

Complaints Procedure

Document Name:	Complaints Procedure	
Document Reference:	PR7.1	
Document Version:	5	
Responsible Officer:	Head of Policy, Regulation and Audit	
Functional Owner:	Complaints Resolution Manager	
QAS Owner:	Manager, Academic Governance	
Date Approved by EMT:	Version 1 Approved 9 November 2012	
Date Approved by GM:	Version 1 Approved 9 November 2012	
Endorsed by ETAB:	Version 1 Approved 16 November 2012	
Date Effective:	16 November 2012	
Next Review Date:	01 March 2016	
Notes:	<p>This Procedure replaces the Grievance Policy (Version: 1 Effective: 20111004).</p> <p>Version 2: Change to investigation timeframe (Apr-13). Version 2 did not require ETAB approval.</p> <p>Version 3: Update to process to reflect ownership within the Student Support Division and minor terminology update in accordance with the annual policy review (Feb-14). Version 3 did not require ETAB approval.</p> <p>Version 4: Changes have been made to align with the new organisational structure and Standards for RTOs.</p> <p>Version 5 23/2/16: Changes made to remove reference to the Divisional Appeals and Complaints Committee and the Organisational Complaints Committee and updating new position titles.</p>	
Scope:	Course Type	All
	RTOs:	Open Colleges Pty Ltd Integrated Care and Management Training Pty Ltd College of Fashion Design Pty Ltd
	Partner RTOs	Yes

Communication:

All Policies, Procedures, Forms and Guidelines are loaded into the Quality Management System (QMS) in Firefly. This will automatically update documents in OCTiVE and OpenSpace. Updates are communicated to staff through Firefly Chatter, Trainers and Assessors through OCTiVE News and students through the Student Lounge in OpenSpace.

1. Student Feedback

Open Colleges seeks feedback from students through the completion of:

- a. New Student Survey;
- b. Three month Student Pulse Survey;
- c. Quality Indicator Surveys; and
- d. Annual Student Survey.

Student feedback is an essential input into Open Colleges' approach to quality and continuous improvement. The Continuous Improvement Policy (PO12) 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.

2. Feedback and Areas for Improvement

Where a student would like to provide 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 1300 650 011.

3. Issues

Where a student encounters an issue and needs assistance from Open Colleges, they are encouraged to raise their concerns to the Student Support team.

Addressing Issues

On receiving an issue, the Student Support Officer will:

- a. Discuss the issue with the student by phone (if required);
- b. Obtain any additional information regarding the issue (if required);
- c. Log the student's issue as a Case in Firefly and;
- d. Investigate the issue and consult with other Open Colleges staff, including their Team Leader or Trainer & Assessors (if required) for advice where necessary in order to provide a resolution
- e. Student Support Officer proposes a resolution to the student by phone or in writing, by email; and records the outcome of the issue in Firefly.

Where an issue is upheld, the Manager of Student Services, Student Support will log any required improvements on the Continuous Improvement Register.

Where an issue refers to concerns with the Student Support Team, the issue will be referred by the Student Support Officer to the Manager of Student Services, (or their delegate) for investigation.

Timeframe for Addressing Issues

The Student Support Officer will endeavour to resolve the Issue within two (2) business days unless investigation of the Issue is required, in which case five (5) business days may be required.

4. Complaint

Where a student is unsatisfied by the resolution of an issue; an issue has not been addressed; new supporting evidence comes to light; or a student believes the outcome of

the issue is inconsistent with Open Colleges Policies and Procedures they may submit a complaint. To submit a complaint, students will need to complete the Complaint Form (FR7.1), which is available on the Open Colleges' website and OpenSpace, and submit it to the Complaints Team by email at: complaints@opencolleges.edu.au

Addressing Complaints

On receiving a complaint, the Complaints Officer will:

- a. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint or;
- b. Discuss the complaint with the student by phone within 2 business days of lodgement;
- c. Obtain any additional information regarding the concern or issue;
- d. Log the student's concern or issue as a Case in Firefly;
- e. Provide the student with their Case Number;
- f. Investigate the student's issues and concerns outlined in the complaint and
- g. Consult with other Open Colleges staff, including but not limited to their Manager, Head of Portfolio, Head of Student Services and Operations, Manager of Student Services or their delegate, Quality and Compliance Manager, Program Manager, Trainer/Assessor, General Manager or their delegate (if required) for advice where necessary in order to provide a resolution;
- h. Provide a resolution to the student in writing; and
- i. Record the outcome of the complaint in Firefly.

Where a complaint is upheld or issues have been identified, the Complaints Officer will log any required improvements on the Continuous Improvement Register and deliver feedback to appropriate Managers where the complaint relates to Open Colleges' staff.

Timeframe for Addressing Complaints

The Complaints Officer will endeavour to resolve the complaint within ten (10) days. In the event the investigation exceeds 10 days, the Complaints Resolution Officer will ensure the student is regularly updated on the progress of their complaint.

