


Policy and Procedure		
Doc #: PP - 2.1		Title: Complaints and Appeals
SRTO 2025 (Outcome Standards: Div 5, 2.7 ,2.8)	NC: 10	
NESA Guidelines 3.13		
Rev #: 12	Approved By: Group General Manager	Date: 19/05/2026

REVISION HISTORY			
Rev	Description of Change	Author	Effective Date
1	Adapted from AAPoly Complaints and Appeals Procedure.	Zita	3/02/14
2	Separated the complaints and appeals process	Zita	17/09/14
3	Updated according to ASQA's updated Standards Changed SNR16.3 to Standards 6.1,6.2,6.3,6.4,6.5,6.6 Removed 'Academic Advisor' Added 'students' to the Policy in clause 2.1 Timeline of 60 days is included in the clause 5.3.	Jeevan	1/04/15
4	Reviewed policy against SRTOs, updated terms. Standard 6.6 has been removed.	Prasad	1/04/16
5	Student to submit appeal form for unsatisfactory course progress to CC.	Bib	31/03/17
6	Reference to the new National Code. Amended clauses 5.2.1.4 A and 5.2.1.4 B.	Elaine	19/12/17
7	Reviewed the policy and procedure. Amended the formatting.	Elaine	30/10/19
8	Updated the website for OSO. Added link to OSO's online complaint form.	Elaine	25/08/20
9	Removed physical address for OSO 'Complaint Form' updated to 'Student Complaint Form'	Krishna	18/05/21
10	Updated and simplified process flowcharts Updated to meet the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 Procedural steps rewritten for improved clarity, ease of readability, and integration of AAPoly- processes particularly for higher education.	Compliance	26/08/25
11	Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO) references have been updated to Commonwealth Ombudsman (CO).	Compliance	17/10/25
12	Removed references to Higher Education (HE) at AAPoly, since HE has developed a separate complaints and appeals policy. Included AOE and AIHS in Schedule 1. Incorporated a separate section 6.4 for AIHS and retired AIHS Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure v4.	Rosa	19/05/26

1.0 Purpose

This policy and procedure:

- 1.1 Ensures a fair, transparent, and systematic approach for managing student feedback, complaints and appeals, both academic and non-academic, at Academies Australasia Colleges (the College), as listed in [Schedule 1](#).
- 1.2 Provides clear guidance to students, visitors, and other stakeholders on how they can submit feedback, lodge a complaint, or appeal a decision.
- 1.3 Outlines the responsibilities of all staff (employees and contractors) in handling feedback, complaints, and appeals, ensuring they understand the required procedures and timelines.
- 1.4 Ensures that all complaints and appeals are managed in accordance with principles of procedural fairness, respecting the rights of all parties involved.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all staff, employees, contractors, current students, and to former students who have completed a course at the College within the last four weeks.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 **Complaint** – An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service provided by the College.
 - Informal complaint – refers to an unofficial complaint where a concern or grievance expressed by a student verbally or in writing that is addressed through discussion, mediation, or direct negotiation with the relevant staff member.
 - Formal complaint – refers to an official complaint where a written grievance lodged via the Student Complaint Form and where specific procedural requirements apply, including written outcomes, reasons for decisions, and the right to internal and external appeal under Standard 10 of the National Code.
 - Academic complaint– related to course content, assessment tasks or judgments, results or grades, teaching quality, or academic staff.
 - Non-academic complaint – related to facilities, administration, support services, or the conduct of the College staff.
- 3.2 **Appeal** – A request to overturn a decision made by the College. It includes the following issues but not limited to:
 - Outcome of assessment marks/course credit;
 - Refusal of leave of absence/release letter/refund request;
 - Intention to Report (ITR) for unsatisfactory course progress/non-payment/misbehaviour; or
 - Decisions related to late enrolment.

- 3.3 **Resolution** – Plans or actions developed and mutually agreed-upon by the College and the complainant to address and resolve the complaint.
- 3.4 **Commonwealth Ombudsman (CO)** – Investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private schools, colleges and universities (education providers) in Australia.
- 3.5 **Student Management System (SMS)** – A platform used by the College to manage and maintain student-related information and administrative processes, including but not limited to student admission and enrolment, attendance, academic records, course progress, communication, compliance reporting, and personal details.

