

SC4: Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedures



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Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline Pinnacle Institute of Education’s approach to managing dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of students, clients, staff and other members of the community. It provides a transparent approach for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

This policy and procedure ensures compliance with Standard 6 of the Standards.

Definitions

Appeal means a request for a decision made by Pinnacle Institute of Education to be reviewed

Complaint means a person’s formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by Pinnacle Institute of Education

Services means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support

SRTOs means the Standards for RTOs 2015 – refer definition of ‘Standards’

Standards means the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 of the VET Quality Framework which can be accessed from www.asqa.gov.au

Policy

1. Nature of complaints and appeals

- Pinnacle Institute of Education responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - Any third party providing Services on behalf of Pinnacle Institute of Education.
 - Any student or client of Pinnacle Institute of Education.
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of Pinnacle Institute of Education's services and activities such as:
 - the application and enrolment process
 - marketing information
 - the quality of training and assessment provided
 - training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements
 - the way someone has been treated
 - the actions of another student
- An appeal is a request for a decision made by Pinnacle Institute of Education to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
 - course admissions
 - refund assessments
 - response to a complaint
 - assessment outcomes / results
 - other general decisions made by Pinnacle Institute of Education

2. Principles of resolution

- Pinnacle Institute of Education is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, Pinnacle Institute of Education ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
 - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - Are able to be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
- Pinnacle Institute of Education will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.
- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, Pinnacle Institute of Education will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.

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3. Timeframes for resolution

- Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer. In matters where additional time is needed, the complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

4. Records of complaints and appeals

- Pinnacle Institute of Education will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the *Privacy Policy & Procedures*.

5. Making a complaint or appeal

- Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or other written format and sent to Pinnacle Institute of Education's head office at Po Box 115 Heidelberg VIC 3084 attention to the Chief Executive Officer.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable Pinnacle Institute of Education to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal.
 - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
 - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- Your complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 7 days.

6. Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some or all members of the management team of Pinnacle Institute of Education will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
- Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Where a third party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO is involved, they will be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task.

7. Independent parties

- Pinnacle Institute of Education acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter.
- Complainants and appellants can find an appropriate independent party by calling the Resolution Institute on 02 9251 3366 or by searching the following directory, according to their locality and area of concern: <https://www.resolution.institute/disputeresolverdirectory>

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- Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by Pinnacle Institute of Education.
- Pinnacle Institute of Education may also appoint the independent party to be involved in the resolution of a complaint or appeal where it is deemed necessary.
- Pinnacle Institute of Education will provide complete cooperation with the external mediator investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.
- The CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

8. External complaint avenues

Complaints can also be made via the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- Email: ntch@education.gov.au

For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to Pinnacle Institute of Education's registering body, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

ASQA can investigate complaints about Pinnacle Institute of Education in relation to:

- the quality of our training and assessment
- our marketing and advertising practices

For students:

- ASQA may not be able to investigate complaint if you do not include evidence that you have already exhausted our formal internal complaints process as above.
- If your complaint does not fall within ASQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you directly contact the agency responsible as listed on the relevant webpage below.
- Please refer to the following webpage below before making a complaint to ASQA: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-domestic-students/before-you-make-complaint>

For other stakeholders:

- Information about the process and information you should provide is available here: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-other-stakeholders>

9. Publication

- This policy and procedure will be published in the Student Handbook and on Pinnacle Institute of Education's website.

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Document Control

Document No. & Name:	SC4 - Complaints and Appeals P&P V2.3
Quality Area:	SC Students & Clients
Author:	RTO Advice Group Pty Ltd
Status:	Approved
Approved By:	Peter Hannan
Standards (SRTOs):	Clause 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 & 6.6