



COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

This policy establishes a comprehensive and structured framework for managing complaints and appeals at Nova Vocational College Ltd (NVC). It ensures that all concerns raised by students, staff, or stakeholders are addressed in a fair, transparent, timely, and confidential manner, consistent with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

This policy is developed primarily to ensure compliance with Outcome Standard 2.7 of the Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025 and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Standard 10).

NVC recognises complaints and appeals as critical mechanisms for ensuring fairness, accountability, and quality outcomes. Through this policy, NVC ensures that all individuals have access to an internal process that is accessible and impartial, with the opportunity for independent and external review where required. The organisation is committed to maintaining transparency, protecting the rights of all parties, and using outcomes from complaints and appeals to strengthen systems, address risks, and continuously improve the quality of training, assessment, and student support services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students, prospective students, staff, contractors, education agents, employers, and any other stakeholders engaged with NVC. It covers complaints and appeals relating to all aspects of operations, including marketing, enrolment, training and assessment delivery, student support services, administrative processes, and the conduct of staff, students, or third parties (if any).

POLICY

Nova Vocational College (NVC) adopts the following principles in relation to complaints and appeals:

- NVC will provide an accessible, fair and transparent complaints and appeals process that is guided by the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, ensuring that all individuals are treated equitably and without bias.
- NVC will ensure that all students, prospective students, staff and stakeholders are informed of their right to lodge a complaint or appeal, and that clear and accurate

information about the process is made readily available prior to enrolment and throughout the student lifecycle.

- NVC will accept complaints and appeals submitted in writing, verbally, or through formal feedback mechanisms, while encouraging written submissions to support a clear, consistent and fair investigation process.
- NVC will ensure that all complaints and appeals are acknowledged promptly, recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register, and managed in a timely manner in accordance with defined timeframes.
- NVC will investigate all complaints and appeals thoroughly and impartially, ensuring that all relevant parties are provided with the opportunity to present their perspective and that decisions are based on evidence.
- NVC will ensure that complaints or appeals involving staff or third-party providers are managed by personnel who are independent of the matter, to maintain objectivity and fairness.
- NVC will ensure that individuals lodging a complaint or appeal are not disadvantaged, victimised or subject to adverse consequences, and that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process.
- NVC will provide clear and timely communication to complainants and appellants at all stages of the process, including acknowledgement, progress updates, outcomes and reasons for decisions.
- Complaints and appeals processes are provided at no cost to the complainant/appellant. Where an independent external review is initiated by the student, any associated costs may be borne by the student unless otherwise determined by NVC.
- NVC will ensure that complaints are generally lodged within ninety (90) calendar days of the incident and appeals within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision, while allowing flexibility where justified to ensure fairness.
- NVC will ensure that outcomes of complaints and appeals are documented, communicated in writing, and include information about further internal or external review options where applicable.
- NVC will provide access to an independent and impartial external review process where internal processes do not resolve the matter, including referral to appropriate external bodies.
- NVC will manage complaints and appeals for international students in accordance with ESOS requirements, including maintaining enrolment status during internal

appeals where required and ensuring that PRISMS reporting obligations are met only after due process.

- NVC will maintain enrolment status during the internal appeals process where required under ESOS legislation, particularly where the appeal relates to course progress or attendance.
- NVC will cooperate fully with any external complaint or appeal processes and will implement any recommendations arising from external review within required timeframes.
- NVC will use complaints and appeals as a key input into continuous improvement by identifying trends, systemic issues and opportunities for improvement, and recording these in the Continuous Improvement Register.
- NVC will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to complaints and appeals and are supported to manage matters appropriately, consistently and in accordance with this policy.
- NVC will ensure that sufficient systems, processes and resources are in place to effectively manage complaints and appeals and maintain compliance with regulatory requirements.

PROCEDURES

1. Lodgement and Receipt of Complaints and Appeals

- Administration staff must ensure that complaints and appeals can be lodged in writing, via email, through designated forms, or verbally, and must support individuals in formalising their submission where required.
- Administration staff must ensure that all complaints and appeals are directed to the RTO Manager or Chief Executive Officer and are recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register upon receipt.
- Administration staff must ensure that complainants and appellants are encouraged to provide sufficient detail, including the nature of the issue, supporting evidence, steps taken to resolve the matter and the desired outcome.
- Administration staff must ensure that complaints are generally lodged within ninety (90) calendar days of the incident and appeals within thirty (30) calendar days of the decision, while allowing flexibility where required to ensure fairness.