4.0 Responsibilities

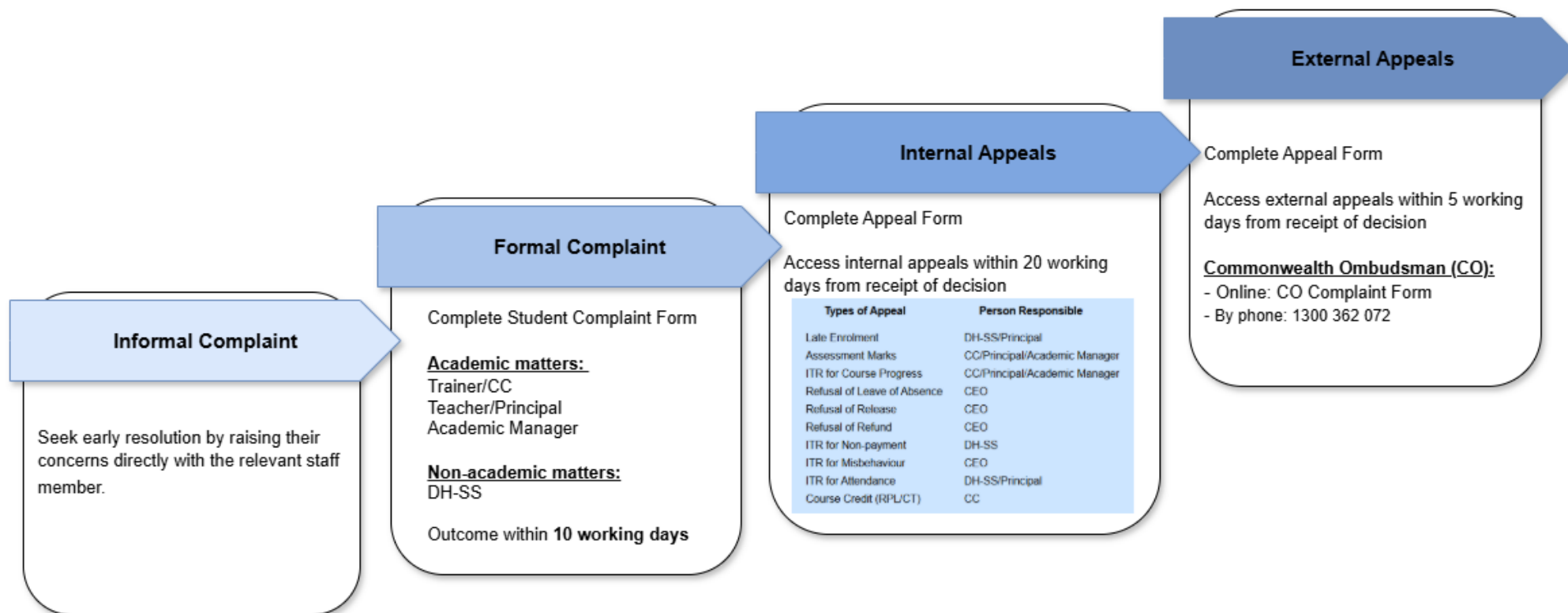
- 4.1 **All Staff at the College** – Responsible for understanding this policy and procedure and knowing what to do when a customer feedback, complaint or appeal is received.
- 4.2 **Department Head (DH)** – Responsible for ensuring that all feedback, complaints, and appeals are managed fairly, promptly, and in accordance with policy. For the purpose of this policy, DH includes all relevant leaders across departments, such as Managers of Student Services, Marketing, Finance, IT, Admissions, as well as Academic Manager, Course Coordinators (CC) and School Principal.
- 4.3 **Student Services (SS) Department** – Responsible for communicating progress and outcome to students and logging and maintaining all records in the student file and also in the Complaints Register.
- 4.4 **Designated Head Student Services (DH SS)** – Responsible for ensuring that student concerns are managed in a supportive, timely, and confidential manner and liaise with relevant departments to facilitate resolution and implement agreed actions.
- 4.5 **Chief Executive (CEO) / Executive Director (ED)** – Responsible for ensuring that the organisation maintains a transparent and fair complaints and appeals process. Review and investigate the complaints and appeals.
- 4.6 **Trainers/Teachers** – Responsible for responding to the students concerns, attempting to resolve issues promptly where appropriate, and referring unresolved or formal complaints to the relevant authorised staff member in accordance with this procedure.

