



<b>AAPoly Policy and Procedure</b>			
Standards: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5	NC: 10	<b>Title: Complaints and Appeals</b>	
<b>Version #: 7</b>		<b>Approved By: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</b>	<b>Date: 11/02/2025</b>

<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>			
<b>Rev</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
1	Adapted existing ACA Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure to replace and integrate Complaints and Appeals Policy and Complaints and Appeals Procedure.  Included Lecturer and Academic Dean in the complaints and appeals process.  'Complaint Form' updated to 'Student Complaint Form'	Compliance Officer	17/05/2021
6	Clause 3.2, bullet point three (3) updated to specify that ITR is for international students. In the flowchart and procedures, 'OSO' was replaced with 'external appeals body' and specified that OSO is the external appeals body for international students.	Compliance Officer	01/06/2023
7	Updated to reference the new National Student Ombudsman and clarify AAPoly's preventative measures	Compliance Officer	11/02/2025

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## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1** To describe a formal policy and procedure for dealing fairly and consistently with feedback, complaints and appeals received. This policy and procedure also describes how the feedback is considered and resolved.
- 1.2** To inform students, visitors and interested parties the route by which they can express a complaint and appeal or provide feedback.
- 1.3** To inform staff of this policy and procedure so that staff know what to do if a customer complaint, appeal or feedback is given.

## 2.0 Scope

- 2.1** This policy and procedure applies to all staff, employees, contractors and students of AAPoly.

## 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.
- Formal complaint – refers to an official complaint.

**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;
- Intention to Report (ITR) for unsatisfactory course progress/non-payment/misbehaviour for international students; or
- late enrolment.

**3.3 Resolution** – Process of resolving feedback and/ or concerns raised. A plan of action is agreed by feedback provider.

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**3.4 Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO)** – Investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private schools and colleges in Australia.


**3.5 National Student Ombudsman (NSO)** – Investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with universities and higher education providers in Australia.

## 4.0 Responsibilities

**4.1 All Staff at AAPoly** – Responsible for understanding this policy and procedure and knowing what to do when a student feedback, complaint or appeal is received.

