

# Complaints Policy and Procedure

## Context

An effective complaints process assists Macedon Ranges Education to comply with the conditions of registration as well as giving students and clients a remedy to address grievances about Macedon Ranges Education and its services and supports the quality of its operations.

## Purpose

To ensure complaints are addressed efficiently and effectively.

## Scope

The *Complaints Policy and Procedure* is available to all clients of Macedon Ranges Education, including those who are being serviced by a third party.

## Policy Statement

Macedon Ranges Education will ensure that it has an appropriate internal complaint-handling process that satisfies the following requirements:

1. A process is in place for lodging a formal complaint if the matter cannot be resolved informally, this requires a written record of the complaint to be kept.
2. Each complainant or appellant has an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost to him or herself.
3. Each party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.
4. The complainant or appellant is given a written statement of the outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome; and
5. The process commences within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint and supporting information and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

If the student chooses to access Macedon Ranges Education's complaints processes Macedon Ranges Education will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints process is ongoing.

If the student is not satisfied with the result or conduct of the internal complaint handling process, Macedon Ranges Education will refer the student to an existing body (where that body is appropriate for the complaint) or make arrangements, if required, for a person or body independent of and external to the RTO to hear the complaint.

If the internal or any external complaint handling process results in a decision that supports the student, Macedon Ranges Education will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome.

## Principles

Any complaint will be handled fairly, recognising the rights of the person making the complaint, Macedon Ranges Education, and the person against whom the complaint is being made. All parties concerned will be treated with courtesy and appropriate confidentiality will be maintained.

Macedon Ranges Education will be transparent and accountable in relation to student complaints by ensuring information about the procedure is widely available and by informing stakeholders about feedback received and actions taken to improve services resulting from the analysis of feedback. Clients are informed that a complaint must be made to Macedon Ranges Education before contacting ASQA.

At any point, a complaint may be withdrawn by the complainant.

Macedon Ranges Education will ensure appropriate training for staff involved in the complaints management process. This will be provided during staff orientation, as part of the company's professional development strategy for its staff, and at least during an annual refresher session.

Macedon Ranges Education will collect data and maintain records of complaints received and their outcomes. These will be analysed by Management as a standard agenda item at Management Review Meetings and assessed annually as part of Macedon Ranges Education's continuous improvement strategy.

All documentation relating to student complaints will be forwarded to the Macedon Ranges Education administration department to be registered within the Macedon Ranges Education's Complaints Register and filed appropriately.

This policy and procedure is available to all staff in the Staff Handbook, and all staff are trained in the application of the policy and procedures. This policy and procedure will also be made available to all prospective and enrolled students on the Macedon Ranges Education website, contractual documentation, and addressed during any orientation program. It is also available to Students in the Student Information Guide.

## Procedure

### Staff and Student Information

Management must inform all staff of complaint procedures. This takes place at the staff induction and as improvements are made to the complaint's procedure.

All staff must inform clients of complaint procedures. This takes place during pre-enrolment (contractual documentation) and during the orientation program.

## Complaints System

The complaints system is designed to ensure that clients can present their complaints free of charge and fairly and equitably.

The complaints procedure ensures:

- that clients have access to an independent arbiter if necessary.
- complaints are resolved within the specified time frame.

Management must, as part of the complaint's procedure, inform clients clearly of the complaint outcomes in writing.

The complaints process will be available to all clients of Macedon Ranges Education, including where services are being provided on behalf of Macedon Ranges Education by a third party.

## Complaint Process

### To initiate the complaint process:

- The student speaks directly with the person concerned to resolve the problem within 7 days, or writes to the Chief Executive Officer within 21 days if unable to speak directly to the person concerned; and
- While not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that the client lodges the complaint in writing, and, where possible, using the appropriate form.

### To investigate the complaint:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint and investigate the matter with all concerned parties.
- For complaints regarding assessment, organise remarking or reassessment as necessary.
- For non-assessment complaints, ensure that the investigation is appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the complaint, calling on external investigators if necessary; and
- In all cases, the investigation is to be conducted, fairly, openly, and impartially.

### To resolve the complaint:

- Respond to the student in writing within 21 days of receiving the complaint with the results of the investigation.
- If the complaint requires more than 60 calendar days to resolve, then the student will be notified in writing, including being provided a reason why, and will be notified in writing of the progress of the complaint until the complaint is resolved.
- Ensure that results of the investigation include any corrective action necessary to prevent similar complaints and ensure that the changes are implemented; and
- Advise all parties of the Complaints Process and/or any external organisations that may assist, for example, police, counselling organisations, Consumer Affairs, etc. if the complaint is unresolved.

### To finalise the complaint:

- Update records including the Complaints Register.

## Corrective Action

Management must monitor the area of complaint to ensure that corrective action is taken, and the problem resolved. Management must also monitor any required changes that are implemented to ensure that there is no recurrence of the problem.

## Preventive Action

Management must implement preventive or corrective action as appropriate to the problem identified through the complaints process and monitor the implementation for effectiveness, to ensure that it:

- Prevents the identified problem; and
- Does not have any unforeseen side effects.

Management must review complaints to determine causes and take action to prevent the reoccurrence of these causes.

## Improvements to the Complaints System

Complaints are subject to the Continuous Improvement of Training & Assessment Procedure.

All improvements must be documented:

- Complaint process and resolution.
- Preventive measures; and
- Student feedback data.

## Related Documents

- Complaints Register.
- Continuous Improvement of Training & Assessment Procedure.
- Student Handbook.

## Version Control

This document is under version control.

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