5.0 Policy Principles

- All complaints and appeals will be handled promptly, fairly, and in accordance with the College's formal processes.
- A resolution should normally be reached within one month. Once resolved, no further investigation will be undertaken unless required for continuous improvement purposes.
- If additional time is required to finalise a complaint or appeal, the College will inform the student in writing, explain the reason for the delay, and provide regular updates and an estimated timeframe for resolution.
- The complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against at any stage of the process.
- All details of the complaint or appeal, including outcomes and actions taken, will be documented and securely filed.
- The College will maintain the student's enrolment throughout the internal and, where applicable, external complaints or appeals process. Students are required to remain enrolled and continue attending classes during this time.
- All internal complaints and appeals will be handled at no cost to the student.
- Students may request to be accompanied by a support person at any stage of the process (at the student's cost). If the student is under 18, a parent or guardian must be present. All correspondence to under 18 students will also be sent to their parents or guardians.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits student's rights to pursue other legal remedies under Federal or State law. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
- Students may appeal a decision to report them for unsatisfactory progress or attendance based on:
 - inaccurate recording or calculation of results;
 - compassionate or compelling circumstances; or
 - failure by the College to implement its documented intervention strategies or procedures.

6.0 Procedure

6.1 Process Flowchart



6.2 Complaints Process

This procedure outlines the steps for handling student complaints. Students should contact the appropriate staff member depending on the nature of the issue:

- a) For academic matters, students should speak with their Trainer, the CC, or Teacher
- b) For non-academic matters, students should contact SS.

6.2.1 Informal Complaint Resolution

Students are encouraged to seek early resolution by raising their concerns directly with the relevant staff member. Open and respectful communication often leads to a prompt and satisfactory outcome without the need for a formal process.

6.2.2 Formal Complaint Submission

If the student is not satisfied with the response or the matter is more serious, the student can raise a formal complaint by completing the Student Complaint Form available on the College website and submitting it to the SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable). Refer to the contact details provided in [Schedule 2](#).

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, SS will:

- a) Assess the type and severity of the complaint and log in the Complaints Register, if applicable.
- b) Forward the complaint to the relevant DH within one (1) working day.
- c) For academic complaints, the student may also be required to book an appointment with the respective CC/Academic Manager/Principal.

• Logging Criteria

- a) Complaints relating to appeals, where there is already a designated internal review or academic process in place (e.g., late enrolment, assessment marks, etc.), do not need to be logged in the Complaints Register. (Refer to Internal Appeals process).
- b) However, **critical or serious complaints must be logged**, especially if they:
 - Raise allegations of student misconduct, discrimination, or harassment.
 - Involve systemic issues, legal risks, or reputational impact.
 - Are escalated to external agencies or legal representatives.

6.2.3 Complaint Review and Decision

Within ten (10) working days of receiving the formal complaint:

- a) The relevant DH will review the complaint and supporting information.
- b) DH may request further information from the student and/or staff involved.
- c) A written outcome will be provided to the student, outlining the decision, reasons for the outcome, and the student's right to access an independent external appeals process if not satisfied.

For academic related complaints reviewed by CC/Academic Manager/Principal, a copy of the written outcome must be forwarded to the DH SS.

If the student accepts the outcome and does not wish to escalate the complaint further, the matter is considered resolved. The DH SS will finalise the College's decision and record the outcome in the SMS.

6.3 Internal Appeals

6.3.1 Lodging an Appeal

- The student must submit a completed Appeal Form to SS **within 20 working days** of receiving the official notification of a decision. The Appeal Form is available on the College website. Appeals must be submitted in writing to Student Services using the designated "Appeal Form" and must clearly outline the grounds for appeal, supported by any relevant evidence.
- For appeals against the College's intention to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress, the Appeal Form must be submitted to the respective CC/Academic Manager/Principal within the same timeframe.

