



**WATERFORD  
COLLEGE**

# **Student Complaints Policy and Procedures Manual**

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# STUDENT COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Aim

The aim of this policy and procedure is to define the system used to meet the requirements of:

- SNR 15.1, 16.2, 16.5, 16.7

The Complaints Policy is to provide a fair and equitable process for resolving complaints or conflicts between clients, employees, students or others that deal with the organisation.

## Requirements

Students may raise any matters of concern relating to the training delivery and assessment, the quality of the teaching, student amenities, discrimination, sexual harassment and other issues that may arise.

Students are encouraged to resolve their concerns and complaints using this procedure and the Institute will ensure that students have a clear understanding of the steps involved.

A hard copy is available upon request from the Student Services and Records Manager.

All complaints will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution and managed in an equitable and efficient manner.

Unless otherwise decided by the Training Manager, all formal complaints will be handled by the Student Services and Records Manager. If the formal complaint is in respect to the Training Manager; the Chief Executive Officer will handle the complaint.

At any stage in the complaints process, students are entitled to have their own nominee included in the resolution process.

Students will be provided with details of external authorities they may approach, if required.

Where a complaint cannot be resolved through discussion and reconciliation, we acknowledge the need for a Formal Complaint process.

If a student is concerned about the conduct of the Institute and wishes to lodge a complaint against the Institute, they may:

- Contact the Regulatory Authority in their state.
- The Regulatory Authority may suspend or cancel the registration of the Institute or course.

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A student's enrolment must be maintained during the complaints and/or internal appeals process and the outcome has not been determined.

Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits student's rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies. Students wishing to take this course of action are advised to contact the Law Institute of Victoria [www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au), for a referral to a solicitor.

If there is any matter arising from a student complaint that is a systemic issue which requires improvement action, a Continuous Improvement Action Plan will be raised and actioned by the Training Manager.

## Responsibility

The Student Services and Records Manager are responsible for implementation of this policy and ensuring that staff and students are made aware of its procedures.

Students are given information about the complaints process prior to and during their orientation programme.

## Definitions

The **Formal Complaint Process** is the process which takes place if a grievance cannot be resolved informally (for example, through affected parties discussing the matter).

## Principles

The principles behind the Waterford College's complaints process are:

- The importance of seeking a resolution to any conflict between the Waterford College and clients, employees or students in a professional and ethical manner
- The Waterford College recognises that all clients, employees and students have the right to and are encouraged to openly discuss expectations and problems, or to lodge a complaint where they consider there are genuine grounds for a complaint
- The principles of fairness, ethics and social justice will be promoted in all the Waterford College dealings with clients, employees and students

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## Objectives

With these principles in mind, the objectives of this policy are to:

- Incorporate conflict management principles into all processes involved in lodging a complaint.
- Develop a procedure for lodging and dealing with a complaint that is easily accessible and not unduly complex.
- Treat all complaints with honesty, integrity and fairness to all concerned.
- Assist clients, employees and students with access to an independent review of a complaint; should the need arise.
- Ensure complaints are processed in an appropriate timeframe.

## Implementation

The Complaints Policy will be implemented through the Quality System, and be audited as a Procedure - Appeals/Complaints.

## Method

### Informal Process

Any student with a question or complaint may raise the matter with the staff of The Institute and seek an informal resolution of the question or complaint. Trainers are the preferred first point of contact with students. Any issues related to training will be managed by the trainer.

Questions or complaints dealt with in this way do not become part of the formal complaint process and will not be documented, recorded or reported on unless the Institute staff member involved determines that the issue, question or complaint was relevant to the wider operations of the Institute, or if the student requests that the matter be documented and placed on his or her student file.

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the question or complaint are encouraged to register a formal complaint.

### Formal Complaints Process

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process, or who want to register a formal complaint may do so. To register a formal complaint, a student must complete the student Complaint Form. The Student Services and Records Manager will contact the student and arrange a meeting. At this meeting, the complaint can be raised and a resolution attempted.

Waterford College Pty. Ltd. Complaint Forms are available from the administration office.

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All formal complaints will be recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

Prior to or at the stage of the complaint meeting, the complaint must be recorded in writing, be signed and dated by the complainant, Student Services and the Records Manager.

The student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

The Student Services and Records Manager will then attempt to resolve the complaint with the student and any other parties who may be involved.

The resolution phase must commence within ten (10) working days of the complaint and supporting documentation being lodged in writing and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

At the end of the resolution phase, Student Services and the Records Manager will report, in writing, the Institute's decision to the student. The Institute decision and reasons for the decision will be documented by the Student Services and Records Manager, and placed in the student's file.

Following the resolution phase, the Institute must implement the decision as conveyed to the student.

If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process, the student may initiate the appeals process by completing the Appeals Form. The appeals form is available at the administrative offices.

The student has twenty (20) working days from the date they receive notification of the outcome of the formal complaint to lodge their appeal. The appeals process then applies.

Any complaints that are lodged as a result of or related to criminal activities are outside this process and shall be referred to the appropriate authorities or legal representatives for their attention.

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## Complaints Process Flowchart

