

Department	Vocational Education & Training	
Quality Controlled Document No. & Title	QA 2.7-2.8	Student Complaints and Appeals Policy
Version	2.0	
SRTOs 2025 National Code 2018 ELICOS Standards 2018	Outcome Standards 2.7 and 2.8 Standards 6.1.6, 9.4.2, 10.1-10.4 N/A	



Author	RTO Associates	
Approved	CEO	
Authorised	CEO	
Distribution	Internal	RTO Staff RTO Students
	External	Prospective Clients

1.0 Policy Purpose

This policy is produced in the context of the Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's commitment to quality programs and Student welfare. Accordingly, this policy should be seen as complementing and consistent with all other student policies developed and implemented by Agriculture Education Institute of Australia. In particular, this policy focuses on establishing mechanisms to address any complaints by students, whether they be prospective, currently enrolled or former students. Agriculture Education Institute of Australia is committed to resolving complaints efficiently and ensuring that the outcomes are consistent, fair and just.

Implementation

1.1 Agriculture Education Institute of Australia provides all students with information pre-enrolment and at orientation regarding the opportunity to have decisions made by Agriculture Education Institute of Australia reviewed and appealed, and for complaints to be lodged, reviewed and resolved. Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals are founded on the principles of fairness, equal opportunity and natural justice. It is Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's intention that all students feel supported and engage in a fair learning environment.

Accordingly, the Institute's complaints and appeals procedures must ensure that:

- a) the complaints and appeals process is accessible to students
- b) the process is fair, impartial and transparent
- c) outcomes and decisions are consistent where circumstances are comparable
- d) privacy of all concerned is respected and confidentiality maintained
- e) all complaints and appeals are dealt with, and resolved, as expediently as possible
- f) records are maintained for a period of no less than two years after the student enrolment ceased.

1.2 It is a condition of employment that all staff adhere to the requirements of Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. It is also a requirement of enrolment that all students abide by the Institute's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. As such, it is expected that all staff and students affected by a complaint and/or appeal participate in the resolution process in a cooperative manner and in good faith. Where a staff member or student is determined not to be cooperative and/or not acting in good faith, then Agriculture Education Institute of Australia reserves the right to take the appropriate disciplinary action.

1.3 Where a student wishes the Institute to reconsider a decision, then the Institute shall engage the services of the Dispute Resolution Centre Victoria (DRCV) to review the student's complaint and/or appeal, and the Institute's decision(s) relating to the student's application. The Institute, the student, and/or their representative are expected to engage in mediation meetings. Institute policy is that the Institute and the student shall be bound by DRCA's decision.

1.4 Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint and appeal process may still lodge a complaint with an external agency, such as the Ombudsman or Consumer Affairs. Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's policy and procedure does not preclude any student from seeking redress in accordance with all applicable laws.

2.0 Organisational Practice Areas

2.1 Complaints and/or Appeals may occur because of decisions made by with regards, but not limited, to:

- Admission, enrolment, transfer and withdrawal.
- Appeal of an assessment result.
- The quality of training provided (e.g., trainer performance, access to facilities and resources).
- Support services.
- Request for special consideration.
- Reporting unsatisfactory progress.
- Failure to meet attendance requirements.
- Refuting of evidence relating to non-academic requirements (e.g. medical certificate).
- Student disciplinary action (e.g. cheating and plagiarism).
- Fees and charges.
- Bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Privacy and confidentiality.

Any other matter, relating to their participation in training with Agriculture Education Institute of Australia, that a student believes is having an adverse impact on their ability to meet course requirements, and/or their health and wellbeing.

