



SITS
COLLEGE

P04

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

HCR Constructions Pty Ltd t/a SITS College

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline SITS College (SITS) system and process for managing complaints and appeals. It provides a transparent overview of how SITS ensures fair, efficient and confidential management of all formal or informal complaints, appeals processes, and feedback.

This policy and procedure ensure compliance with the requirements set out in the *Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025* and the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*.

Definitions

ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET regulator and the RTO's registering body
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Students Management System
Standards	Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025
Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by SITS or by a third party.
Appeal	A request for a decision made by SITS to be reviewed
Overseas Student	A person who is studying in Australia on a student visa. An overseas student is also called an international student.
Services	Training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support

Policy

Nature of complaints and appeals

- SITS responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - the RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - any third-party providing services on behalf of SITS, including education agents.
 - any student or client of SITS.
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of SITS services and activities such as:
 - the application and enrolment process
 - marketing information
 - the quality of training and assessment provided
 - training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements
 - the treatment of any person(s)

- the actions of another student
- An appeal is a request for the review a decision made by SITS. Decisions may be regarding:
 - course admissions
 - refund assessments
 - response to a complaint
 - assessment outcomes / results
 - deferment, suspension or cancellation
 - other decisions made by SITS
- Both the RTO and the complainant must maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation. This obligation also applies to any third parties, support persons, or legal/non-legal representatives involved.
- The complainant is expected to actively participate and cooperate in the investigation and resolution process.

Making a complaint or appeal

- All policies and procedures are introduced and explained during orientation. Students are required to acknowledge that they have read, understood each. It is each student's responsibility to access the most current versions of policies and procedures, which are published on the official SITS website <https://sits.edu.au> to ensure that the information they rely on is accurate and up to date.
- Complaints regarding an incident should be made as soon as possible after the event.
- Appeals must be made within twenty (20) working days of initial decisions.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Online Complaints and Appeals Form*. This online form is available on SITS website. Students can access assistance with accessing or completing the online form by speaking with SITS student services.
- When making a complaint or requesting an appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable SITS to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - Any evidence you must support your complaint or appeal, including
 - details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue
 - suggestions about how the matter might be resolved

Principles of resolution

- SITS is committed to supporting a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process. Through this policy and procedure, SITS ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - are responded to in a professional, consistent and transparent manner
 - are responded to promptly, fairly and objectively, and with sensitivity and confidentiality
 - can be made at no cost to the individual
 - are used to inform continuous improvement
- Appointed SITS personnel will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.

- When a complaint involves allegations against an individual or third party, SITS will notify all parties concerned and ensure each has a fair opportunity to respond to the allegations as part of the complaints process.
 - Each party involved in the complaint or appeal may have a support person of their choice present at any meetings scheduled to resolve the issue.
- There are no charges for students to submit a complaint or appeal to SITS, or to seek information or advice regarding SITS' complaints and appeals process.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Internal appeals

- Appeals must be made within twenty (20) working days of initial decisions.
- Appeals must be made in writing using the Online Complaints and Appeals Form. This online form is available on SITS website. Students can access assistance with accessing or completing the online form by speaking with SITS student services.

Deferral, suspension, cancellation (overseas students)

- For any deferral, suspension or cancellation of enrolment initiated by SITS, SITS will provide the overseas student a written notice of its intention to report.
 - SITS will:
 - advise the overseas student of their right to access the registered provider's internal complaints and appeals process within (20) working days.
 - only report a breach if:
 - the internal and external complaints processes have been completed, and the breach has been upheld
 - the overseas student has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the (20) working day period;
 - the overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process;
or
 - the overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process by notifying the registered provider in writing.
- For any course progression and attendance breaches, SITS must wait for both internal and external complaints and appeals processes to be completed prior to proceeding with the deferral, suspension, or cancellation.
 - Where an overseas student's health or wellbeing, or the wellbeing of others, is likely to be at risk, a SITS-initiated deferral, suspension, or cancellation of enrolment may take effect immediately.
 - The student can still access the internal appeals process after any of these actions are taken and SITS will still complete the process.
 - If the internal appeals process finds in favour of the student, the deferral, suspension, or cancellation will be reversed immediately, the student be notified, and take any corrective action.



Assessment appeals

- In the case of an assessment appeal, the task will be re-assessed by an assessor who was not involved in the original decision.
- The outcome of any reassessment will stand as the final result for the task.
- The student will be advised in writing of the outcome, along with the reasons for the decision.

External appeals

- In the event of the complainant or appellant remaining dissatisfied with the result or conduct of SITS' internal complaints and appeals process, the complainant has the right to access an external appeals process at minimal cost.
- SITS must notify the complainant of their right to access an external complaint handling and appeals process within 10 working days of the completion of the internal complaints handling and appeals process.
 - International students who wish to lodge an external appeal can do so through the Overseas Students Ombudsman. See the [Overseas Student Ombudsman website](#) for further information.
 - The appropriate external complaints body might include:
 - the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) - 1300 362 072
 - [National Training Complaints Hotline - Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#) - 13 38 73
 - [QLD Training Ombudsman](#) - 1800 773 048
 - [Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#)
 - The National Complaints Hotline -

Independent parties

- SITS acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter.
- Costs associated with independent parties will be covered by the party who choose to involve them.
- For international students, the independent party is the Overseas Students Ombudsman. This service is free of charge. Where an international student is not satisfied with the outcome or conduct of the internal process, they are referred to as the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). See information under external complaint avenues.
- SITS will provide complete cooperation with the external mediator investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.
- The Compliance Head will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation, and any recommendations being made by SITS.