Cost of Complaints

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

Vexatious Complaints

Where a student is deemed by the Complaints Officer to have submitted a vexatious complaint or multiple unfounded complaints, the Complaints Officer may refer the student's behaviour to the Head of Portfolio or their delegate, Head of Student Services and Operations, Manager of Student Services or their delegate or the Appeals and Complaints Committee as a potential breach of the Student Code of Conduct. In such cases, the Student Code of Conduct Procedure (PR5.4) will apply.

5. Complaint Appeal

Where a student is unsatisfied by the resolution of their complaint, they may lodge a Complaint Appeal. To lodge a Complaint Appeal, students will need to complete the Complaint Appeal Form FR7.2, which is available on the Open Colleges' website and OpenSpace, and submit it to the Complaints Team by email at: complaintappeals@opencolleges.edu.au

Addressing Complaint Appeals

On receiving the complaint appeal form, the Complaints Officer will:

- a. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint appeal within 2 business days of lodgement;
- b. Obtain any additional information regarding the complaint appeal;
- c. Collate all relevant information and present the complaint appeal to the Appeals and Complaints Committee;

The Appeals and Complaints Committee will review the complaint appeal and may request the student to submit additional information or determine a resolution.

The Complaints Officer will provide the resolution to the student in writing, by email on behalf of the Appeals and Complaints Committee and record the outcome of the complaint appeal in Firefly.

Where a complaint is upheld or issues have been identified, the Complaints Officer will log any required improvements on the Continuous Improvement Register and deliver feedback to appropriate Managers where the complaint relates to Open Colleges' staff.

Timeframe for Addressing Complaint Appeals

The Appeals and Complaints Committee will endeavour to resolve the complaint appeal within twenty (20) days. In the event the investigation exceeds 20 days, the Complaints Resolution Officer will ensure the student is regularly updated on the progress of their complaint.

Cost of Complaint Appeals

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

Vexatious Complaint Appeals

Where a student is deemed by the Appeals and Complaints Committee to have submitted a vexatious Complaint Appeal and that such a case may have damaged the reputation of Open Colleges or its staff or Trainers and Assessors, the Committee may deem such actions on the part of the student to be a breach of the Student Code of Conduct. In such cases, the Student Code of Conduct Procedure (PR5.4) will apply.

6. External Complaint Reviews and Cases

Where a complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint appeal, they may request an external review be undertaken via the LEADR Student Mediation Scheme.

Addressing External Review Cases

On receiving notification from LEADR of a review request, the Complaints Resolution Manager will:

- a. Acknowledge receipt of the review request with LEADR within 2 business days of lodgement;
- b. Obtain any additional information from LEADR regarding the review case;
- c. Collate all relevant information and present the review details to the

- Appeals and Complaints Committee;
- d. Provide LEADR with any requested information/responses;
 - e. Liaise with LEADR in relation to the scheduling and details of any mediation sessions

Where action is to be taken by Open Colleges as a result of the mediation process, the Complaints Resolution Manager will inform the relevant Division in writing and log any required improvements on the Continuous Improvement Register. The Divisional Complaints Officer will provide written confirmation when agreed outcomes are implemented and update the complaint records accordingly.

The Complaints Resolution Manager also leads the collation of information and response where Open Colleges is required to respond to issues raised by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Where Open Colleges receives correspondence from other external bodies relating to student complaints, the Complaints Resolution Manager will:

- Refer the matter to the Divisional Complaints Officer for management as a Complaint Appeal in the event the complainant has not engaged with the Open Colleges Complaint Management process;
- The Divisional Complaints Officer will respond to the third party, advising them of the external review process in the event the complainant has engaged with the internal complaint management process in full and not utilised the LEADR services

When receiving correspondence from other external bodies there will be no receipt of acknowledgment.

Cost of External Complaint Review

The complainant is required to pay the fee prescribed by LEADR on lodgement of the application for a review. The complainant will be required to also pay 50% of any subsequent hours fees charged as part of the review process.

Fee information and payment terms are published by LEADR in the *Student Mediation Scheme Information Kit* and *Application for External Review*. These documents are available via the LEADR website, <http://www.leadriama.org/membership-information/student-mediation-scheme>

7. Reporting

Complaints and Complaint Appeals

The Complaints Resolution Manager will report on complaints, complaint appeals and any external review cases weekly to a dedicated review panel, Chaired by the Managing Director. This panel includes representatives from Quality and Standards, Student Recruitment, Shared Services and Education Divisions as needed.

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

Related Forms and Documents

	Location		
	OpenSpace	Website	QMS
Procedures			
PR7.1 Complaints Procedures	X	X	X
PO7 Complaints Policy	X	X	X
Forms			
FR7.1 Complaint Form	X	X	X
FR7.2 Complaint Appeal Form	X	X	X

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