

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



POLICY

The Complaints and Appeals Policy and related procedures are designed to ensure that National College Australia, RTO ID 91000 responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of students, clients and/or staff.

Complaints are the expression of dissatisfaction with the quality or any aspect of the business operations and service, including nuisances, discrimination or similar against another person, inclusive of participants, staff and contractors. NCA shall follow a transparent approach for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

PURPOSE

National College Australia strives to promote harmony in the workplace and create a working environment that supports the physical, mental and emotional well-being of its staff. The purpose of the College's Complaints and Appeals Procedure is to establish a consistent and fair approach in handling complaints about academic and non-academic matters across the entire operation and in all locations of service provision.

SCOPE

National College Australia's complaints policy is to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- a. the RTO, its Trainer or Assessors or other staff
- b. a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its Trainer, Assessors or other staff or
- c. a learner of the RTO

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

National College Australia complies with Standards for Registered Training Organisation's (RTO) 2025 clauses 2.7 and 2.8 of the Quality Area 2.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint – non-academic or academic matters relating to issues such as the general work environment, individuals, misconduct, harassment, services, etc.

Appeal – A request to review assessment decisions.

Please Note: During the implementation of the complaints or appeals procedure, normal work will continue and learners must continue to attend classes.

Complaints and appeals may be made in relation to any of National College Australia's services, activities and decisions such as:

- The enrolment, and induction process
- The quality of education provided
- Training and assessment matters, including learner progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study
- Access to personal records
- Decisions made by National College Australia
- The way someone has been treated

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

All complaints or appeals are treated in confidence and will only be used to resolve the complaint/appeal and only disclosed to people who are related to the complaint/appeal. If National College Australia needs to provide information to any other person or parties, we will obtain written permission before disclosing the information.

NCA is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Students have the right to lodge a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with our approach in any way.

Note: if the complaint is from a learner who is appealing an assessment outcome, refer to *appealing an assessment outcome*.

The College must take on a **customer-centric approach** when dealing with complaints. The first thing a staff member must do if they receive a complaint is to listen to the person's grievance, tell them you understand, show empathy and give them time to express their concerns.

Always attempt to resolve the issue immediately. It is up to the staff member to determine what a 'day to day issue' is and what must go through the formal complaints process. Discretion should be used but note that a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which will probably affect the student's experience with the College and their opinion about the quality of our services.

A complaint is sometimes also when the person feels they have tried everything and simply does not know what else to do in solving a problem.

Complaints must be dealt with in a professional, open, timely and fair manner without exception. The root cause of any complaint or appeal will be included in the continuous improvement processes of the College, and monitored by the Quality and Compliance Specialist or the CEO.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'student' refers refer to learners, employer representatives, a member of the public, and government agency representatives.

PROCEDURES

All complaints will be dealt with sensitivity and confidentiality. They will be handled in a professional, timely manner that is fair and provides transparency to all parties.

National College Australia maintains a supportive and fair environment allowing students to appeal assessment outcomes and recognition decisions. All new learners are advised of their right to appeal an assessment outcome in the Learner Handbook, which they receive as part of their induction package.

The College as employer may be represented by an industrial organisation of employers or the employer's chosen representative and the employee may be represented by an industrial organisation of employees or the employee's chosen representative.

The complainant is also able to be represented/supported throughout the process at all meetings, by bringing along a person of their choice (third party) and is encouraged to do so. This can be a person with a personal relationship such as Partner, Mother, Father or union representative, etc.

Once a complaint has been lodged, an investigation will be conducted to determine the facts involved in the matter. The person whom the complaint has been made against will be given details of the complaint and have an opportunity to respond to the matter.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



An investigation may include face to face meetings, telephone conversations, a review of documentation and any other action item as required.

Complainants will have access to records kept in regards to the matter during the investigation and for a minimum of two (2) years after the matter has been closed. Files will be handled in accordance with the relevant privacy legislation at all times.

From time to time, this and other policies will be reinforced during internal professional development activities.

PROCEDURE FOR APPEALING AN ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Appeals must be submitted within two (2) weeks of the assessment outcome given to a learner

Step 1	The learner is provided with an online Student Complaint form – email us.
Step 2	The Form is returned to the Head of Operations and reviews all complaints upon receipt. (Acknowledge receipt of complaint in writing by sending an email to complainant within 3 working days of receipt, record details of the complaint on the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i> . Commence process of investigation within 21 days of receiving the complaint).
Step 3	The Head of Operations will advise the team and trainer Assessor of the appeal raised by the student
Step 4	The Head of Operations will assign a second assessor to review the assessment task(s) and request an outcome within 7 days
Step 5	The Head of Operations will advise the learner of the outcome in writing within 7-10 days from the date on the <i>Assessment Appeals Form</i> .
Step 6	If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be escalated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Head of Operations will provide a debrief of the matter.
Step 7	Under the instruction of the CEO, the Head of Operations will arrange for the assessment(s) to be re-assessed by a third Assessor and request an outcome within seven (7) days.
Step 8	The PEO will advise the learner of the outcome in writing within a further 7-10 days.
Step 9	The complaint must be completely resolved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original complaint. If the matter is particularly complex and it is going to take longer to resolve, the complainant is to be advised in writing along with reasons for the extra time. Where NCA considers, NCA will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 30 calendar days are required, and • Regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter
Step 10	NCA will co-operate fully in the process of the external party to investigate and review the matter. This will include and not be limited to providing full access to the relevant student file/s and the internal complaints records were permitted to do so by law. All staff will be instructed to cooperate in such instances and to give an accurate account of the events as they understand them.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



