

Complaints and Appeals Policy

OPOL009



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Purpose

The Complaints and Appeals Policy was formulated taking cognisance of the College's values and its mission statement. The College is committed to maintaining a fair environment that supports and encourages learners to voice their concerns.

Shafston understands that, on occasion, there may be instances of dissatisfaction and acknowledges that the cause(s) must be addressed and rectified promptly. In such instances, the College invites feedback from the dissatisfied party so that a resolution can be found and as an opportunity to consolidate the feedback into a review and improvement of the College's policies and procedures. Staff are also invited to contribute ideas and feedback to assist in shaping and reviewing this policy through communicating with their supervisor.

Shafston will address any and all complaints and appeals of assessment decisions in a fair, constructive and timely manner.

This policy and procedure ensure compliance with the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations, including Outcome Standard 2.4 (Complaints and Appeals), as well as compliance with the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 10.

Overview

The complaints and appeals policy provides guidelines to all students of Shafston regarding instances of dissatisfaction within our organisation. It has been developed to cover decisions made for or on behalf of the RTO and complaints about the RTO, RTO staff, students, third parties, and assessments.

A complaint or appeal may refer to, but is not limited to:

- Course advice and enrolment
- Suspension and/or cancellation of enrolment
- Program delivery
- Marketing and promotional activity
- Personal safety
- Customer service and administration
- Issue of results, certificates, statements of attainment
- Learning resources
- Fees and charges
- Equity and access, discrimination, harassment, bullying, and vilification
- Marking and assessment (including RPL and credit transfer decisions)
- Assessment process and decision
- Enrolment application decision
- Learner progress and academic progress decisions
- Suspension or termination of enrolment

Principles

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This Complaints and Appeals Policy ensures Shafston adopts the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness in its operations by:

- Informing those involved of the allegations;
- Providing all parties with a reasonable opportunity to present their case;
- Ensuring the decision-maker is unbiased and acts impartially;
- Making decisions based on evidence and relevant considerations;
- Providing written reasons for decisions;
- Ensuring the process is timely, transparent, and confidential.

Internal Complaints Process

Step 1: The complainant should first attempt to resolve the issue informally by discussing it with the relevant staff member or trainer.

Step 2: If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the complainant should submit a formal complaint in writing using the Complaints and Appeals Form, providing full details of the complaint and any supporting evidence.

Step 3: The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 business days of receipt. The Academic Manager (or delegate) will investigate the complaint, which may include interviews with the parties involved.

Step 4: The complainant will be advised of the outcome in writing within 20 business days of lodging the complaint, including the reasons for the decision and any actions to be taken.

Step 5: If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request an internal appeal by writing to the Principal Executive Officer within 20 business days of receiving the decision.

Internal Appeals Process

Step 1: The appellant submits a written appeal using the Complaints and Appeals Form, stating the grounds for appeal and any new evidence.

Step 2: The appeal will be reviewed by a person or panel independent of the original decision-maker.

Step 3: The appellant will be advised of the appeal outcome in writing within 20 business days, including the reasons for the decision.

External Appeals

If the complainant or appellant remains unsatisfied with the internal process, they may seek external review through:

- The National Training Complaints Hotline: 13 38 73
- The Overseas Students Ombudsman: www.ombudsman.gov.au (for international students)
- Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland: 1300 130 670

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Shafston will maintain the student's enrolment while a complaint or appeal is being processed, unless there are extenuating circumstances relating to the health or safety of the student or others.

Record Keeping

All complaints and appeals, their outcomes, and any actions taken will be recorded and securely maintained by Shafston. These records will be used to identify systemic issues and inform continuous improvement of the College's policies, procedures, and services.

Related Documents

- Complaints and Appeals Form
- Student Code of Conduct
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- RPL Policy (CPL036) — for appeals of RPL decisions
- Credit Transfer Policy (CPL034) — for appeals of CT decisions

Version History

Date	Summary of Modifications	Version
2021	Version 1.0 finalised.	1.0
08/10/2025	Updated regulatory references from "Standard 6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015" to "2025 Standards for RTOs, Outcome Standard 2.4". Added RPL and credit transfer decisions to scope of appeals. Added vilification to discrimination coverage. Added external appeals bodies. Clarified timelines. Added record keeping and continuous improvement clause.	2.0