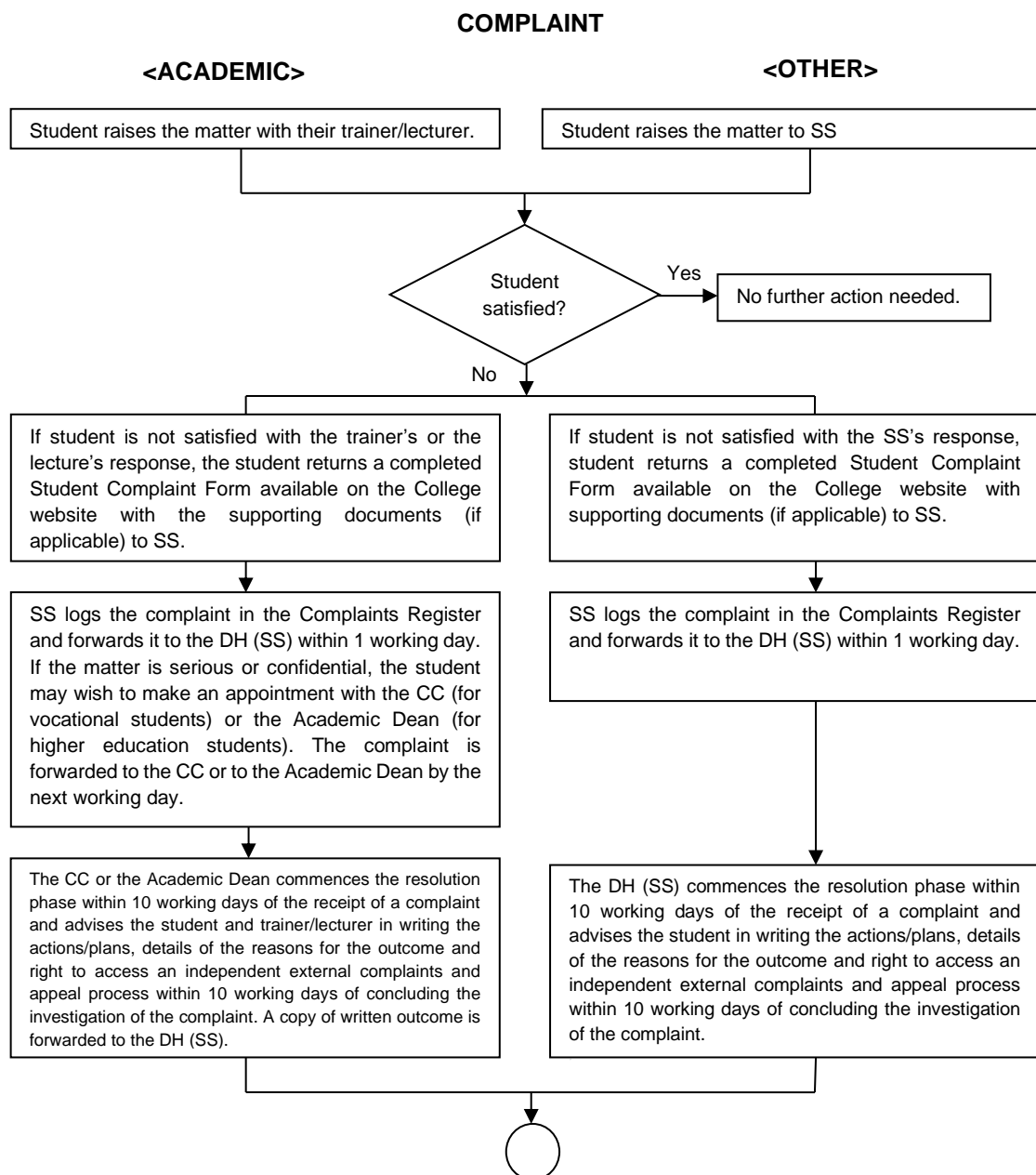
**4.2 Designated Head (DH) – Student Services, VET, Marketing, and ELICOS/ Course Coordinator (CC)/ Academic Dean/ Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Responsible for ensuring that all feedback, complaints and appeals are dealt with fairly and timely.


