

PO7 Complaints Policy

Responsible Officer	Head of Compliance & Resolutions
Functional Owner	Manager, Student Resolutions
QAS Owner	Quality Manager

1. Background

Open Colleges acknowledges that complaints are part of operating a successful large scale business operation and is committed to managing complaints from all sources and ensuring that all issues are investigated fairly and promptly.

2. Scope

This policy outlines Open Colleges approach to the management of complaints from Open Colleges' students and other interested parties regarding the courses and learning experience it offers and general operations of the business.

This policy does not include complaints from Trainers and Assessors, staff or assessment and appeals which are course related. The management of complaints and feedback from Trainers and Assessors and staff are covered in the PO3 Course Management and Improvement Policy and PO16 Human Resources Policy respectively. Furthermore, Assessment and Appeals are covered in the PO5 Assessment Policy.

3. Compliance

This policy and supporting documentation adheres to compliance with the following Standards for RTOs 2015:

Standard Six: Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively. Clauses: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6

4. Definitions

Appeals and Complaints Committee	This committee determines the outcomes of complaint appeals and complaints escalated to external bodies and lead engagement with external bodies. The committee is convened by the Student Resolutions Officer and includes the Head of Compliance & Resolutions as Chair. Other relevant members may include the Chief Education & Experience Officer, Head of Portfolio, Training Operations Manager, Head of Shared Services, Manager of Compliance, Manager, Student Resolutions. Refer to DC13.4 Terms of Reference Appeals and
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
Complaint	Where a complainant submits a grievance in writing to Open Colleges either using the defined complaint form or other format that clearly identified the matter as a complaint.
Complaint Appeal	When a complainant is unsatisfied by the resolution of their complaint, they may lodge a Complaint Appeal in writing to Open Colleges.
Education Management Team	Made up of the Chief Education & Experience Officer, Head of Compliance & Resolutions Head of Portfolio, Training Operations Manager, Trainer/Assessor and Manager of Compliance

Issue	When a student believes that their learning experience at Open Colleges has not met their expectations and engage in the non-formal Student Issue Procedure (PR4.8) to address an issue
Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme	Is the Student Mediation Scheme which a student can access to have the outcome of the complaint appeal externally reviewed at their own cost. Fee information and payment terms are published by the Resolution Institute in the <i>Student Mediation Scheme Information Kit</i> and <i>Application for External Review</i> . These documents are available via the Resolution Institute website, http://www.leadriama.org/membership-information/student-mediation-scheme
Principles of Natural Justice	The rules or principles of natural justice, also known as procedural fairness, have been developed to ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable. Put simply, natural justice involves decision-makers informing people of the case against them or their interests, giving them a right to be heard (the 'hearing' rule), not having a personal interest in the outcome (the rule against 'bias'), and acting only on the basis of logically probative evidence (the 'no evidence' rule). http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/3707/FS_PSA_14_Natural_justice_Procedural_fairness.pdf
Review Panel	Chaired by a member of the senior executive team with representatives from Compliance and Resolutions, Education, Student Recruitment, Shared Services and Corporate Services.
Vexatious complaint	Means a complaint which is instituted without sufficient grounds and serving only to cause annoyance.

5. Policy

Open Colleges seeks open and honest feedback from students and other parties on their experiences with Open Colleges. Students are encouraged to provide feedback on their experience throughout their studies. Open Colleges provides opportunities for students and other parties to provide formal and informal feedback on their experiences.

Open Colleges seeks feedback from students through their engagement with:

- a. New Student Survey
- b. Three-month Student Pulse Survey
- c. Quality Indicator Surveys
- d. Student Issues Procedure

Student feedback is an essential input into Open Colleges approach to quality and continuous improvement. The PO12 Continuous Improvement Policy outlines how Open Colleges' uses various feedback mechanisms to inform the improvement of its operations. By systematically and expeditiously responding to student feedback, Open Colleges hopes to address student issues before they escalate into complaints.

In managing Complaints and Complaint Appeals, Open Colleges is committed to:

- Ensuring a complainant is not victimised or discriminated against;
- Conducting complaints processes in accordance with the principles of natural justice;
- Considering complaints in a consistent, transparent, objective & unbiased manner;
- Addressing complaints in a prompt and timely manner;
- Systematically implementing improvements arising from Complaints;

- Making details of this Policy and related procedures publicly available;

5.1 Feedback, Issue and Areas for Improvement

Where a student would like to provide informal feedback or they believe that their learning experience with Open Colleges has not met their expectations, they are encouraged to raise their concerns with the Student Support Team through OpenSpace or by calling directly on 1300 650 011. Refer to PR4.8 Student Issues Procedure for details.

5.2 Complaint

Where a student is unsatisfied by the resolution of an issue, wishes to have an issue more formally addressed, or for any other reason, they may submit a complaint.

