

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy Statement

commUnity+ is committed to providing a high-quality learning environment that fosters the growth and success of all our students. We recognise that from time to time, students may encounter concerns or issues that require resolution. To ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability, we have established the following Student Complaints and Appeals Policy. This policy outlines the processes for handling complaints and appeals from students enrolled at commUnity+. Complaints can be about any Comm Unity Plus Ltd representative, including any third parties engaged by the organisation.

Child Safety Statement

Comm Unity Plus Services Ltd commits to the safety of children and young people in all that we do. It is the responsibility of all members of our team.

We understand that we have a responsibility to uphold the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who come in contact with us, our team and services. Their safety and wellbeing will always be our first priority.

We will always act promptly when we learn that a child is at risk.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the procedure, process and resources available to students for dealing with their concerns, complaints and appeals.

Authorisation and Responsibility

Level	Position
Authorisation	CEO
Responsibility for implementation	General Manager of Education

Scope

This policy applies to all Board Members, employees, volunteers, visitors, consultants, contractors and to all students of commUnity+ who acknowledges that students who believe they have been adversely affected by its operations have a right to complain and have their complaint dealt with in a fair, accountable and transparent way in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

commUnity+ is committed to responding promptly and efficiently to complaints and appeals and has developed and implemented a process for handling complaints efficiently.

This policy is made available to all students via publication on the website and in the Student Handbook.

Policy

A student who has a complaint or appeal, has the right to raise the complaint or appeal and expect that every effort will be made to resolve it in accordance with this policy and its accompanying

procedures, without prejudice or fear of reprisal or victimisation. They have the right to present the complaint or appeal informally, as well as in writing.

Verbal complaints will be accepted where the Complainant makes it clear that they are making a formal complaint and not giving general feedback. commUnity+ recognises that critical comment and response are an important part of the collective endeavour to improve the quality of educational programs and community strengthening activities, and such feedback would not normally be viewed as a complaint unless specific action was requested.

commUnity+ will manage all complaints and appeals as fairly, effectively and efficiently as possible. We will encourage the parties to approach the complaint or appeal with an open mind and to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.

commUnity+ will take action to deal with identified causes of complaints and appeals and will then monitor and improve systems and operations if and as required. Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and/or conciliation, commUnity+ acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent person to mediate between the parties. The parties will be given the opportunity to formally present their case to the independent person.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints.

Records

All details regarding student complaints and appeals, including outcomes, will be recorded on the Complaints Register located at: [Pathway: ComPlus > Education > Compliance > Continuous Improvement > Complaints Register.](#)

Completed Complaint/Appeal Forms and Complaint/Appeal Action Record should be stored in the same folder as the Complaints Register.

Pathway: ComPlus > Education > Compliance > Continuous Improvement > Complaints Register.

Principles

The following principles should be adhered to following a complaint/appeal:

- **Confidentiality** - Only those directly involved in handling the complaint or appeal should have access to information on the complaint;
- **Access and transparency** – information about how and where to lodge a complaint/appeal is easily accessible;
- **Impartiality** - No decisions or judgments will be made until all information has been impartially considered by those responsible for handling the complaint;
- **Respect** - Those responsible for handling the complaint must be sensitive to the needs of those directly involved and to those who may be affected by the grievance; and,
- **Prompt Action** - All complaints must be dealt with promptly and a response to a complaint must be received within 7 days from the date the complaint is received.

Procedure

If a student has a complaint or appeal, the following steps are to be followed:

1. The complainant should discuss the issue / complaint / appeal with the person involved to try and resolve it verbally.
2. The RTO manages and responds to complaints in relation to the quality of training and assessment; the quality of client service; and compliance with the VET Quality Framework, including allegations involving the conduct of:
 - the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other employees

- a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other employees
 - a learner of the RTO.
3. The RTO manages appeals or requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf. An appeal is an application by a learner or complainant for reconsideration or review of an unfavourable decision or finding during training and/or assessment or investigation.
 4. If no resolution is reached, the student should discuss the issue / complaint / appeal with his or her teacher / trainer to see if it can be resolved.
 5. If following step 2 there is no resolution, the student can choose to complete a Complaint/Appeal Form in writing.
 6. The student should bring the complaint/appeal to the attention of the trainer/teacher or a Training Manager within seven (7) days or as soon as possible after the issue has taken place.
 7. If the complaint or appeal is not dealt with to the student's satisfaction within a seven (7) day period after being formally lodged, s/he may bring it to the attention of the General Manager Education. The General Manager Education will either deal with the issue directly or arrange for it to be dealt with by someone from the management team. This process must commence within 48 hours from the time the General Manager Education receives written notification from the student about their dissatisfaction to the response received from their teacher / trainer and a response / resolution must be presented within 7 days.
 8. Should the issue still not be resolved to the student's satisfaction, commUnity+ will make arrangements for an independent external person (at no cost to the student) to resolve the issue. The student will be given the opportunity to formally present his or her case. The time frame for this process may vary but should take no longer than 14 days.
 9. If a student is still not happy with external mediation, he / she may take the complaint to the Complaints Unit of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). There are a variety of processes for contacting the VRQA and making a complaint. These are outlined on the VRQA website:

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/making-a-complaint.aspx>

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the General Manager Education with endorsement by the CEO to ensure that it continues to comply with relevant state or federal legislation or regulation.

Activities	Frequency
Review	Two years

Related Documents

Legislation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VET Quality Framework - National Vocational Education and Education Regulator (Data Provision Requirements) Instrument 2020
Standards and Guidelines:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian Quality Framework - Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs) 2015
Organisational Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - commUnity+ Student Handbook - Complaint Register - Complaint/Appeal Form - Complaint/Appeal Action Record - Glossary of Terms

Version Control

Version	Code Type	Change	Authorised	Date
9	N/A	Reviewed	CEO	November 2018
10	POL365	Reviewed and reformatted into new template; updates	CEO	July 2023
10.1	POL365	Legislation links updated to current series	CEO	October 2023