complainant

Action	Details	Responsibility
	Dispute Assessment Officer Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Tel: 9603 8370 www.disputes.vic.gov.au/	

If a Complainant is still dissatisfied with the decision of the College, they may wish to seek legal advice or place a complaint about VASS College of Vocational Education to ASQA directly (please be aware that ASQA does not act in a mediation capacity).

Appeals regarding assessments and assessment judgements must be made in accordance with the Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Records of Complaints and Their Outcomes

Action	Details	Responsibility
Record complaint and outcomes.	<p>Following the complaint, appropriate actions will be taken by the College to prevent the problem from recurring through its Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance policy and procedures.</p> <p>The complaint details and outcomes will be logged on College's Complaints and Appeals Register for review by Management.</p> <p>Outcomes are recorded to the Senior Management Team in accordance with Communication Policy procedures and any improvements to College processes are recorded in the continuous improvement register and form part of continuous improvement program.</p>	Compliance Officer

Confidentiality

All persons associated with the informal and formal procedures should maintain confidentiality and only discuss the grievance with those who have responsibility for dealing with the grievance.

Responsibilities

All staff are expected to conduct themselves in a manner, which respects the rights and welfare of other members of the College, and to show competence, care, good faith and compliance with instructions, policies and procedures in the performance of their duties.

Supervisors are responsible for trying to prevent problems and settling grievances in the workplace.

It is the complainant's responsibility to raise the issue(s) of the grievances as soon as possible with the other party/parties and agree to be involved in settling the issue(s) prior to making a formal complaint.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for providing procedural guidance to all parties in the Formal Procedure stage of the Procedure.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for the provision of advice and promulgation of this Procedure.

The Compliance Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this Procedure.

POLICY REVIEW

December 2025

Approved by:	Leila Alloush CEO	Date:	January 2024
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Definitions

Complainant:	The staff member lodging the grievance.
Grievance:	Behaviour or action of another member or members of staff, which has or is likely to have an unreasonable negative impact on the ability of a staff member to undertake their duties.
Investigator:	Means an impartial person appointed by the CEO to conduct an investigation into the substance of the grievance who may be external or internal to the RTO and shall not have any prior involvement in the subject matter of the grievance, and if internal, shall be a senior officer not employed in the same area of either the complainant or respondent.
Party:	Means the Complainant and/or Respondent.
Principles of Natural Justice:	General procedural fairness in the handling of a grievance that involves all of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the right to a fair hearing; b. the right to attend hearings with a friend or support person, if required; c. the opportunity for all parties involved to be heard; d. the respondent having full knowledge of the nature and substance of the grievance; e. the complainant not determining the outcome, but may be a party to it; f. the right to an independent, unbiased decision-maker, and; g. a final decision that is based solely on the relevant evidence.
Respondent:	The staff member or members against whom the grievance has been lodged.
Senior Management:	The Chief Executive Officer, Compliance Officer.
Senior Officer:	Means Senior Management Team, CEO, Compliance Officer.
Supervisor:	Normally the management position to which the staff member reports. However, this position must be no less than Compliance Officer.

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS FORM (GRIEVANCE FORM)

Name:

Address:

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Telephone: Home Work Mobile

Date:.....

Best time to be contacted

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Course or training being undertaken with us:

Name of trainer or assessor:.....

Details of Grievance

Describe your complaint, or the decision you want to appeal:

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Date or dates involved:

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Describe any efforts *you* have made to resolve the issue:

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Describe any efforts staff have made to resolve the issue:

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How do you think the situation can be resolved – what do you want to happen?

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Signature and Declaration

I hereby affirm the information provided within this form to be true and correct. I authorise the College to obtain further information with respect to my grievance and, if necessary, to investigate the legitimacy of my claims

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Privacy

In compliance with the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000, the information on this form will only be used for purposes associated with this grievance. Information collected is used solely for the purpose of assisting the College to make an informed decision on your case, and will not be disclosed unless authorised by you or your agent, or required by law.