**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 in the Complaints Register.

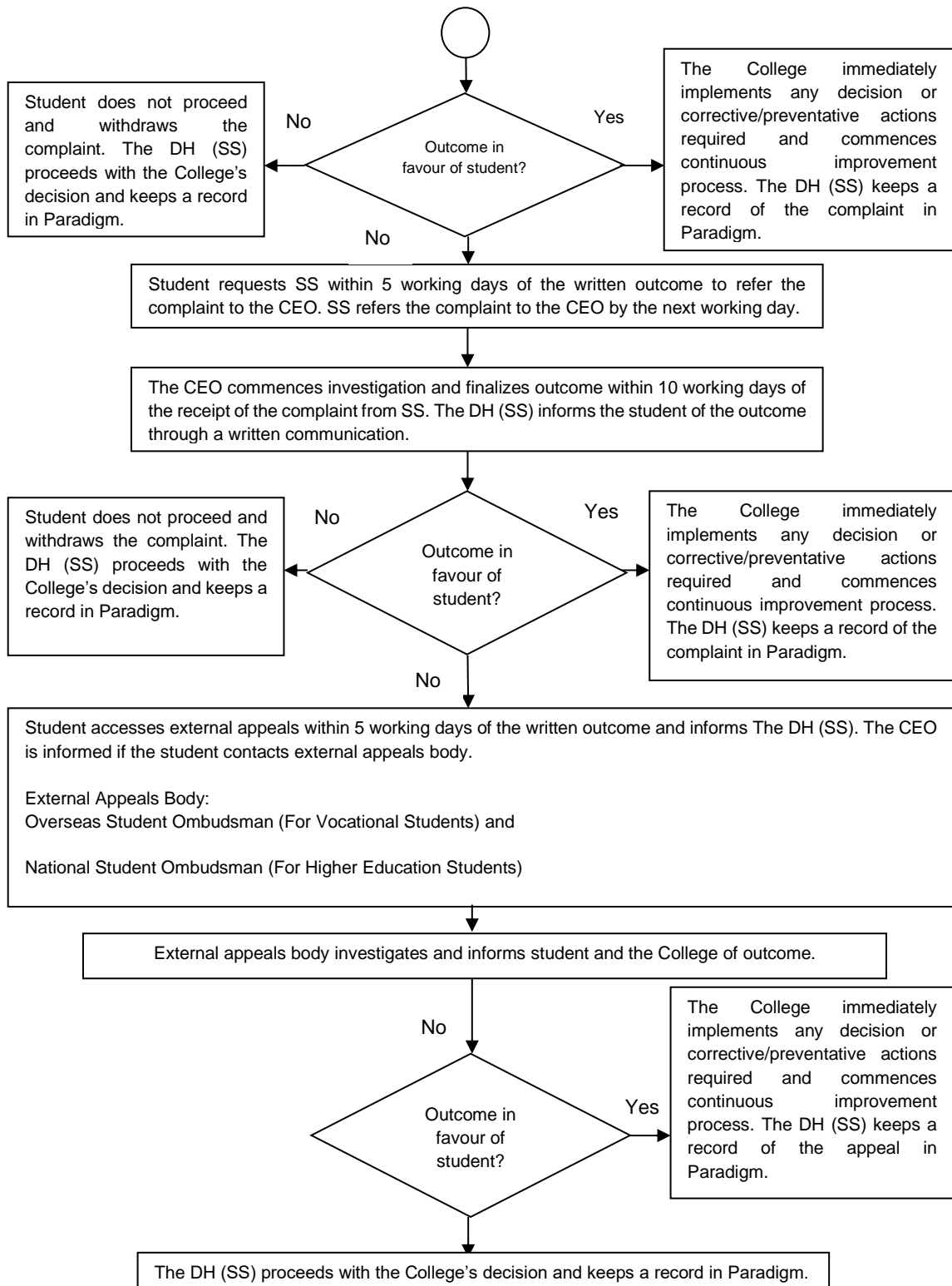
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## 5.0 Procedure

