

RTO Student Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedure

AQTF REFERENCE

AQTF 2.6: The RTO provides appropriate mechanisms and services for learners to have concerns reviewed and addressed where appropriate. Complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively.

SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure there are internal procedures that apply within the college for addressing student complaints and grievances. These procedures are designed to ensure there is a transparent process for ensuring student complaints and grievances are dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly and within all privacy legislation.

This policy and procedure is a means to resolve problems experienced by trainer and trainees, enabling it to be addressed immediately, effectively, professionally and confidentially.

POLICY STATEMENT

BHSSC is committed to providing students with an education of the highest possible standard. However, from time to time, students may raise concerns, complaints or grievances about matters or issues relating to their experiences at the college.

BHSSC will encourage the parties to approach a grievance with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems first through discussion and conciliation. Where a grievance cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, a formal complaint procedure will be followed. BHSSC acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between parties when required.

1.0 PRINCIPLES

The student grievance resolution procedures of the college are based on the following principles:

- 1.1 Procedures used to review and resolve complaints and grievances are fair and must be seen to be fair;
- 1.2 Confidentiality will be respected for all parties, unless the use of the information is authorised by law;
- 1.3 Staff involved in resolving complaints and grievances will act fairly at all times and ensure that conclusions will be based on a fair hearing of each point of view;
- 1.4 There will be no reprisals or any disadvantage arising as a result of a student making a complaint or grievance in good faith;



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- 1.5 Complaints or grievances are handled in a timely manner with achievable deadlines specified for each stage of the resolution process;
- 1.6 Any student who makes a complaint or grievance and any staff member or student on whom the complaint or grievance has a direct impact, is regularly informed of the progress of the matter;
- 1.7 Where the complainant is not satisfied the outcome proposed by the decision-maker, the student is entitled to seek a review, (appeal) either on procedural or substantive grounds, from a higher internal body or an appropriate independent arbitrator.

2.0 TYPES OF STUDENT GRIEVANCES

2.1 Qualification grievances

These are usually complaints or appeals against educational decisions. They include but are not limited to:

- Progress decisions
- Assessment matters
- A decision of a member of staff that affects an individual or groups of students
- Selection or admission decisions
- Content or structure of programs, nature of teaching, or assessment

2.2 Administrative grievances

These relate to decisions and actions associated with administrative or academic services. They include but are not limited to:

- Administration of policies, procedures and rules by administration
- Access to College resources and facilities.

3.0 Grounds for COMPLAINT or GRIEVANCES

A student has valid grounds for making a complaint or appealing against a decision (relating to a formal complaint decision) where the student considers he/she has been adversely affected by:

- Improper, irregular or negligent conduct by a college staff member;
- Failure by the staff member to act fairly;
- A decision that has been made without sufficient consideration to facts, evidence or circumstances of specific relevance to the student;
- Failure by the college to make a decision in a timely manner;
- A penalty that, where applied, is or would be too harsh.

4.0 COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The trainee grievance/appeals procedures relating to the delivery of training and/or the assessment of training outcomes, access and equity issues, involves trainees initiating the following process:

- Discussion with relevant trainer/trainee about grievances:
- Should this not be resolved, the grievance matter can be taken to the BHSSC VET Coordinator
- Should this not be resolved, the grievance matter then can be taken to the RTO Management Committee.

In the event that grievances cannot be resolved, BHSSC will advise trainees of the appropriate legal body where they can seek further assistance. Where appropriate, initial assessments may be reviewed and/or alternative assessment methods identified.

When a student has a complaint or grievance about a matter listed in section 2, he or she should first discuss the matter with the staff member concerned. If the student has concerns about raising the matter with this staff member, he or she should discuss this with a Student Services Coordinator.

The college expects that in most cases the discussion of the grievance with the relevant staff member will result in a prompt solution which both parties find acceptable.

