Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

POLICY CODE: QA2.7 & 2.8

Related Outcome Standard: 2.7 & 2.8

NATIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PROVIDERS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO OVERSEAS STUDENTS 2018(CTH). STANDARD 6 AND 10

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Project Controls Institute, Australia provides a transparent, accessible, and responsive system for managing feedback, complaints, and appeals. This system empowers VET students to raise concerns, voice their experiences, and seek review of decisions that impact on their training journey, without fear of reprisal.

Through this policy, Project Controls Institute, Australia affirms its commitment to:

- Upholding the rights of VET students to express concerns or dissatisfaction about any aspect of their experience, whether it relates to training delivery, assessment outcomes, support services, interactions with staff, third-party providers, or administrative processes.
- Ensuring that feedback and complaints are managed fairly, impartially, and promptly, affording procedural fairness to all parties involved.
- Providing VET students with clear avenues to appeal decisions made by the organisation or third parties that adversely affect them, including assessment decisions, ensuring that appeal processes are transparent, independent, and supportive of natural justice.
- Using insights gathered from feedback, complaints, and appeals to drive continuous improvement across all areas of the organisation, ensuring the quality, relevance, and responsiveness of services provided.

This policy fosters a learning environment where VET students feel heard, respected, and supported, reinforcing Project Controls Institute, Australia's broader commitment to student wellbeing, equity, and quality assurance.

2. Legislative Background

Outcome 2 – VET Student Support, Division 5 – Feedback, Complaints and appeals, Standard 2.7 and 2.8, National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 (Cth).

National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth) Standard 6 and 10

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All VET students enrolled or intending to enroll or formally enrolled at Project Controls Institute, Australia.
- All employees, contractors, third-party service providers, and stakeholders.
- All decisions made by Project Controls Institute, Australia or its authorised representatives that may affect a student.

It is important to note that this policy has a broad application. A complaint may be made by a VET student, an employee or any other stakeholder.

4. Policy Statement

Project Controls Institute, Australia is committed to fostering a culture of openness, fairness, and continuous improvement where students and other stakeholders feel safe to provide feedback, raise concerns, or appeal decisions without fear of disadvantage or reprisal. The organisation recognises that both **informal and formal complaints** play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of services, ensuring student satisfaction, and maintaining accountability.

This policy outlines processes for:

I. Informal complaints and feedback

- Encourages open communication between students and staff to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity, informally and at the local level.
- Supports VET students to raise concerns directly with Trainers and Assessors, assessors, support staff, or the Quality & Operations Manager (with appointment), allowing for timely and flexible resolution.
- Promotes a culture where feedback (both positive and constructive) is welcomed as part of day-to-day interactions and regular feedback surveys.

II. Formal complaints and feedback

- Provides a structured and documented process for VET students or other stakeholders who wish to escalate concerns that were not resolved informally or that require a formal review.
- Ensures that formal complaints are handled impartially, fairly, and within reasonable timeframes by designated personnel who are independent of the issue.
- Guarantees that procedural fairness is maintained, outcomes are documented, and students are informed of resolution avenues, including external escalation options.

Furthermore, Project Controls Institute, Australia ensures that:

- VET Students are fully informed of their rights to provide feedback, lodge complaints, and appeal decisions through multiple accessible channels.
- All complaints and appeals, whether informal or formal, are treated confidentially and are used as valuable inputs for continuous improvement.
- Feedback, complaints, and appeals can relate to any aspect of the student experience, including services provided by third parties delivering training or assessment on behalf of Project Controls Institute, Australia.

This policy strengthens Project Controls Institute, Australia's commitment to a fair, respectful, and supportive learning environment where student voices are heard and acted upon.

5. Procedures

Complaints procedures and the student's rights to access both internal and external complaints and appeals process are explained:

I. Access and Support

- During orientation
- In the Student Handbook and on the website
- Within the Student Written Agreement
- On request from staff

Complainant may seek help from Student Support and Welfare Officers or bring a support person.

Support Services for First Nations Students

- First Nations students are offered culturally appropriate support through internal services or external referrals
- Where available, a First Nations Liaison or identified contact person is assigned