### 5.1 Process Flowchart

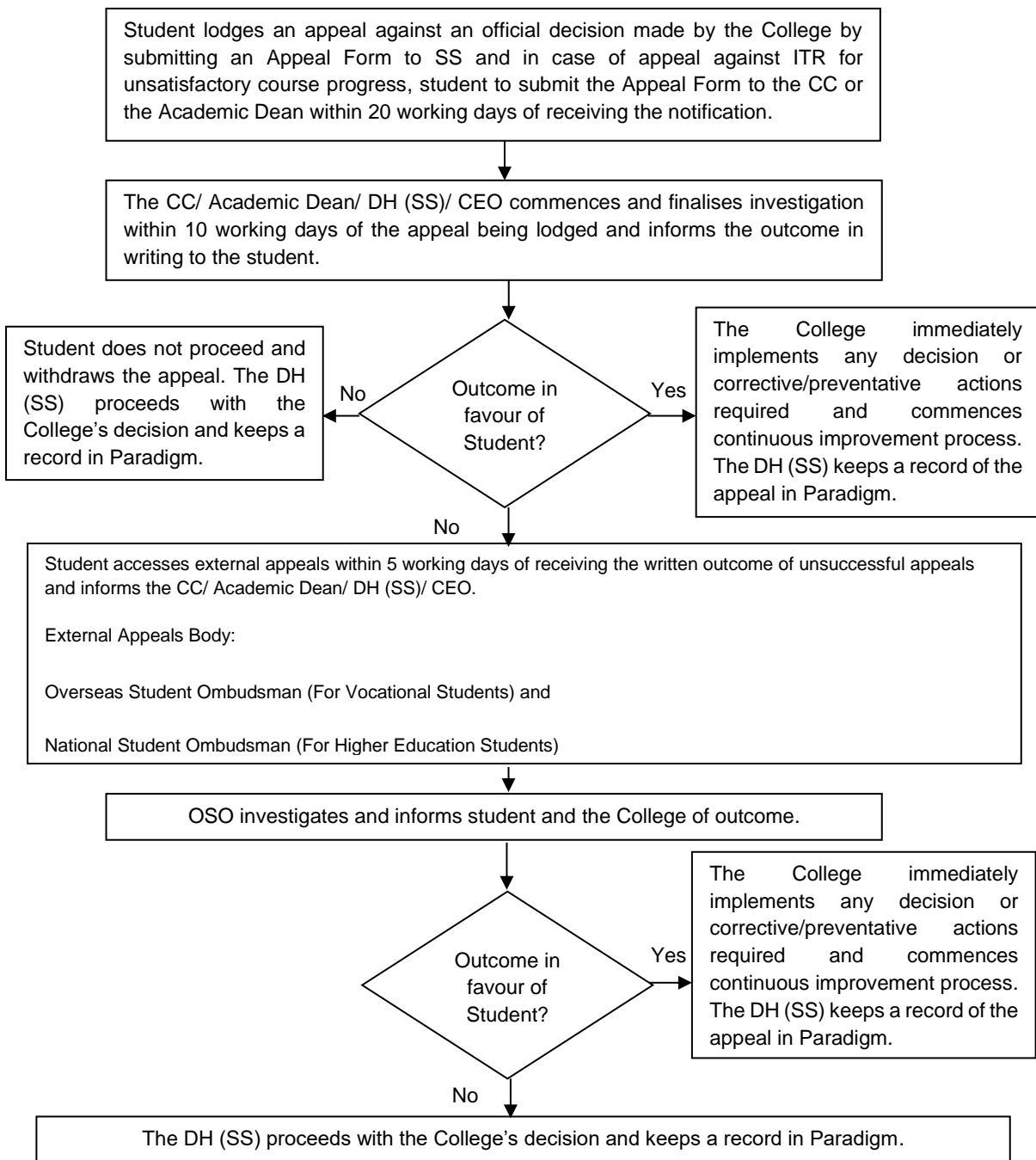



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## APPEAL



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## 5.2 Flowchart Details

Sometimes students may have a complaint or be unhappy about a particular decision or action of the College or of a trainer/lecturer or other College staff members. For academic complaints students should approach the Trainer and/or CC (for vocational students) or the lecturer and/or the Academic Dean (for higher education students). For any other issues, students should contact SS.

### 5.2.1 Complaint (A- Academic related and B- Other)

**5.2.1.1.A** In the first instance, students should raise the matter with their trainer or lecturer. Many issues or problems can be resolved by the trainer or lecturer on the spot and the trainer or lecturer can give the student information which clears up the problem.

**5.2.1.1.B** For other complaints, student must raise the matter to SS.


**5.2.1.2.A** If the student is not satisfied with the trainer or the lecturer's response or the matter is more serious, the student completes and returns the Student Complaint Form available on the College website to SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable).

**5.2.1.2.B** If the student is not satisfied with the SS's response or the matter is more serious, the student completes and returns the Student Complaint Form available on the College website to SS. The student should attach copies of any supporting documents (if applicable).

**5.2.1.3.A** Upon receiving the Student Complaint Form with the supporting evidence, SS immediately logs the complaint in the Complaints Register and forwards it to the DH (SS) within 1 working day. If the matter is very serious or confidential, the student may wish to make an appointment with the CC or the Academic Dean to give notice of the complaint. The complaint is referred to the CC or the Academic Dean by the next working day to handle.