3.0 Student Complaint and Appeal Procedure

1. Inform Agriculture Education Institute of Australia staff.	In the first instance, if appropriate, all students are encouraged to discuss their concerns or issues informally with a Agriculture Education Institute of Australia staff member. Students may approach their trainer, the Student Support Officer (SSO), the RTO Manager, or Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO.
2. Lodge a Complaint and/or Appeal.	<p>Should a student's concerns or issues not be able to be resolved informally, then the student will need to lodge a formal complaint and/or appeal with Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO.</p> <p>Students may access the required Complaint and Appeal Form from Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's website or student administration. The Form should be completed and lodged with Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO as soon as practicable.</p> <p>Should the student consider it inappropriate that Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO investigate the complaint and/or appeal, then this will need to be noted on the Complaint and Appeal Form, and the student will be advised of appropriate external agencies which they may approach. Irrespective, all complaints and/or appeals will be considered and investigated by Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO.</p> <p>Should the nature of the concerns or issues involve a possible criminal offence, then students are advised to contact Police and/or seek legal advice. The student's application details shall be entered on the Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's Complaints and Appeals Register. All Forms and any supporting documents shall be kept in the student's file.</p> <p>At all times, all information shall be treated in accordance with Agriculture Education Institute of Australia Privacy and Records Management policies.</p>
3. The Student Complaint and/or Appeal is investigated.	All formal complaints and appeals shall be considered by Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's CEO. Where warranted, the CEO shall investigate the complaint and/or appeal. The investigation must allow the student to provide any relevant information and evidence either in writing or verbally. Students will be permitted to engage support when presenting information and evidence.
4. Outcome.	<p>It is intended that all formal complaints and appeals be investigated and the student informed, in writing, of the outcome of their application, and detailed reasons for the decision, within 10 working days from the date when the complaint and/or appeal was received by Institute. Where more time is required, then the student shall be informed in writing, where a date must be provided as to when the student shall be informed of the outcome of their application. Any extension in time should not exceed an additional 20 working days.).</p> <p>A copy of all correspondence shall be kept in the student's file. Details of the outcome of the student's application shall be recorded on the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Register.</p>
5. Reconsideration – Independent Review.	<p>Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their application, then they may, within 15 working days, request that their application be reconsidered. The student may make such an application by responding to Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's notification of the outcome of their application. Student must provide an explanation of the grounds on which they are requesting a reconsideration, which may include additional information and/or evidence.</p> <p>Agriculture Education Institute of Australia shall engage the services of the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) to review the student's complaint and/or appeal, and the Institute's decision(s) relating to the application. The Institute's CEO, the student, and/or their representative are expected to engage in mediation meetings. DSCV is part of the Victorian Department of Justice & Community Safety, and provides free dispute resolution services to all Victorians. DSCV can be contacted on 1300 372 888 or through www.disputes.vic.gov.au</p>
6. Reconsideration Outcome.	<p>Agriculture Education Institute of Australia and the student agree to be bound by the decision of the DSCV. Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of the reconsideration process, then may seek legal advice. The student shall retain the right to take action under the Australian Law.</p> <p>All records shall be kept in the student's file. Details of the outcome of the student's reconsideration application shall be recorded on the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Register.</p>
7. Continuous Improvement.	Where appropriate, Agriculture Education Institute of Australia shall review the relevant training and assessment services, and/or RTO management and operational practices, in order to implement change

	<p>to minimise the risk of reoccurrence of similar complaints and/or appeals.</p> <p>Where changes are implemented, then these shall be recorded in Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's Continuous Improvement Register.</p>
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Implementation

- 3.1 All complaints and appeals shall be dealt with in accordance with principles of natural justice and ensure procedural fairness. The Institute's processes are governed by the following principles:
- 3.1.1 Accessibility: The procedure must be available to all learners and stakeholders, including prospective students.
 - 3.1.2 Transparency: Information on how to lodge a complaint or appeal must be clearly explained and easy to find (e.g. in student handbooks, websites, or orientation materials).
 - 3.1.3 Timeliness: Complaints and appeals must be acknowledged promptly and resolved in a timely manner.
 - 3.1.4 Impartiality: The process must ensure the decision-maker is unbiased and not involved in the original issue.
 - 3.1.5 Right to Appeal: The process must allow the complainant to escalate the matter to an external, independent party if unsatisfied with the RTO's decision.
 - 3.1.6 Recordkeeping: All stages and outcomes must be documented and retained in line with recordkeeping requirements.
 - 3.1.7 Improvement Focus: Findings from complaints and appeals should inform quality assurance and continuous improvement processes.
- 3.2 Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's RTO Manager shall plan and conduct student feedback surveys at the mid-point and at the conclusion of a student's course of studies. The outcomes of 'feedback' shall be tabled at Management Team meetings, where a plan for any response or action shall be developed, and personnel assigned with responsibility for implementation. Agriculture Education Institute of Australia trainers are able to provide feedback at any time. The Institute schedules formal review meetings between a member of management and trainers at least once per semester.
- 3.3 Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's RTO Manager shall administer *Quality Indicator Surveys* annually. The outcomes of the surveys shall be tabled at Management Team meetings, where a plan for any response or action shall be developed, and personnel assigned with responsibility for implementation.