6.3.2 Appeal Review

The staff member responsible (as outline in the table below) must:

- Review the Appeal Form and any supporting evidence submitted by the student.
- Access and review the student's records in the SMS.
- Conduct interviews if additional information or clarification is required.
- Finalise a decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.
- Inform the student of the outcome in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

Types of Appeal	Person Responsible
Late Enrolment	DH SS/Principal
Assessment Marks	CC/Principal/Academic Manager
ITR for Course Progress	CC/Principal/Academic Manager
Refusal of Leave of Absence	CEO
Refusal of Release	CEO
Refusal of Refund	CEO
ITR for Non-payment	DH SS
ITR for Misbehaviour	CEO
ITR for Attendance	DH SS/Principal
Course Credit (RPL/ CT)	CC

6.3.3 Outcome

- If the original **decision is overturned or varied** in favour of the student, the College will immediately implement any required changes, corrective or preventative actions, and initiate a continuous improvement process, where appropriate.
- If the original **decision is upheld**, the College may proceed with the decision (including cancellation of the electronic Confirmation of Enrolment (eCoE)) and, where applicable, implement any necessary actions or improvements. The student will also be informed of their right to access the external appeals.
- If the **student is not satisfied** with the appeal outcome, they have the right to lodge an external appeal with an external appeals body listed in [Schedule 2](#).

Note: The College will **not** report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS until both internal and external appeals processes are complete.

6.3.4 Communication, Documentation and Record Keeping

- All communication must be recorded in the SMS
- The student is provided with a written statement of the appeals outcome, including the reasons of the decision.
- Records of the complaints or appeals must be kept in the student's file and/or SMS.

6.4 Complaints and Feedback from Parents, Guardians, and the Wider School Community (Specific for [AIHS](#))

6.4.1 Intent and Applicability

Australian International High School (AIHS) is committed to fostering transparent, respectful, and responsive communication with its broader school community. This section outlines the external complaints and feedback process available to parents, legal guardians, carers, staff, community members, contractors, and other stakeholders who are not students. (Students are guided by a separate internal complaints and appeals procedure.)

This mechanism provides a structured and accessible way for stakeholders to raise concerns, provide constructive feedback, or submit formal complaints regarding school operations, services, staff conduct, or school policies.

6.4.2 Who Can Submit a Complaint

This complaints procedure is available to all non-student individuals or groups connected to the school community, including but not limited to:

- Parents and guardians of students
- Extended family members or carers
- School staff and contractors
- Visitors, service providers, and community members

6.4.3 When to Submit a Complaint

This procedure should be used when:

- Efforts to resolve an issue informally have been unsuccessful
- A concern involves a serious or recurring matter
- You seek to provide formal feedback regarding school operations, services, or interactions with staff

Before submitting a formal complaint, it is encouraged that complainants:

- Attempt resolution with the relevant staff member or department where appropriate
- Review the school's policies related to the matter of concern
- Prepare any supporting documents or notes that can clarify the complaint

6.4.4 How to Submit a Complaint

Complaints or feedback can be submitted via the following channels:

- **Telephone:** Call the School Office at +61 2 9224 5500
- **In-Person Appointment:** Email Student Services (studentservices@academies.edu.au) to arrange a meeting with the appropriate staff member or the School Principal
- **Email:** Send formal complaint to info@academies.edu.au

Anonymous complaints may be submitted; however, the ability to investigate and resolve such matters may be limited if follow-up information is unavailable.

6.4.5 Who Manages Complaints

- General complaints will be managed by the School Principal, who will coordinate investigation and response within a reasonable timeframe (usually within 10 working days).
- Specialised or sensitive complaints, including those involving the School Principal, will be referred to the Executive Director (ED) or another appropriate authority. Contact details can be requested via Student Services.
- All complaints will be logged, tracked, and responded to with professionalism and respect for confidentiality.

6.5 External Appeals

- If the student chooses to access the external appeals process, they must do so within **five (5) working days** of receiving the internal appeal outcome.
- The student must inform the College once they have lodged an external appeal. This ensures that their **enrolment is maintained** during the external review process.
- The student is entitled to access **one external appeal process** related to the matter. The College is not required to wait for the outcomes of **multiple external processes** that the student may choose to pursue. After the conclusion of the external appeal, the College may proceed to report the student to the relevant authorities, if applicable.
- VET students can also raise complaints and concerns to the [ASQA](#) through [National Training Complaints Hotline](#). The National Training Complaints Hotline (NTCH) will review the information provided and refer the complaint to the most appropriate authority to provide further advice. However, NTCH is unable to investigate complaints and will not advocate on the student's behalf.
- Note: AIHS students may lodge complaints to NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA). Complaints to NESA must be made in writing and include relevant information listed [here](#).
- To access external appeals, refer to [Schedule 2](#).