**5.2.1.3.B** Upon receiving the Student Complaint Form with the supporting evidence, SS immediately logs the complaint in the Complaints Register and forwards it to the DH (SS) within 1 working day.

**5.2.1.4.A** Within 10 working days of the receipt of a formal complaint, the CC or the Academic Dean will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or trainer/lecturer/staff members if

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further information is required. The CC or the Academic Dean shall, if they see fit, make a decision on the matter and advise the student and trainer in writing the actions/plans, details of the reasons for the outcome and right to access an independent external complaints and appeals process within 10 working days of concluding the investigation of the complaint. A copy of written outcome is forwarded to the DH (SS).

**5.2.1.4.B** Within 10 working days of the receipt of a formal complaint, the DH (SS) will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or staff members if further information is required. The DH (SS) shall, if he sees fit, make a decision on the matter and advise the student in writing the actions/plans, details of the reasons for the outcome and right to access an independent external complaints and appeal process within 10 working days of concluding the investigation of the complaint.


**5.2.1.5 If the outcome is in favour of the student**, the College immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. The DH (SS) keeps a record of the complaint in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

**If the outcome is not in favour of the student**, the student may choose either to withdraw the complaint or proceed further. If student proceeds, the student must request SS within 5 working days of the written outcome to refer the complaint to the CEO. SS refers the complaint to the CEO by the next working day. If student does not proceed and withdraws the complaint, the DH (SS) proceeds with the College's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

**5.2.1.6** The CEO commences investigation and finalises outcome within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint from SS. Once the outcome has been finalised by the CEO, the DH (SS) informs the student of the outcome through a written communication including details of the reasons for the outcome.

**5.2.1.7 If the outcome is in favour of the student**, the College immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. The DH (SS) keeps a record of the complaint in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

**If the outcome is not in favour of the student**, the student may choose either to withdraw the complaint or access an independent external appeals body. If student proceeds, the student must contact

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the external appeals body within 5 working days of the written outcome and inform the DH (SS). If the student accesses external appeal body, the CEO is informed. If student does not proceed and withdraws the complaint, the DH (SS) proceeds with the College's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

External Appeals Body:

- Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO) for Vocational Students.
- National Student Ombudsman (NSO) for Higher Education Students.

**5.2.1.8** The external appeals body investigates and informs student and the College of outcome. The appeal procedure will be determined by the independent mediator. If required, all documentation from the student and the College related to the appeal will be forwarded to the independent body.

**5.2.1.9 If the outcome of the external appeal is in favour of the student**, the College immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. The DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.


**If the outcome is not in favour of the student**, the DH (SS) proceeds with the College's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

## **5.2.2 Appeal Against an Official Decision Made by the College**

**5.2.2.1** Student lodges an appeal against an official decision made by the College by submitting an Appeal Form to SS within 20 working days of receiving the notification.

In case of appeal against the College's intention to report for unsatisfactory course progress, student submits the Appeal Form to the CC or the Academic Dean within 20 working days of receiving the notification.

**5.2.2.2** Staff responsible as per the type of appeal (CC/ Academic Dean/ DH (SS)/ CEO) commences and finalises investigation within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged. Staff will consider the information provided (if applicable) and information about the student in the Student Management System (Paradigm) and may contact the

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student if further information is required. Once the outcome has been finalised the student is informed in writing.

