COMPLAINTS & APPEALS Policy

OFFICIAL

DOCUMENT REFERENCE:	**PPP163**
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE:	Institute Executive Team
CATEGORY:	Governance
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RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS:	**Legislation:** Education and Training Reform Act 2006 Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Child Safe Standards (Vic) July 2022 VET Student Loans Code of Practice Standards for RTOs 2025 **Gender Impact Assessment**, Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) **Date completed:** TBA
	Documents: PPP140 Academic Grievance/Complaint & Appeal Procedure PPP141 Complaints Resolution & Appeal Procedure PPP175 VSL Student Entry Procedure PPP088 Grievance Resolution Guidelines

Introduction

South West TAFE (SWTAFE or the 'Organisation') is committed to ensuring a harmonious, fair and just learning environment by ensuring that current, past or prospective students and other external parties have access to processes that allow for grievances, disputes, problems and complaints to be resolved in a timely manner.

SWTAFE aims to resolve complaints and appeals honestly, fairly and without bias. Wherever possible, complaints and appeals will be managed internally.

ASQA, our National VET Regulator requires the Organisation to define the process that ensures current, past or prospective students, other external clients and the public who may have a complaint and/or appeal that requires address are managed consistently, effectively and efficiently.

In addition to these requirements, SWTAFE must meet requirements under Clause Part 4.6A — Complaint handling and dispute resolution of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and VET Student Loans Code of Practice.

Scope

This Policy applies to individuals, businesses, and agencies that engage with SWTAFE including:

- Past, present, and prospective students
- NDIS participants
- Parents and guardians
- Employers
- Internal and external stakeholders
- Volunteers

It specifically addresses concerns related to:

- Training delivery
- Teacher performance

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- Course expectations
- Complaints of a non-academic nature

Employee grievance matters are not within the scope of this policy and are covered by the Grievance Resolution Guidelines ***(PPP088).***

In instances where a complaint relates to a perceived illegal activity or behaviour putting SWTAFE or community at risk, it is highly likely that police will be contacted.

Academic Related Complaints and Appeals

SWTAFE has an Academic Grievance/ Complaint and Appeals Procedure ***(PPP140)*** to deal with matters of concern related to training delivery, teacher performance, and/or course expectations. PPP140 outlines the handling of complaints and appeals and is easily accessible to current, prospective and previous students, including those who are or would be entitled to VET Student Loan assistance and employers of apprentices and trainees studying at SWTAFE.

Non-Academic Related Complaints and Appeals

The Complaints Resolution and Appeal Procedure (PP141) outlines the structured steps for addressing complaints of a non-academic nature, ensuring each matter is handled consistently and thoroughly until resolution is achieved.

Issues of a non-academic nature for example: concerns about procurement, facilities and parking– can be referred for attention through SWTAFE's Online Feedback portal on the SWTAFE's website. A paper-based feedback form will be made available at South West Central or the reception area of each campus for students, employees and the general public to complete.

Principles:

All complaints and appeals will:

- Have specified timelines for responses of each stage of the process;
- Allow the complainant and/or respondent to be accompanied and assisted by a third party if desired. Minors who are party to the complaint must be accompanied by a support person preferably their parent or guardian.
- State that decisions and actions are given in writing if requested by the complainant and or/respondent;
- Ensure that complainants and respondents are not victimised or discriminated against;
- Be complete, unambiguous, agreed to and ratified through delegation to an appropriate Executive Manager.

Process:

The complaints and appeals management process will have:

- a senior manager with overall responsibility for managing complaints and communicating their value to the organisation
- have staff at all levels understand and comply with complaints management policies and procedures
- ensure volunteers understand their responsibilities for receiving, reporting and escalating complaints, concerns and disclosures in accordance with SWTAFE complaints management and child safety requirements.
- provide staff with appropriate guidance, training and support to handle complaints
- direct students to the complaints process when they experience a problem or have an issue
- monitor staff performance to ensure complaints are handled properly and appropriate remedies are provided
- provision for appeal through an independent internal investigation of complaints which remain unresolved

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- provision for external review of decisions made following any internal investigation; and
- consideration of any recommendations arising from the external review

Reporting

The Complaints Manager will provide an annual report to the SWTAFE Board on the de-identified complaints and appeals received for the calendar year, identifying any trends or concerns.

Nominated Complaints Manager

In the first instance, all complaints and/or concerns are lodged with the Audit and Compliance Officer who is SWTAFE's nominated Complaints Manager. They can be contacted in writing by

- Audit and Compliance Officer
  South West TAFE
  P O Box 674
  WARRNAMBOOL 3280
- Or via feedback@swtafe.edu.au
- Or using the "feedback button" on the website – www.swtafe.edu.au

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

SWTAFE is committed to making diversity, equity and inclusion part of everything we do, including in the implementation of this policy/procedure/guideline. This document was the subject of a comprehensive access and equity assessment (also known as a Gender Impact Assessment), as per the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). For more information, please visit the 'Our Values' page on our website [external] website or the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Homepage on ECHO [internal]. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

SWTAFE is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a Child Safe Program designed to keep children safe within our organisation. For Child Safe key documents, resources, contact officer details please go to: Child Safe Commitment