Other interested parties including industry, employers, education institutions and the general public may also lodge complaints.

Complaints are to be submitted in writing either via FR7.1 Complaints Form or other written means that clearly identifies the matter as a complaint. Complaints may be submitted via email to complaints@opencolleges.edu.au or post to Open Colleges Complaints, PO Box 1568, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

All complaints will be allocated to a Student Resolutions Officer to investigate and manage the case. The Student Resolutions Officer will acknowledge receipt of all complaints in writing.

Where a student is deemed to have submitted a vexatious complaint or multiple unfounded complaints, the Student Resolutions Officer may refer the student's behaviour to the Education Management Team as a potential breach of the Student Code of Conduct. In such cases, the Student Code of Conduct Procedure (PR5.4) will apply. Where a complainant who is not a current student is deemed to have submitted a vexatious complaint or multiple unfounded complaints, the organisation may refer the matter to relevant external agencies.

All complainants will receive a written outcome to their complaint, including reasons for decisions and options available to the complainant.

5.3 Complaint Appeal

Where a complainant is unsatisfied by the resolution of their complaint, they may lodge a Complaint Appeal.

Complaint Appeals are to be submitted in writing either via FR7.2 Complaint Appeals Form or other written means that clearly identifies the matter as a complaint appeal. Complaint Appeals may be submitted via email to complaintappeals@opencolleges.edu.au or post to Open Colleges Complaint Appeals, PO Box 1568, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012.

All Complaint Appeal cases will be investigated by a Student Resolutions Officer who will acknowledge receipt of each Complaint Appeal in writing.

All Complaint Appeal Cases will be reviewed, and proposed outcomes endorsed by the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

All complainants will receive a written outcome to their complaint appeal including reasons for decisions and options available to the complainant.

There is no cost to the student for submitting a Complaint or Complaint Appeal.

5.4 External Review

Open Colleges is a member of the Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme.

Where a complainant has exhausted the internal complaint process and is unsatisfied by the resolution of their Complaint Appeal, they may apply to the Resolution Institute for a review of their complaint.

Where a complainant chooses to apply for a review with the Resolution Institute, they will be required to pay 50% of the fees and charges as prescribed by in the Student Mediation Scheme Information Kit. The complainant will be responsible for any additional costs associated with the review including travel and third party representation.

The Manager, Student Resolutions will manage all external review cases.

5.5 Reporting Requirements

The Manager, Student Resolutions will report on complaints, complaint appeals and any external review cases monthly to a dedicated review panel, Chaired by the Managing Director. This panel includes representatives from Compliance and Resolutions, Education, Student Recruitment, Shared Services and Student Services as needed.

The panel review trends emerging from complaints and implement improvements directly where required.

6. Quality and Continuous Improvement

This Policy is subject to systematic review, evaluation and improvement, including annual review and ongoing feedback from stakeholders

7. Related Forms and Documents

- PO14 Access, Equity and Fairness Policy
- PO12 Continuous Improvement Policy
- PR4.8 Student Issue Procedure
- PR5.4 Student Code of Conduct Procedure
- Open Colleges' Student Handbook
- [Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015](#)
- [Best Practice Guidelines for Complaints Handling](#), Commonwealth Ombudsman
- [Resolution Institute Student Mediation Scheme Information](#)

For internal use only: [QMS1.8 Location of QMS related documents](#).

How can we improve this document?

If you can identify opportunities for us to improve this document, please email improvements@opencolleges.edu.au. This request will automatically be logged on our Continuous Improvement Register. Please include the document reference number in your email and specific details about how we can improve the document.

Version	Approved by	Endorsed by	Effective date	Review date
7	Chief Learning Officer 13 March 2017	General Managers	March 2017	March 2018
Version History	<p>This policy replaces the Grievance Policy (V1 20111004)</p> <p>V2: April 13 minor administrative changes. Did not require ETAB approval</p> <p>V3 Feb 14 Minor terminology changes in accordance with annual policy review. Did not require ETAB approval</p> <p>V4: March 15 Changes made to reflect new organisational structure and Standards for RTOs. Endorsed by ETAB March 15</p> <p>V5: Feb 2016 Changes made to remove reference to the Divisional Appeals and Complaints Committee and the Organisational Complaints Committee. Additionally, removing reference to 'informing students of this Policy during their induction</p> <p>V6: October 2016 updated in new format, removal of issues from the complaint process and minor wording updates</p> <p>V7: March 2017 updated into new format with changes to Review Panel and Reporting Requirements</p> <p>V7: February 2018 updated role titles</p>			
Course Type	All			
RTOs:	Open Colleges Pty Ltd (90796) Integrated Care and Management Training Pty Ltd (90197) College of Fashion Design (3798)			
Partner RTOs:	Yes			