II. Feedback and Complaints Management System (Standard 2.7)

- **Receiving Feedback and Complaints**
  - Feedback and complaints may be submitted:
    - Verbally to a staff member (Informal compliant/ feedback)
    - In writing through the Complaints and Feedback Form
    - Anonymously via suggestion boxes
- **Complaints can relate to:**
    - Services provided by the RTO
    - Behaviour of staff or other students
- **Conduct of third parties or RTO contractors**
    - Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurs.
- When making a complaint, complainant must provide as much information as possible to enable Project Controls Institute, Australia to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
    - The issue relating to the complaint, describing the incident and how it affected the complainant.
    - Any evidence to support the complaint.
- **Complaint Handling Process**
    - All complaints are acknowledged in writing within 5 business days by the Student Support Officer and forwarded to the Quality & Operations Manager in accordance with Performance Indicator 2.7(b).
    - Investigation is completed within 15 business days of the receipt of the Complaints and Appeals form, depending on complexity of the complaint.
    - Procedural fairness is upheld at all stages:
        - Both parties can present evidence
        - Conflict of interest is avoided
- The complainant (and support person if required) will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss it at no cost to them. This meeting is to be conducted by the Quality & Operations Manager or the delegated staff for non-academic complaints and the Education Manager for academic complaints.
- The Project Controls Institute, Australia must provide a written outcome of the complaint/investigation to the complainant and the Chief Executive Officer within 15 business days of receipt of the formal complaint or earlier if practicable.

III. Appeals and Management System

- **Appeal Rights and Scope**
    - If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint resolution process, they may appeal. Appeals may also be made for decisions relating to:
        - Assessment outcomes

- Disciplinary actions
- Fee or refund disputes
- Any other decision adversely affecting them

- Appeals must be lodged via the Complaints and Appeals Form within 10 business days of the outcome/ decision.
- If a complaint or appeal is not resolved internally, students may access an external body such as the Overseas Students Ombudsman (www.ombudsman.gov.au) at no cost.

- **Appeal Handling Process**
  - Appeals will ordinarily be investigated by the Chief Executive Officer and must be acknowledged within 5 business days of receipt of the Compliant and Appeals Form.
  - The Chief Executive Officer can request further information and evidence as required conducting the appeal.
  - The appeals process is completed, and resolution is reached within 15 business days unless extended for valid reasons.
  - Procedural fairness is observed.
  - The outcome of the appeal is provided in writing to the appellant within the advised timeframe.
  - If the appeal is not resolved internally, the student may:
    - Access an external resolution body (e.g. Ombudsman).
  - Where a student has lodged an appeal against a decision to report them for course progress or attendance or non-compliance with student written agreement, Project Controls Institute, Australia will not report the student until the appeal process, including external appeals, is completed.

IV. Documenting and Communicating Outcomes

- All complaints and outcomes are recorded in the Complaints & Appeals Register.
- If the internal complaint or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, Project Controls Institute, Australia will implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.
- Written outcome is provided to all involved parties, with reasoning and resolution steps within the given timeframe

V. Continuous Improvement

- Complaints and Appeals are reviewed quarterly by the Quality & Operations Manager and the Quality & Operations Manager to identify systemic issues.
- Improvement actions are recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register.

6. Responsibilities

- **CEO**: Makes final internal decisions on complex complaints and appeals.
- **Quality & Operations Manager**: Oversees complaints/appeals systems, ensures procedural fairness as well as timeliness.
- **Education Manager**: Assist CEO & Quality & Operations Manager handling academic complaints and appeals. Provide evidence for assessment-related appeals if required.
- **Student Support Officer**: Assist students in submitting feedback, complaints or appeals.
- **Quality & Operations Manager**: Ensures alignment and compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and reviews complaints and appeals to guide continuous improvement.
- **All Staff**: Act reasonably and maintain confidentiality in finding resolutions for any informal complaints and feedback received and participate fairly in investigations.

7. Supporting Documents

- Orientation Presentation
- Student Handbook
- Complaints and Appeals Form
- Complaints and Appeals Register
- Feedback Form
- Feedback Surveys
- Continuous Improvement Register

8. Related Policies

- QA 2.1 Students Information Policy and Procedures
- QA 2.6 Student Wellbeing Support Policy and Procedures
- QA 4.4 Continuous improvement Policy and Procedures

9. Operational Procedure Table: Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

Action	Responsible Staff	Supporting Document	Timing/Frequency	Compliance Mapping (Standard 2.7 / 2.8)
Provide complaints and appeals information	Student Support Officer	Student Handbook, Website	At enrolment, ongoing	2.7(d), 2.8(a) – Students informed of their rights and access to process
Acknowledge and manage complaints and appeals	Student Support Officer	Complaints and Appeals Form and Register	Within 5 business days	2.7(b), 2.8(b) – Timely and transparent management of issues
Investigate and resolve complaints and appeals	Quality & Operations Manager and CEO	Complaints and Appeals Form and Register	Within 15 business days	2.7(c), 2.8(b), 2.8(c) – Fair resolution, documentation, and outcome implementation
Conduct continuous improvement reviews	Quality & Operations Manag	Complaints and Appeals Registers; Continuous Improvement Register	Quarterly	2.7(e) – Feedback used to identify issues and support improvement

10. Document Control

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