



Complaints & Appeals Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Australian Paramedical College (APC) is committed to undertake all necessary actions to resolve student complaints, grievances and appeals relating to both academic and non-academic matters in a fair and expeditious manner. This policy may also be applied to persons seeking to enrol in a course of study with Industry Pathways.

1.2 The CEO of the Australian Paramedical College is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the VET Quality Framework (VQF) including Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTO). This includes the complaints and appeals policy and procedures.

1.3 The Quality Practice Coordinator as the delegate of the CEO is responsible for the Quality practices for complaints and appeals.

1.4 The Commercial Manager as the delegate of the CEO as being responsible for complaints related to course fees, costs and refunds.

2.0 Purpose

Australian Paramedical College has developed this complaint and appeals policy to:

- a. Reassure students that any disputes or complaints will be taken seriously, handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a speedy resolution;
- b. Ensure that students have a clear understanding of the steps involved in Australian Paramedical College complaint and appeals policy; and,
- c. Provide independent authorities who may assist in the event of a complaint or appeal with relevant information regarding the company's complaint and appeals process.
- d. Support compliance with Standard 6 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

3.0 Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- a. APC meet the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 in that every RTO must be compliant with Standard 6 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. As an RTO we must have a publicly available complaints and appeals policy. This policy is available on the APC website, is provided to students on enrolment and is additionally available on request.



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- b. All students to be made aware of the Australian Paramedical College Complaints and Appeals Procedure and their right to take their complaint or appeal to the National VET Regulator if they wish to do so;
- c. All complaints and appeals received will be given consideration with full attention to details with the objective of an amicable settlement to all parties concerned;
- d. Resolution to any complaint or appeal between aggrieved parties will be addressed informally and/or formally, and in an open and trusting environment; and,
- e. All appeals must be lodged in writing and the complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome and the reasons for that outcome within ten (10) business days.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Australian Paramedical College students, staff, contractors & stakeholders.

In the event that a student has a grievance concerning any matter in relation to Australian Paramedical College staff, other students or procedures, there is a process in place to ensure that the grievance can be resolved amicably. Students have access to a complaints and appeal procedure if they feel they have been unjustly treated or have a serious complaint.

A student and/or provider may be assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the grievance or complaint.

A **complaint** can be made to the Australian Paramedical College relating to but not limited to the conduct of the following:

- trainers, assessors and/or other staff
- students of the RTO
- any third parties providing services on behalf of the RTO (where relevant).

Complaints may be made to any member of staff and processed by the Quality Practice Coordinator

An **appeal** can be made to Australian Paramedical College to request a review of a decision, including assessment decisions.

Appeals must ideally be made directly to the Quality Practice Coordinator.

The Australian Paramedical College will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaints and appeals process.



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- a. Any staff member can receive a complaint. Where possible, complaints are resolved immediately.
- b. Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately they must be transferred to the Quality Practice Coordinator.

All written (formal) complaints and appeals are to be registered and the complainant/ appellant notified of receipt in writing within 5 working days.

- a. Australian Paramedical College maintains a secure Complaints and Appeals Register, documenting all complaints and appeals received, as well as actions taken and decisions made.
- b. The Australian Paramedical College will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes reviewing both the details in the complaints and appeals register, and the complaints and appeals policy and procedures, and taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.
- c. The Australian Paramedical College will apply a natural justice process to manage and address complaints and appeals.
- d. The Australian Paramedical College will review, investigate and respond to the complainant within 60 calendar days to identify the outcome or finalisation of the complaint or appeal investigation.
- e. Where an outcome cannot be identified within the 60 calendar days, the complainant will be advised by the Quality Practice Coordinator of the timeframe and ongoing investigation anticipated end date.

5.0 Academic Appeal

Australian Paramedical College seeks to prevent appeals by ensuring that students are satisfied with their course and its outcomes.

Personnel are expected to be fair, courteous and helpful in all dealings with students.

Any complaint or issue relating to training and assessment will be treated seriously, investigated thoroughly, and dealt with according to the merit of the complaint. Appeals must be made within five (5) business days of receipt of assessment.