Timeframes for resolution

- SITS will advise overseas students of their right to access the registered provider’s internal complaints and appeals process within (20) working days of a written notice of its intention to report.
- Any complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing within (3) working days.
- The complaints and appeals process will commence within (10) working days of receipt of the application. Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable and within at least (20) working days.
- Where a matter requires an alternative timeline for consideration, the complainant or appellant will be notified in writing. Written notification will include:
 - the reasons for the delay
 - regular updates on progress made until such a time that a decision has been reached
- Once a decision has been reached regarding a complaint or appeal, SITS notifies the complainant or appellant in writing as soon as practicable and within (5) working days.
- SITS notifies students of their right to access an external complaint handling and appeals process within (10) working days of the completion of the internal complaints handling and appeals process.

Feedback

- SITS implements mechanisms that support the ongoing provision of feedback from staff, students and third parties. This feedback informs SITS ongoing continuous improvement and quality assurance processes.
- Feedback can be made in writing at any time via the *Online Complaints and Appeals Form*. This online form is available on SITS website.
- SITS also collects feedback from students on enrolment and after course completion to identify specific Continuous Improvement opportunities.

Procedure

Section	Step	Action	Responsible Person
Complaints Management	1	Provide students with information on complaints policy during orientation and publish current version on SITS website.	Student Services + Compliance
	2	Receive complaints in writing via Online Complaints and Appeals Form; assist students if needed.	Student Services
	3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint within 3 working days.	Student Services
	4	Forward complaint to Compliance to commence review within 10 working days.	Student Services



Section	Step	Action	Responsible Person
	5	Review complaint, confirm sufficient detail/evidence, and commence investigation while maintaining confidentiality.	Student Services + Compliance
	6	Notify relevant parties (staff, student, third party) and provide opportunity to respond.	Student Services + Compliance
	7	Arrange support person for complainant at meetings, if requested.	Student Services
	8	Investigate, gather evidence, and consult with relevant staff/parties.	Student Services + Compliance
	9	Document findings and prepare resolution and ensure compliance with Standards/National Code. Escalate complex or high-risk complaints to Managing Director.	Student Services + Compliance
	10	Review and endorse resolution (if escalated)	Managing Director
	11	Communicate decision in writing to complainant within 5 working days of resolution.	Student Services
	12	File records and note necessary in Continuous Improvement Register and Complaints Register.	Student Services + Compliance
	13	Report systemic trends/issues to Managing Director for oversight.	Compliance
	14	Oversee effectiveness of complaint handling and ensure compliance with Outcome Standards/National Code	Compliance
Appeals Management Internal Appeals	1	Receive appeal via Online Complaints and Appeals Form (must be lodged within 20 working days).	Student Services
	2	Acknowledge receipt of appeal within 3 working days.	Student Services
	3	Refer appeal to Compliance for review within 10 working days.	Student Services
	4	Reassess evidence, ensure confidentiality, and consult relevant staff/parties.	Student Services + Compliance



Section	Step	Action	Responsible Person
	5	For assessment appeals, appoint an independent assessor to re-assess work.	Student Services + Compliance
	6	For appeals regarding deferral, suspension, cancellation, wait for both internal and external complaints and appeals processes to be completed prior to proceeding with the deferral, suspension, or cancellation (see exceptions).	Student Services + Compliance
	7	Draft resolution. Escalate to Managing Director if complex or requiring organisational decision.	Compliance
	8	Endorse final resolution and ensure consistency and fairness.	Managing Director
	9	Notify appellant of outcome and reasons in writing within 5 working days of decision.	Student Services
	10	File records and note necessary in Continuous Improvement Register and Complaints and Appeals Register. In the case of deferral, suspension, cancellation, complete any rectification actions or record details in PRISMS.	Compliance
Appeals Management External Appeals	1	If appellant dissatisfied, advise them within 10 working days of their right to external appeals. Provide details of external bodies (Commonwealth Ombudsman, National Training Complaints Hotline, Overseas Students Ombudsman). Ensure students understand the purpose of an external appeal.	Student Services + Compliance
	2	Ensure cooperation with external investigating body (respond promptly).	Compliance
	3	In the case of deferral, suspension, cancellation, complete any rectification actions or record details in PRISMS (if applicable).	Student Services + Compliance
	4	Notify appellant of outcome and reasons in writing within 5 working days of decision.	Student Services
	5	Record outcome in Continuous Improvement Register and Complaints and Appeals Register.	Student Services + Compliance



Section	Step	Action	Responsible Person
	6	Monitor systemic issues and report to Managing Director.	Compliance + Managing Director
Feedback	1	Receive feedback via one of the approved feedback mechanisms.	Student Services
	2	If necessary, contact the individual providing feedback to obtain further details or information.	Student Services
	3	Assess feedback and identify Continuous Improvement opportunities.	Student Services
	4	File records and note identified improvements in Continuous Improvement Register.	Student Services