<b>Types of Appeal</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Assessment Marks	Course Coordinator/Academic Dean
ITR for Course Progress	Course Coordinator/Academic Dean
ITR for Non-payment	Chief Executive Officer
ITR for Misbehaviour	Chief Executive Officer
Course Credit (RPL /CT)	Course Coordinator/Academic Dean
Refusal of Leave of Absence	Chief Executive Officer
Refusal of Release	Chief Executive Officer
Refusal of Refund	Chief Executive Officer
Late Enrolment	Course Coordinator/ Academic Dean


**5.2.2.3 If the outcome is in favour of the student,** the College immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. The DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

**If the outcome is not in favour of the student,** the student may choose either to withdraw the appeal or access an external appeals body. If student proceeds, the student must contact the external appeals body within 5 working days of the written outcome and inform the CC/ Academic Dean/ DH (SS)/ CEO. If student does not proceed and withdraws the appeal, the DH (SS) proceeds with the College's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.

**5.2.2.4** The external appeals body investigates and informs student and the College of outcome. The appeal procedure will be determined by the independent mediator. If required, all documentation from the student and the College related to the appeal will be forwarded to the independent body.

**5.2.2.5** If the outcome of the external appeal is in favour of the student, the College immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. The DH (SS) keeps a record of the appeal in Paradigm as evidence of the communication to the student.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the DH (SS) proceeds with the College's decision and keeps a record in Paradigm.


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### 5.3 General Guidelines

- If the College considers that more than 60 calendar days is required to process and finalise student complaint or appeal, the College will inform student in writing the reasons as why more than 60 calendar days is required and will regularly update student on the progress of the matter.
- The Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure does not, in any way, inhibit the student's rights to pursue other legal remedies under the Federal or State law. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
- The College will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.
- Students must also enrol in their course during the complaints and/or appeals process.
- There is no cost to the complainant and/or appellant for utilising this complaints and/or appeals process.
- At all meetings, the student may have a support person present (at the student's cost). If the student is under the age of 18, the parent or guardian must also be present.
- Student has the right to appeal a decision made by the College to report their unsatisfactory course progress based on the following grounds:
  - the College's failure to record or calculate a student's marks accurately,
  - compassionate or compelling circumstances, or
  - the College has not implemented its intervention strategy and other policies according to its documented policies and procedures that have been made available to the student.

### 5.4 External Appeal

**5.4.1** The student will have access and receive the outcome of only **one external appeal process** before the College may report the student to the relevant authorities where applicable. Hence the College does not have to await the outcome of multiple external appeal processes which the student may wish to access. However, the College will inform students that they could refer to the external appeals body.

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#### **External Appeals Body:**

- **Overseas Student Ombudsman (Vocational Students)**

The OSO offers a free and independent service for vocational students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. The student may initiate the external appeals process to OSO by telephone, in writing, by fax, or using OSO's online complaint form. Refer to OSO's contact information below.

Tel: 1300 362 072

Fax: 02 6276 0123

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints>

Online Complaint Form: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

- **National Student Ombudsman (Higher Education Students)**

The NSO offers a free and independent service for higher education students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their higher education provider. The student may initiate the external appeals process to NSO by telephone, in writing, by fax, or using NSO's online complaint form. Refer to NSO's contact information below.

Tel: 1300 395 775

Email: [nsooutreach@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:nsooutreach@ombudsman.gov.au)


Website: <https://www.nso.gov.au/>

Online Complaint Form: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

### **5.5 Withdrawal of Complaint/ Appeal**

**5.5.1** 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.

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

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## 5.6 Documenting Complaint/Appeal

**5.6.1** The DH 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.

**5.6.2** 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.

**5.6.3** The outcome of the complaint/appeal and the reasons for the outcome will be placed in the student file and in the Paradigm.

**5.6.4** DH (SS) will monitor and annually review the complaints and appeals as part of their continuous improvement process.

## 5.6 Forms of Feedback

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

- Student Complaint Form;
- e-mails; or
- verbal feedback to AAPoly staff.

## 6.0 References

**6.1** Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure

## 7.0 Appendices

**7.1** Student Complaint Form

**7.2** Appeal Form

**7.3** Complaints Register

**7.4** Unsuccessful Appeals Letter

**7.5** Appeal against ITR for Unsatisfactory Course Progress Form