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Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Purpose

This document provides clear and practical guidelines to regarding the handling of complaints and/or appeals lodged against AIAC, students, trainers, staff and/or third parties

Complaint - is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action or service of the Registered Training Organisation.

Appeal - is where a student of AIAC or another interested party disputes a decision arising from a complaint, an assessment decision, or another decision made by the RTO.

1 Complaint Procedures

Academic complaints: The student should first approach their instructor or the operations manager if they have an academic complaint or concern. If the student feels comfortable, he/she should follow the informal complaint process as a starting point.

Non-Academic complaints: Students should contact their instructor or the Student counsellor at studentsupport@aiacollege.com. If the student feels comfortable, he/she should follow the informal complaint process as a starting point.

Grievance complaints (employees): All enquiries, formal or informal should be referred to the Grievance Policy & Procedure in the HR manual or by contacting the HR officer at info@aiacollege.com.

The Head of Operations is the overall responsible person for all complaints and appeals.

1.1 Making an Informal Complaint

AIAC believes that most disputes arise from misunderstanding or miscommunication and as such can be resolved by dealing with the issue directly. AIAC recommend that initial complaints be handled by:

1. Discussing the issue directly with those involved to try and resolve it verbally.
2. If no resolution is reached, discuss the issue with your Student support officer (SSO) or the RTO Compliance officer (RCO) to see if it can be resolved.
3. If this resolves the situation, the outcomes will be put in writing and signed by all parties using the Informal Complaint Declaration form (Document no. AIAC-QHS-FRM-004_V1). The form is to be stored in the student or employee file in accordance with the Quality Document Control procedures.
4. The event is to be entered into the Complaints Register as an 'Informal complaint' and marked as completed by the RCO.

1.2 Making a Formal complaint


If there is still no resolution, or the complainant does not feel comfortable approaching the person/s involved, then they may access the formal complaints procedure.

1. The person making the complaint should download the **Complaints** from SharePoint or contact the RCO at rtc@aiacollege.com for a copy.
2. The person should put the following information relating to the complaint in writing to the HR officer, and must include:
 - a. A description of the complaint
 - b. A statement about whether the person wishes to formally present their case
 - c. Information about any prior steps taken to deal with the complaint or appeal
 - d. What they would like to happen to fix the problem and prevent it from happening again

(A written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint/appeal will be forwarded to the complainant within five working days by the RCO. This can be done via email.) AIAC will respond to any formal complaint that is made regarding his or her dealings with the registered provider, the registered provider's education agents or any related party the registered provider has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas student's course or related services.

3. The RCO (or a management representative) will commence assessment of the complaint/appeal within 10 working days of the complaint/appeal being lodged. A response/resolution must be presented within 14 working days if possible. The RCO (or a delegate) will:

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- a. Undertake a preliminary enquiry to determine nature of the complaint/appeal in a professional, fair and transparent manner.
- b. Inform other relevant parties (if necessary), being careful not to disclose personal information if the complainant has requested to remain anonymous.
- c. Provide all parties an opportunity to present their case, allowing for each person involved to have a support person in attendance.
- d. Discuss with the parties any resolution and any arrangements required by the company.
- e. Record the outcome of discussion on the Complaints & Appeals form, complete the 'Follow up' section, and update the Complaints register.
- f. All parties involved will receive a written statement of the outcomes, including reasons for the decision/outcome and the student's right to access an external complaints and appeals process within 10 working days of the conclusion of the matter.
- g. In the written statement, the RCO will provide to the complainant, the details of the Community Justice Centre if the student/employee wishes to seek external advice if they are unsatisfied with the internal review decision. This is a free service.

Community Justice Centre
<http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/>
1800 990 777

- h. All parties will have 10 working days to respond to AIAC and advise if they wish to appeal the decision. This must be done in writing by emailing the RCO at rto@aiacollege.com. Failure to reply within the time frame will result in the matter being closed by AIAC.

2 Appeals Procedure

If the person is still not happy with the outcome, or the student would like to lodge an Academic or Non-academic appeal, they may lodge a formal appeal by downloading the **Academic Appeals form** or the **Non-Academic Appeals form** from SharePoint and submitting to the RCO at rto@aiacollege.com. Alternatively, the student or employee may take their complaint to the Community Justice Centre.

