

Complaints, Appeals and Grievance Policy and Procedure (VET Courses)

Statement

AIHFE is committed to continuous improvement by providing students with a mechanism for lodging grievances, complaints or appeals with respect to successful resolution or positive outcomes for prospective and enrolled students in the AIHFE VET courses.

AIHFE will ensure prospective or domestic students grievances, complaints and appeals are dealt with in a timely manner.

Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy at which the grievance has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.

Scope

This policy applies to all AIHFE students enrolled in VET courses and prospective students.

Objectives

- Ensure that procedural fairness is applied to all parties involved in a grievance;
- Ensure that decisions are impartial, transparent and capable of review;
- Minimise personal and organisational dysfunction arising from unresolved claims;
- Ensure student complaints, grievances and appeals are dealt with promptly and in accordance with the principles of fairness and equity.

Definitions of appeal, Grievances and Complaints:

Academic Grievance: grievance/s which relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in the course of study.

Appeal: The process in which AIHFE manage requests for a review of a decision, including assessment decisions, made by AIHFE or a third-party providing services on behalf of AIHFE.

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction regarding an established procedure, which affects the quality of services offered by the organization including the conduct of the AIHFE, its trainers, assessors or other staffs or a third-party providing services on the AIHFE's behalf or a learner of the AIHFE.

Complaints are managed through the Continuous Improvement Section.

Complainant: In relation to non-academic grievances, the term "complainant" applies to both current students of the Organisation and students as in prospective students seeking to enrol with the Organisation.

Grievance: a serious problem or concern of an academic or non-academic nature raised by an enrolled student or prospective student, which is believed by that student, to disadvantage them in the course of their study at AIHFE.

Non-Academic Grievance: grievance/s which do not relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in the course of study.

Non-Academic Grievances includes complaints concerning the following:

- Discrimination
- Unfairness and injustice
- Vilification
- Sexual harassment
- Other forms of harassment
- Student amenities
- Complaints in relation to personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student
- General complaints including dissatisfaction with services
- Complaints about financial matters
- Fines and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities and the use or misuse of personal information.

VET Courses: Courses that lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

Principles of grievances/complaints

- Responses to formal grievances and complaints lodged are coordinated by the CEO of the AIHFE.
- All complainants associated with VET courses enabled courses making a complaint, grievance or appeal are provided with the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the grievance process.
- All grievances are managed fairly, equitably and as efficiently as possible, at no cost to the complainant.
- That the complainant and any respondent is not victimised or discriminated against at any of the stages set out in this policy, nor as a result of a grievance being raised.
- A full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
- Where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, AIHFE will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- If the grievance is resolved, the CEO will provide a formal written response to the complainant outlining the agreed outcome to the grievance or complaint

or appeal and forward a brief report or a copy of the finding with accompanying documents to the Director.

- This policy is applicable regardless of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the persons' place of residence or mode of studies.
- Information concerning this policy and procedure and necessary training will be provided to all the staff at the staff induction procedure.

Publication

- This policy and procedure was agreed and ratified by the Directors of the Australian Institute of Higher and Further Education Pty Ltd on 07/01/2015 and reviewed and ratified again on 09/02/19. This policy and procedure will be disseminated by publication on Australian Institute of Higher and Further Education Pty Ltd's website.

Student Privacy

Aggrieved student/s must be reasonably identified for formal proceedings to commence under the grievance policy and procedure. AIHFE acknowledges and respects the privacy of students.

It is required under the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012 to comply with the Information Privacy Principles in respect of the collection, use and disclosure of personal information from individuals. Records of all grievances, applications for review of decisions and outcomes of the grievance process are kept for a period of five years.

These records are kept strictly confidential and stored securely at AIHFE. All students are able to access their personal information held by AIHFE under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

Grievance Procedures

This grievance procedure can be utilised by clients to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to a client's progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a Vocational Education Training (VET) course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that AIHFE in relation to the client. All the Grievances and the action taken will be recorded in the Grievance Register and will be maintained by the Registrar or a nominated member of the staff.

During all stages of this procedure, AIHFE will take all steps to ensure that:

- the client and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against
- the client has an opportunity to formally present his/her case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings

- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the client or a respondent
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the client, AIHFE will immediately take any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the client of the outcome
- there is no cost to the client to utilise this grievance procedure.

Stage one - Formal Complaint and Grievance

Formal complaints and grievances must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the CEO as follows:

There is no cost for accessing the internal complaint and grievance process.

The CEO
Australian Institute of Higher and Further Education
PO Box 3079
Success
WA 6964

Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing within five working days. The grievance handling process will commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal complaint and grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

The Registrar or her nominee (who must be independent of the grievance) will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the client hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face to face interview with the client. When such clarification occurs in a face to face interview, both the client and any respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The CEO, or the nominated staff member, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the client within 20 working days of receipt of the grievance on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the client of his/her right to access the internal appeals process if the client is not satisfied with the outcome.

Stage two - Internal review and appeal

If the client is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her formal complaint and grievance, the client may lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receiving notification of the outcome.

There is no cost for accessing the internal review and appeal process.

Appeals must be submitted on writing marked to the attention of the Director as follows:



The Director
Australian Institute of Higher and Further Education
PO Box 3079
Success
WA 6964

The Director will convene an Appeals Panel within 15 working days of receipt of an Appeal. This panel is to comprise appropriate individuals relevant to the nature of the appeal. To ensure independence no person involved in the original grievance process may be a member of an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel will make a determination by reviewing the original decision and the basis of the appeal. Where the Appeals Panel meets with the client or any respondent in the course of its review, both the client and any respondent may ask another person to be present at these meetings. Following the decision of the Appeals Panel, the Director will provide a written report to the client within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the client of his/her right to access the external appeals process if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome.

Stage three - External appeal and review

If the client is dissatisfied with the outcome of his/her appeal, the client may lodge an external appeal to an external mediator within 20 working days of receiving notice of the outcome.

AIHFE agree to be bound by the External Reviewer's recommendations, and the Chief Executive Officer will ensure any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the report from the External Reviewer.

External Mediation Services

The AIHFE uses Resolution Institute for external appeal, mediation and review process.

Cost of mediation to be equally shared by both the student and the AIHFE. For details of the external mediation process and the fees please contact the Resolution Institute on

Telephone: (02) 9251 3366

Email: nominations@resolution.institute

Level 2,13-15 Bridge St, Sydney 2000.

<https://www.resolution.institute/membership-information/student-mediation-scheme>

or AIHFE on 08 94173553.

The client may access an external mediation or support service at any time. The client should be aware that external services will typically only become involved if he/she can confirm to them that he/she has exhausted all options

made available to him/her by AIHFE. They may contact AIHFE to validate the client's claim that this has happened.

The procedure set out in this document does not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the client's rights to take action under Australian Consumer Law. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe the client's right to pursue other legal remedies. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the decision, the Director may refer them to ASQA website for further information about making a complaint.

The primary reason of any appeal will be included in the systematic monitoring and evaluation processes of the RTO so that appropriate corrective action can be instigated to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Enrolment Status

Where the client chooses this policy and procedure, AIHFE will maintain his/her enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

Delay in processing and finalizing a complaint or an appeal:

If AIHFE considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, AIHFE:

- a) informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and
- b) regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.