6.6 Withdrawal of Complaint/Appeal

The student may withdraw a complaint or appeal at any time during the resolution process. The student must make the withdrawal in writing and submit it to the SS. This will then be forwarded to the DH SS. Alternatively, the student may send an email to the DH SS using their email address that is registered with the College.

The DH SS will send a written acknowledgement of the withdrawal to the student. The matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved.

6.7 Documenting Complaint/Appeal

6.7.1 The DH SS must keep records of the following, where applicable:

- actions taken to address the root cause of the complaint/appeal;
- minutes of meetings at which actions arising from complaint/appeal were agreed on;
- changes to systems and/or processes to address the inadequacy that led to the complaint/appeal or to improve operations.

6.7.2 The DH SS will record the complaint and its resolution in the College's Complaints Register that will allow identification and detail of the following:

- submission date of complaint;
- nature and description of complaint;
- date/s when cause of complaint occurred;
- attachments (if applicable);
- determined resolution including reasons for any decision;
- date of resolution; and/or
- date written statement of outcomes was sent to student.

6.7.3 The outcome of the complaint/appeal and the reasons for the outcome will be placed in the student file and in the SMS.

6.7.4 The DH SS will monitor and annually review the complaints and appeals as part of their continuous improvement process.

6.8 Confidentiality and Fairness

- The College will manage all complaints confidentially, with information shared only with those directly involved in the investigation and resolution.
- If a complaint involves another individual, that person will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Support persons (e.g. friend, relative, or interpreter) may accompany the complainant in meetings related to the complaint.
- The College encourages respectful communication and will not tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour in the complaints process.

6.9 Forms of Feedback

6.9.1 Feedback or complaints can be provided to the College by various means. These include:

- Student Complaint Form;
- E-mails; or
- Verbal feedback to the College staff.

7.0 References

- 7.1 Management Review (Continuous Improvement) Policy and Procedure
- 7.2 National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025
- 7.3 National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- 7.4 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Guidelines for Approved NSW School Providers Delivering Courses to Overseas Students

8.0 Appendices

- 8.1 Student Complaint Form
- 8.2 Appeal Form
- 8.3 Complaints Register
- 8.4 Unsuccessful Appeals Letter
- 8.5 Appeal against ITR for Unsatisfactory Course Progress Form

Schedule 1

Academies Australasia Institute (AAI)
Academies Australasia Polytechnic (AAPoly) Vocational
Academy of English (AOE)
Australian College of Technology (ACT)
Australian International High School (AIHS)
Clarendon Business College (CBC)
Supreme Business College (SBC)
Skills Training Australasia (STA)

Schedule 2

Contact Details

This schedule is maintained separately from the policy body to ensure contact information remains current. Please contact Student Services for the most up-to-date version if needed.

Complaint Type	Primary Contact	Submission Methods
General complaints or feedback (AAI, ACT, CBC, SBC, AIHS, AOE)	Designated Head, Student Services	- Phone: +61 2 9224 5500 - In person: By appointment through (studentservices@academies.edu.au)
General complaints or feedback (AAPoly VET and STA colleges)	Designated Head, Student Services	- Phone: +61 3 8610 4100 - In person: By appointment through (studentadmin@aapoly.edu.au)
External Appeal – Overseas Students	Commonwealth Ombudsman (CO)	- Online: CO Complaint Form - Phone: 1300 362 072 - Mail: GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601 - Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au - In person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney – Level 20, 60 Castlereagh Street • Melbourne – Level 2, 452 Flinders Street
Complaints to the Regulator (Concerns about training providers)	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) / Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	- Website: National Training Complaints Hotline - Form: Online form - Phone: 13 38 73
Contacting NESAs	NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs)	- Email: schoolrego@nesa.nsw.edu.au - Phone: +61 2 9367 8866 - Post: GPO Box 5300, Sydney NSW 2001