The RCO will form an appeals committee with the Head of Operations and the Operations Manager or another suitable manager and review the previous complaints process. The committee will call an intervention meeting with the appellant and if appropriate the person/s the complaint has been lodged against. During this meeting, all parties will have an opportunity to present their case. The student may also have a support person in attendance. The complainant and the defendant may also be allowed to question each other if this assists in the mediation process.

If the matter (appeal) is resolved in the intervention meeting, the RCO will fill in the 'Follow Up' section of the Appeals form, update the Complaints and Appeals register and place copies of all documents in the student and/or employee file. The matter will then be closed. A written confirmation will be issued to the student/employee by the RCO within 10 working days.

Students that are not successful in the internal review/assessment or not satisfied with the outcome will be notified within 10 working days of the outcome explaining the reason/s why and of their right to access external appeals processes (note that under the ESOS Act, AIAC is required to provide contact details for external appeals organisations, however, AIAC is not required to assist the students in the processes involved).


The RCO will be responsible for notifying students of the outcome in writing and at a minimum, must include the details for the Community Justice Centre (as listed above).

All parties will have 10 working days to respond to AIAC and advise if they wish to refer the decision to an external agency. This must be done in writing by emailing the RCO. Failure to reply within the time frame will result in the matter being closed by AIAC.

2.1 External Agencies

This is normally managed by the student, unless initiated by AIAC. AIAC may decide at its discretion to refer the matter to an independent external agency if required. The RCO or another manager will arrange this and advise the student in writing of what will happen.

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If the student or employee wishes to seek independent external advice, this is to be arranged by the student and done at their own expense. The RCO will ensure the student has the contact details for the CJC.

3 Finalising the complaint/Appeal

From any substantiated complaints and appeals, the causes will be reviewed as part of the company's continuous improvement processes by the complaints committee, and appropriate corrective action will be taken immediately to prevent or reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence. The student will be notified in writing by the RCO (or a delegate) of what actions or processes the company has put into place to remedy the situation. Details are to be recorded on the Quality Improvement Register.

The RCO will update the Complaints and Appeals register with any new or changed information and mark the item as 'resolved', noting if there are any follow-up actions required and the time frame.

Once the matter is resolved, the Complaints Committee may choose to arrange a follow up meeting with the involved parties to ensure the matter is resolved or to offer further support. For extreme cases, this meeting may also need to be used to discuss the student's enrolment at AIAC.

3.1 Findings in favour of the Student

Where the internal or external process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the overseas student, the RCO will compile a recommendation to present to management within 14 working days. The recommendation is to include, as a minimum; details of the findings, suggestions for improvement and a suggested timeframe for implementation. The RCO will also update the Quality Improvement Register with the appropriate details and remedial action required.

4 Further details

Any complaint that is related to illegal activity, such as theft, assault etc, will be immediately referred to the appropriate authority.

All documentation relating to complaints or appeals will be stored securely as per the Quality Data Control policy.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire process as far as reasonably possible. The RCO will advise parties involved before disclosing personal information to a third-party.

The AIAC RTO Compliance Officer will be personally responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy.

During the entire process, the student/employees involved may continue to study or work, unless another agreement is made and placed in writing, or there are significant safety concerns.

5 Student Feedback

AIAC has implemented several different strategies to reduce the risk of complaints. Students are invited to:

- Attend monthly meetings with management to discuss concerns.
- Provide feedback to AIAC via different surveys throughout their training.
- Provide feedback through the Part 142 Exposition, using the Suggestion for Continuous Improvement form (9B17),
 - Feedback forms and surveys can be found on the student SharePoint site or by contacting the RCO at rto@aiacollege.com.

6 Review of policy and procedures

The Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure will be reviewed 12 months from the date of implementation or after any significant change in regulation by the Compliance officer. The document map and control register (AIAC-QHS-RG-006_V1) will be used to manage the review schedule.

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Authorised by:	D. Murray	New version no.	1

6.1 Amendments and Version history

Version no.	Amendment date	Amendment details	Amended by	Date of inclusion
1.0		Original document created and released	D. Murray	15/03/2021