If this *informal approach* to dealing with student grievances does not lead to an acceptable resolution then the student should pursue the *formal process for Complaints and Appeals* as set out below:

MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

STAGE 1 – Seek advice

A student who believes that his or her grievance has not been adequately resolved should seek information and advice from the Director of Student Management, Assistant Principal (Student Management) or VET Coordinator.

Students may then decide to:

1. Take no further action, OR
2. Lodge a formal grievance

STAGE 2 - Formal Grievance in Writing

A formal Grievance must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of the event, to VET Coordinator, Director of Student Manager or Assistant Principal (Student Management). A *Complaints and Appeals Form* is available from any of the above staff members.

The Written Complaint OR Appeal must be signed and lodged with Assistant Principal (Student Management).



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The college staff member who has received a grievance will acknowledge receipt of the written grievance in writing within 5 working days from its receipt and indicate when a resolution of the matter can be expected (within 10 working days).

The Assistant Principal will independently review the grievance and attempt to find a resolution of the problem. If the staff member has or perceives there to be a conflict of interest in their handling of the grievance the staff member will refer the matter for investigation to another staff member who is eligible and qualified to handle the matter. The student is to be notified of the referral of the grievance to another staff member.

If the grievance is found to be frivolous or vexatious or no grounds or evidence can be found for it, the staff member investigating the matter will not offer any resolution of the grievance.

The staff member investigating the grievance must keep formal records of the actions taken, seek advice where required and with regard to the VRQA Standards for continuing Registration as an RTO. The staff member must notify the student in writing of the outcome of the process and document the reasons that resolution was or was not achieved.

STAGE 3 – APPEALING A GRIEVANCE DECISION

If after Stage 2 of the process, the student does not believe that the grievance has been adequately resolved, then he or she may appeal.

The appeal must be lodged in writing to the School Council within 20 days of the decision.

The student will receive an acknowledgement of the Appeal letter within 5 working days.

An independent arbitrator will be appointed to Hear the case (within 15 days of acknowledgement letter)

The student will be notified in writing within 5 working days of the Appeal Hearing.

RELATED POLICIES

RTO Quality Assurance Policy

RELATED FORMS

Student Grievances and Appeals FORM

REGISTERS

Student Grievances and Appeals REGISTER



Student Grievance and Appeals FORM

Family Name:	First Name:	
Course Title:	Advocacy:	Date:

Prior to submitting a formal complaint, have you:

- Read the Student Grievances and Appeals Policy as published in the College Handbook?
- Made an appointment to speak with the trainer/teacher concerned?
- Sought advice from the VET Coordinator/Student Services?

1. Summary of nature of situation or complaint.

Include a description of the events that occurred, including efforts made to informally resolve the complaint, name and contact details of any witnesses or supporting parties. The outcome you seek.

2. Evidence

Attach copies of all evidence about the complaint referred to in your statement above.

Student Signature:	Date:
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Where to send your completed Student Grievance and Appeals FORM:

VET Coordinator
Box HILL Senior Secondary College
Dunloe Ave, MONT ALBERT Nth 3129

Office Use Only

Date complaint received:.....