2. Acknowledgement and Initial Assessment

- Administration staff or the RTO Manager must acknowledge receipt of complaints and appeals in writing within two (2) to three (3) working days.
- The RTO Manager must conduct an initial assessment of the complaint or appeal to determine the appropriate course of action, including whether the matter requires immediate attention due to risk or potential systemic impact.
- The RTO Manager must determine whether the matter relates to a complaint, an assessment appeal, or a non-academic appeal and allocate responsibility accordingly.
- The RTO Manager must ensure that all relevant documentation is created, recorded and maintained in the Student Management System and Complaints and Appeals Register.

3. Investigation and Review of Complaints

- The RTO Manager or delegated independent officer must investigate complaints in a fair, impartial and confidential manner, ensuring that all relevant information is gathered and reviewed.
- Staff must engage with the complainant and any involved parties to obtain further details where required, using appropriate communication methods such as meetings, phone calls or written correspondence. Complainants may be accompanied by a support person at any stage of the complaints or appeals process.
- Staff must ensure that all parties are given the opportunity to present their perspective and must maintain procedural fairness throughout the process.
- Where a complaint involves a third-party provider, the RTO Manager must ensure that the third party is involved in the investigation and resolution process.
- The RTO Manager must assess whether the complaint indicates any systemic issues and escalate these for continuous improvement where required.

4. Management of Assessment Appeals

- Trainers must encourage students to initially discuss assessment outcomes with the assessor within a reasonable timeframe to resolve concerns informally where possible.
- Where unresolved, the RTO Manager must arrange for the assessment to be reviewed by a qualified assessor independent of the original decision.

- The independent assessor must review the assessment evidence and make a determination in accordance with assessment requirements, ensuring fairness and consistency.
- The outcome of the reassessment will be considered final unless the matter proceeds to external review.
- Trainers and administration staff must ensure that the outcome of the reassessment is communicated clearly to the student and recorded appropriately.

5. Management of Non-Academic Appeals

- The RTO Manager or CEO must investigate appeals relating to administrative or other non-academic decisions by reviewing the original decision, supporting documentation and relevant policies.
- Staff must engage with the appellant and any relevant parties to gather further information and ensure that all perspectives are considered.
- The appellant must be provided with the opportunity to be accompanied by a support person during discussions where required.
- Where necessary, the RTO Manager or CEO may engage an independent party to review the appeal to ensure impartiality and fairness.

6. Outcome Determination and Communication

- The RTO Manager or CEO must determine the outcome of complaints and appeals based on the evidence gathered and ensure that decisions are fair, consistent and documented.
- Administration staff must provide written notification to the complainant or appellant outlining the outcome, reasons for the decision, actions taken and any recommendations for improvement.
- Staff must ensure that individuals are informed of their right to access further internal or external review processes if they are not satisfied with the outcome.
- Administration staff must ensure that all outcomes are recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register and relevant student or organisational records.

7. Timeframes and Progress Updates

- The RTO Manager must ensure that complaints and appeals are finalised within thirty (30) calendar days where possible and no later than sixty (60) calendar days.
- Where additional time is required, administration staff must inform the complainant or appellant in writing of the reasons for the delay.
- Staff must provide regular progress updates, at least weekly, until the matter is resolved.

8. External Appeals and Independent Review

- The RTO Manager must ensure that complainants and appellants are informed of their right to access external complaint and appeal bodies where internal processes do not resolve the matter.
- Administration staff must provide accurate and up-to-date information on relevant external bodies, including the Overseas Students Ombudsman, National Training Complaints Hotline, ASQA and relevant state authorities.
- NVC must cooperate fully with any external review process and provide access to relevant documentation where permitted by law.
- The CEO must ensure that any recommendations arising from external reviews are implemented within required timeframes and monitored for effectiveness.

9. ESOS and Enrolment Management (International Students)

- Administration staff must ensure that the enrolment status of international students is managed in accordance with ESOS requirements during complaints and appeals processes.
- Staff must ensure that students are not reported or disadvantaged during internal appeals processes where required by legislation.
- Administration staff must ensure that PRISMS reporting is undertaken only after the completion of internal and external appeal processes in accordance with regulatory requirements.

10. Record Keeping and Documentation

- Administration staff must maintain accurate and complete records of all complaints and appeals, including supporting documentation, investigation notes and outcomes.

- All records must be stored securely in the Student Management System and relevant organisational registers.
- Staff must ensure that records are accessible for audit and review purposes and maintained in accordance with record-keeping requirements.

11. Continuous Improvement and Monitoring

- The RTO Manager must regularly review complaints and appeals data to identify trends, recurring issues and areas for improvement.
- Staff must record identified issues and corrective actions in the Continuous Improvement Register.
- The CEO or delegated staff must ensure that improvement actions are implemented within agreed timeframes and monitored for effectiveness.
- Staff must discuss complaints and appeals outcomes in management meetings to support organisational learning and continuous improvement.

VARIATIONS

NVC reserves the right to modify this policy as necessary to comply with legislative changes or organisational needs.