	<p>Advise of the outcome and update records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a written response to the complainant outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RTO's understanding of the complaint ○ The steps taken to investigate and resolve the complaint ○ Decisions made about resolution, with reasons for the decisions made ○ Areas that have been identified as possible causes of the complaint and improvements to be recommended ○ Their right to access the appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process. <p>If dissatisfied with the internal processes, the complainant/appellant may initiate an external complaint or appeal, which can include the following parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Community Justice Centre - https://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/ ○ Resolution Institute - https://www.resolution.institute/ ○ Intermediate - https://www.intermediate.com.au/ <p>NCA will discuss the complaint and its outcome at the next management meeting. Update the Complaints and Appeals Register so it includes the outcome of the complaint, any improvements to be made as an outcome. Keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student or staff file (where relevant).</p>
--	--

PROCEDURE FOR GENERAL COMPLAINTS

For Academic and Non-academic matters regarding external parties

Step 1	The learner is provided with an online Student Complaint form (Request Admin) The Form is returned to the Head of Operations
Step 2	The Head of Operations will inform the learner their complaint has been received within 5-10 working days.
Step 3	<p>The Head of Operations will investigate the matter with the aim of seeking a resolution. If the complainant is a current student, the Head of Operations will discuss the matter relevant stakeholders to ensure an outcome can be assured</p> <p>This may take up to 21 days to ensure a thorough investigation but it will be conducted as quickly as possible.</p> <p>The complainant will be advised of the progress and/or outcome in writing within seven (7) days. The final outcome will be advised within 14 working days. The matter is recorded in the <i>Student Complaint Register</i>, and monitored by the Quality & Compliance Specialist.</p> <p><i>If the matter is particularly complex then it will be escalated to the CEO which may take longer than the 14 days.</i></p>
Step 4	If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will further investigate the issue and provide a written response within a further seven (7) days.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



Step 5	<p>Where NCA considers more than 30 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, NCA will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and • Regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter
Step 6	<p>If the complainant remains unsatisfied with the College's resolutions, he/she will be advised of their right to take the matter to external review, which can include the following parties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Justice Centre - https://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/ • Resolution Institute - https://www.resolution.institute/ • Intermediate - https://www.intermediate.com.au/
Step 7	<p>NCA will securely maintain records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes, and identify potential causes of complaints and appeals and take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.</p> <p>The Student Complaint Register will be updated during the process and with the final resolution.</p> <p>NCA will ensure the complaints and appeals policy is publically available, on NCA's website.</p> <p>All complaints will be reviewed and any actions resulting in changes to college systems and procedures will be discussed at management meetings and/or facilitator meetings and implemented as part of NCA's continuous improvement activities.</p>

For Non-academic matters regarding internal parties (staff)

Step 1	<p>Discuss the issue with the immediate manager. Exercise goodwill and maintain professionalism in all attempts to resolve conflicts. The process must be fair, transparent and efficient.</p> <p>Where necessary, the manager will arrange a formal meeting to resolve the issue to everyone's satisfaction. An <i>Employee Counselling Record</i> will be completed as a record of the meeting. Either party may request the presence of a third party at the meeting. Furthermore, NCA's employee assistance program (EAP) is available to you during this time, which is an arrangement between a corporation, and its employees that provide a variety of support programs for the employees. Support is available 24/7 and they can be contacted on 1300 360 364.</p> <p>Timeframes for a review of the situation must be set and recorded on the form. The initial review period should be within 7-14 days. It is the manager's responsibility to conduct the follow-up review and sign off on the record once it has been closed.</p>
Step 2	<p>If the matter is not resolved by the review date, either party may approach the Principal Executive Officer who will investigate the issue. The CEO may meet with both parties together or individually. A second <i>Employee Counselling Record</i> will be completed with dates for a review.</p>

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY



	The review period should be within 7-14 days. The CEO will lead the review and provide a written response to both parties.
Step 3	Records will include the <i>Employee Counselling Record</i> and it may include any other documentation/items used as part of the investigation. All records will be kept in the relevant staff file(s).

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Name	Complaints and Appeals Policy
Version	1.0
Standards	Quality Area 2 SRTO 2025
Clauses:	2.7 and 2.8
Approved Date	August 2025
Approved By	CEO
Review Duration	Annual