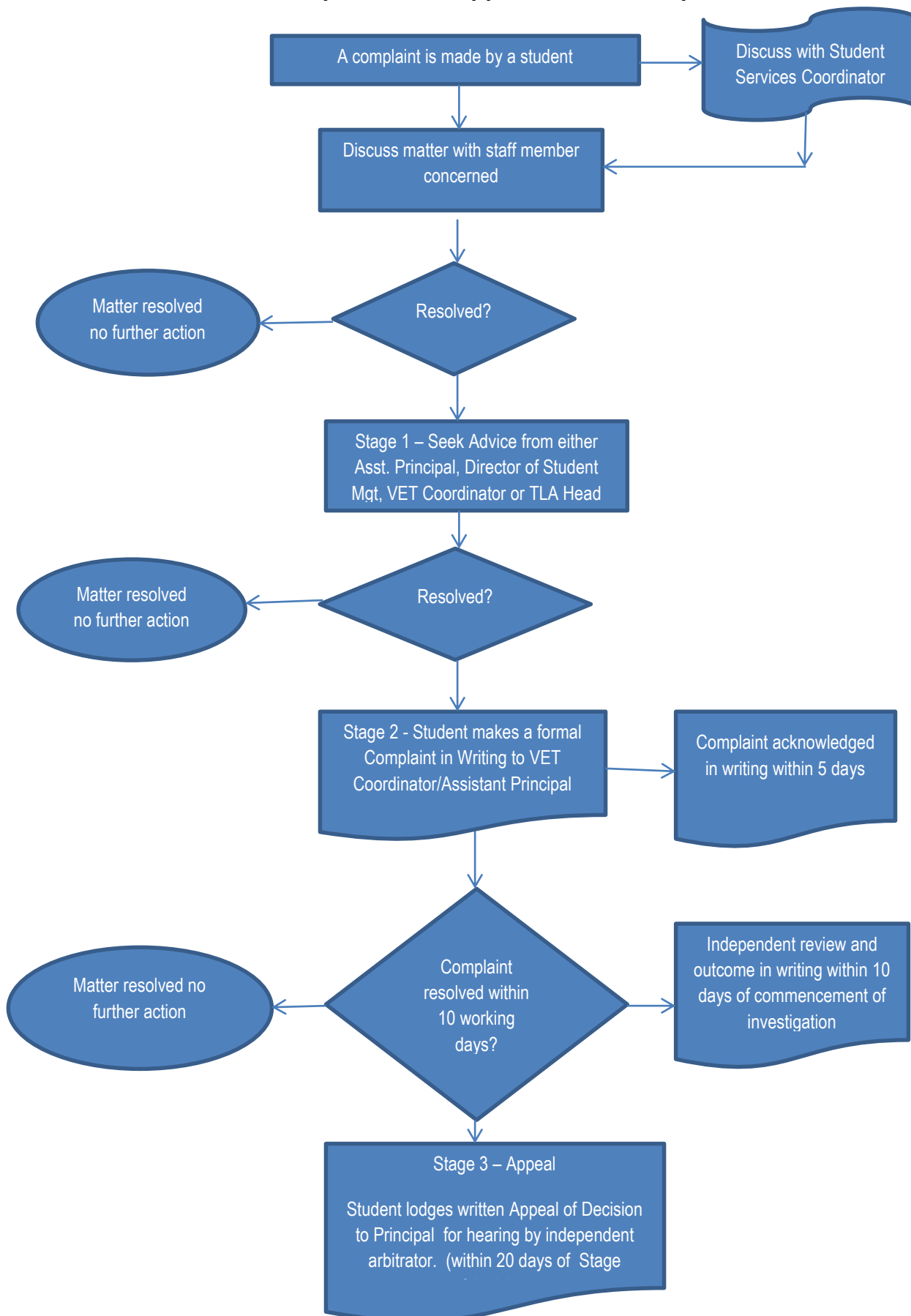
Complaint No.....

RESOLUTION OF GRIEVANCES TIMELINE

Stage/Action	Responsible	Lodging
Student discusses grievance with staff member concerned	Student / staff member concerned	Within 10 working days of the event
Stage 1 - Seek Advice	Student seeks advice from either VET Coordinator, Director of Student Management. Head TLA	Within 10 working days of the event
Stage 2 – Formal Grievance in Writing	Student lodges complaint in writing with the VET Coordinator/Assistant Principal	<p>Within 10 working days of the event</p> <p>A letter acknowledging receipt sent to student within 5 working days of receipt.</p> <p>Case independently reviewed by RTO Management Committee in a timely manner – no more than 10 working days after the commencement of the investigation.</p>
Stage 3 - Appeal	Student lodges formal written appeal to the Principal	<p>Within 20 days of the formal decision (above)</p> <p>Acknowledgement letter within 5 working days.</p> <p>Independent arbitrator (within 15 days of acknowledgement letter)</p> <p>Student notified in writing within 5 working days of the Appeal Decision.</p>



Complaints and Appeals Process Map



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