Australian Paramedical College will maintain a student's enrolment while a complaint and appeal process is on-going, however, this does not exclude Australian Paramedical College from reserving the right to suspend a student from studies and attending class or visiting the Australian Paramedical College sites if that is considered necessary during this period.



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All records of any appeals will be kept on file in accordance with Document and Data Control Policy and the Privacy Policy.

Academic appeals will be addressed by Australian Paramedical College within ten working (10) days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

Procedure

1. If a complaint relates to a report about harm or safety, please refer to the Australian Paramedical College, Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
2. For verbal complaints:
 - Personnel are to address and attempt to resolve the complaint if possible, advise the Quality Practice Coordinator of the complaint, its cause, actions taken, and decisions made to document in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
 - If the complaint cannot be promptly and simply resolved, advise that the issue may need to be formally documented and or will be escalated to the Quality Practice Coordinator or advise to make a formal complaint in writing to the same to address the complaint or issue
3. To put a complaint/appeal in writing, the complainant/appellant shall:
 - Be entitled to the support of a third party in progressing the complaint/appeal if required.
 - Put the complaint/appeal in writing themselves using the complaints and appeals form or
 - An employee can make a written record of the complaint for the complainant to sign. In this case
 - note whether the complainant/appellant wants the support of a third party
 - ensure the complainant signs and dates the form
 - identify yourself, and your role within the RTO
 - sign and date the form yourself.
 - Appeals must be in writing from the student and made within five (5) days.

4. The Quality Practice Coordinator should be the recipient of the written complaint/appeals. Where an employee receives a complaint, they shall:
 - if the complaint/appeal is in relation to the Quality Practice Coordinator, it is to be forwarded to the CEO.

The CEO or delegate shall enter it into a separate secure Complaints and Appeals Register, which is kept separate from the main Register.

- send a prompt written acknowledgement to the complainant from either the Quality Practice Coordinator or the CEO as appropriate.
5. To resolve the complaint/appeal, the Quality Practice Coordinator will
 - collaborate and discuss the issue/s with the staff member to whom the complaint/appeal was made.
 - give the complainant/appellant an opportunity to present their case (they may be accompanied by other people as support or as representation)
 - give the relevant staff member, third party or student (as applicable) an opportunity to present their case. They also may be accompanied by other people as support or as representation.
 - if necessary, convene an independent panel, the Complaints and Appeals Committee, to hear the complaint/appeal.
 6. The committee must not have had previous involvement with the complaint/appeal, and must include a minimum of three of the following representatives:
 - The CEO
 - The Commercial Manager
 - Quality Practice Coordinator
 - Paramedical Course Coordinator
 - Student Success Coordinator
 - Executive Support Coordinator
 - An independent representative from outside the organisation.



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The committee's role is to:

- address the issue/s
 - apply natural justice
 - communicate the outcome/decision to all parties in writing within 60 days of receipt of the complaint/appeal
 - document the complaint/appeal — including the cause, actions taken, and decisions made — in the appropriate secure Complaints and Appeals Register.
7. If the complaint/appeal is not finalised within 60 calendar days of its receipt, inform the complainant/appellant of the reasons in writing and regularly update them on the progress of the matter.
8. If the procedures fail to resolve the issue/s, the complainant/appellant may have the outcome reviewed (on request) by an appropriate party independent of the RTO.

The Complainant may seek to lodge the issue through ASQA who accept complaints about training providers from all members of the community.

9. The RTO will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes:
- reviewing the details in the Complaints and Appeals Register
 - reviewing the complaints and appeals policy and procedures
 - taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.
10. If the process fails to resolve the complaint or appeal, or arrive at an amicable outcome a review by an independent party will be provided if requested

Definitions

Appeal: An appeal is a request for the reconsideration of a decision that has already been made. An appeal can only be made by the person that the original decision affected.

Complaint: A Complaint is the formal communication of dissatisfaction with a product or service provided by Australian Paramedical College

Natural Justice Relates to the use and application of 'Procedural Fairness'

Related Documents

Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Document and Data Control Policy

Privacy Policy

Complaints & Appeals Process

Complaints Form