5. Standards for RTOs 2025: Outcome Standards 2.7 – 2.8

Standard 2.7

Outcome Standard

- (1) Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation.

Performance Indicators

- (2) An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:
- (a) it operates a complaints management system that:
 - (i) allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation;
 - (ii) ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness;
 - (iii) identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints; and
 - (iv) provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved;
 - (b) information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students;
 - (c) VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints;
 - (d) outcomes of complaints are documented by the organisation and communicated to all parties to the complaint; and
 - (e) feedback and complaints are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

Standard 2.8

Outcome Standard

- (1) Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student.

Performance Indicators

- (2) An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:
 - (a) it operates an appeals management system that:
 - (i) allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation, where those decisions adversely affect the student;
 - (ii) ensures all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness;
 - (iii) specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals; and
 - (iv) provides avenues for review by an independent party if requested by the appellant (at no or low cost to the appellant);
 - (b) information about how to appeal an adverse decision through the appeals management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students;
 - (c) outcomes of appeals are documented by the organisation and communicated to the appellant; and the outcomes of appeals are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement

Self-Assurance Considerations

- Agriculture Education Institute of Australia ensures that information is made publicly available on how to provide feedback, make complaints or lodge appeals. Information is included on the Institute's website, the Student Manual and is provided at student orientation.
- Agriculture Education Institute of Australia implements outcomes of Quality Indicator Surveys. The Institute processes feedback and complaints ensure that matters are investigated promptly and impartially, uphold the principles of natural justice and ensure procedural fairness.
- Agriculture Education Institute of Australia has systems to document and communicate the outcomes of complaints, and store complaint documentation securely.
- Agriculture Education Institute of Australia's complaint resolution processes enable the Institute to understand the root cause of a complaint and how this informs actions, including policies and processes (or amendments to these), leading to continuous improvement.
- Agriculture Education Institute of Australia provides opportunities for complaints to be escalated and complaint outcomes to be reviewed. Where a complaint is not able to be satisfactorily resolved, you have documented systems for providing the complainant with avenues for further review.

Self-Assurance Evidence of Practice

- Self-assurance audits
- RTO Management Team Meetings, Agenda and Meeting Minutes. Management Team reviews of complaints, appeals and feedback, and plans action to address issues.
- Student Feedback
- Trainer Feedback
- Student Surveys and Reports
- Register of Continuous Improvement

Sources

- ❖ National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 (ver 28 February 2025)
- ❖ Preparing for the revised Standards, ASQA September 2024
- ❖ ASQA Outcome Standards Policy Guidance, March 2025
- ❖ ASQA - Practice Guide – Training, 10 April 2025
- ❖ Revised Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Online Guidance Hub, Western Australia Training Accreditation Council
<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/training-accreditation-council/revised-standards-registered-training-organisations-rtos-online-guidance-hub>
- ❖ Quality Area 2: VET Student Support, Western Australia Training Accreditation Council
https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/training-accreditation-council/training-standard-27_28
- ❖ Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

Student Complaints & Appeals Form

Instructions to Applicant

- (1) Complete this form and submit to the RTO Manager or Administration as soon as possible.
- (2) Clearly state the nature of your complaint and, if appropriate, indicate what evidence you have to support your claim.
- (3) All complaints will be treated seriously, and you may be required to discuss the complaint with senior members of staff.
- (4) You will be formally notified of the outcome of your complaint.

Surname		Given Names		Student ID	
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Describe your complaint / appeal

What action have you taken to try and resolve this complaint / appeal?

Do you have a suggested remedy to the problem?

I hereby declare that the information provided on this form is true and correct.

Student's Signature Date/...../.....

Agriculture Education Institute of Australia CEO's Signature Date/...../.....

☐ Submit via mail

Agriculture Education Institute of Australia
Unit 2, 148-150 Welsford Street
Shepparton VIC 3630

☐ Submit via email:

CEO@agricinstitute.edu.au

☐ Submit in person:

Unit 2, 148-150 Welsford Street
Shepparton VIC 3630