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Complaints & Appeals Policy & Procedure

1. Purpose

AIAC is committed to providing a transparent, fair, and effective process for managing complaints and appeals. This policy ensures:

- All students, staff, and other stakeholders can raise concerns safely
- Complaints and appeals are resolved in a timely, impartial, and fair manner
- Continuous improvement is supported through lessons learned from complaints
- Compliance with the Standards for RTOs 2025 and, where relevant, the ESOS framework

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction with the actions, decisions, or services of AIAC, its staff, trainers, or third parties.
Appeal	A request for review of a decision made by AIAC, including academic, non-academic, or administrative decisions.
Complainant	Any student, staff member, or stakeholder lodging a complaint.
RTO Compliance Officer (RCO)	The officer responsible for administering this policy, maintaining records, and ensuring compliance.

3. Principles

All complaints and appeals will be managed according to the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** All stakeholders can lodge a complaint or appeal easily, with support provided if needed
- **Impartiality:** Decision-makers will be independent of the matter
- **Confidentiality:** Information is treated sensitively and only shared on a need-to-know basis
- **Timeliness:** Processes are conducted within specified timeframes
- **No Disadvantage:** Lodging a complaint or appeal will not adversely affect a student's study, assessment, or employment
- **Transparency:** Complainants will receive clear information about process, progress, and outcomes

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- **Continuous Improvement:** Outcomes are used to prevent recurrence and improve RTO practices

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All AIAC students (domestic and international)
- Staff and contractors
- Employers, industry partners, or other third parties interacting with AIAC

It covers all complaints and appeals, including academic, non-academic, administrative, and workplace-related matters.

5. Complaints Procedure (Flow chart on page 5 for a simple summary)

5.1 Informal Complaints

1. The complainant should attempt to resolve the issue directly with the person(s) involved.
2. If unresolved, contact the Operations Managers (OP).
3. The OP will record the complaint, attempt mediation, and document the outcome.
4. Outcomes will be stored in the Complaints Register.

5.2 Formal Complaints

If the informal process does not resolve the issue:

1. Submit a **Complaint Form** to the OP, including:
 - Description of the complaint
 - Steps taken to resolve the issue
 - Desired resolution
2. Acknowledgement of receipt will be provided within **5 working days**.
3. The OM (or delegated independent officer) will:
 - Conduct a fair and transparent investigation
 - Consult relevant parties while maintaining confidentiality
 - Allow all parties to provide evidence and have a support person present
 - Recommend resolution to management
4. A written outcome will be issued within **20 working days** (or notify of delay if more time is needed).
5. Outcomes will be recorded in the Complaints Register and Continuous Improvement Register.

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5.3 Escalation

- If the complainant is unsatisfied, they may lodge an internal appeal (see Section 6) or seek an external review.

6. Appeals Procedure

1. Submit an **Appeal Form** to the OP within **10 working days** of receiving the complaint outcome.
2. The OP will convene an Appeals Committee (Head of Operations + independent managers).
3. Committee responsibilities:
 - Review the original complaint and investigation
 - Conduct an intervention meeting with all parties
 - Ensure impartiality and opportunity for support persons
4. A written decision will be issued within **20 working days** of appeal lodgement.

6.1 External Appeals

If still dissatisfied:

- Students and stakeholders may access independent external agencies such as:
 - ASQA (training/assessment complaints)
 - Community Justice Centre or equivalent mediation service
 - Relevant Ombudsman or government authority
- AIAC will provide contact details, but external costs are the responsibility of the complainant, except where legislation requires otherwise (e.g., ESOS).

7. Continuous Improvement

- All substantiated complaints and appeals are analysed for systemic issues.
- Corrective actions are recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register.
- Serious risks of non-compliance are reported to ASQA.

8. Responsibilities

- **Operations Manager:** Administers complaints, maintains records, coordinates investigations and appeals
- **Compliance/HR Manager:** Oversees the process, ensures impartiality and compliance
- **All Staff:** Cooperate with investigations and uphold principles of fairness

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9. Confidentiality & Recordkeeping

- All documentation is securely stored per the Data Control Policy
- Access to files is limited to those directly involved or legally required
- Information is only disclosed with consent or as legally required

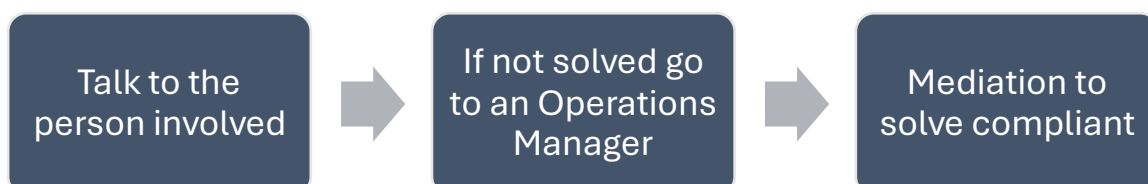
10. Student/Stakeholder Support

- Access to student support services or other assistance during the process
- Guidance on lodging complaints or appeals
- Support for language, literacy, or accessibility needs

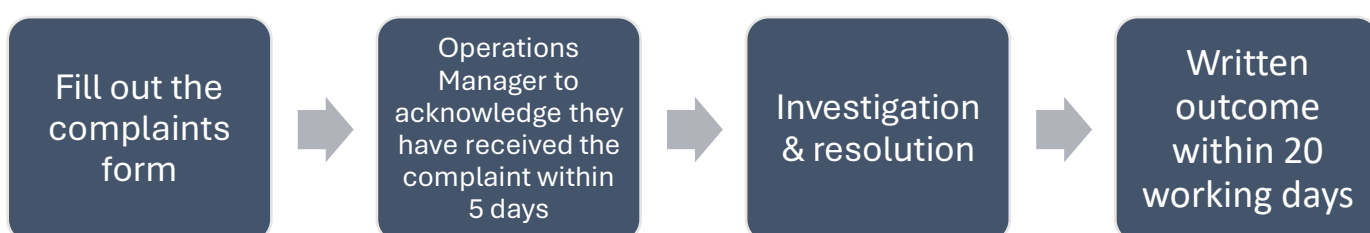
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Complaints & Appeals Flowchart

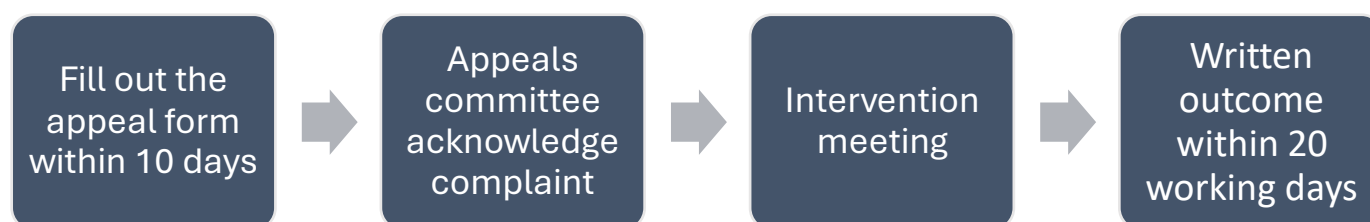
Step 1: Informal Complaint Procedure



Step 2. Formal Complaint



Step 3. Internal Appeal



Step 4. External Review

