



Skilled Up
Institute
unfold your career

RTO Number: 40471 | CRICOS Code: 03666M



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Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure – V3.0



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Purpose and Principles

Purpose

This policy establishes the principles and procedures for Skilled up for managing feedback, complaints, and appeals in a manner that is fair, transparent, accessible, and timely. The purpose of this framework is to ensure a positive and supportive learning environment, provide a clear mechanism for resolving grievances, and use feedback to drive continuous improvement.

This policy ensures that Skilled up meets its obligations under all relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks, including:

- The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025*, specifically Standard 2.7 (Feedback and complaints management) and Standard 2.8 (Effective appeal processes).
- The *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* (for CRICOS-registered providers).
- The Victorian Skills First VET Funding Contract and the associated Skills First Quality Charter.

Principles

The management of all complaints and appeals is guided by the following core principles:

- **Fairness:** All parties will be treated with respect, impartiality, and without bias. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied at every stage, and decisions will be based on an objective assessment of evidence.
- **Accessibility:** This process is provided at no cost to the student. Information about the process is publicly available and presented in clear, simple language. SKUP will provide support to any student who requires assistance to lodge a complaint or appeal.
- **Timeliness:** All matters will be managed efficiently and resolved as quickly as practicable, in accordance with the clear timeframes outlined in this policy.
- **Confidentiality:** The privacy of all parties will be respected and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and other relevant privacy legislation. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.
- **Right to Support:** At any stage of the formal process, a complainant or appellant has the right to be accompanied and assisted by a support person of their choice, provided that person is not a practising lawyer acting in a legal capacity.
- **No Victimisation:** No person will be subjected to any form of reprisal, discrimination, or disadvantage as a result of making a complaint or lodging an appeal.
- **Continuous Improvement:** SKUP values all feedback, complaints, and appeals as essential opportunities to review and improve its services, training, and assessment practices.



To ensure clarity and transparency, the following table summarises the maximum timeframes for each stage of the formal process.

Process Stage	Action	Maximum Timeframe
Formal Complaint or Appeal Lodged	Written Acknowledgment of Receipt to the Student	5 Business Days
Formal Complaint (Stage 2)	Investigation and Provision of a Written Outcome	20 Business Days from Acknowledgment
Internal Appeal (Stage 3)	Review and Provision of a Written Outcome	20 Business Days from Acknowledgment
All Formal Stages	Written Notification of Extension (for complex cases)	Must be sent before the initial deadline expires

Scope

This policy applies to all VET students, including prospective, current, and recently graduated students of SKUP. It covers:

- **Complaints** relating to any aspect of SKUP's operations, services, staff, third-party partners (e.g., placement hosts, subcontracted providers), other students, or facilities.
- **Appeals** against academic and administrative decisions made by SKUP that have an adverse effect on a student. This includes, but is not limited to, assessment results, decisions regarding course progress, and decisions to defer, suspend, or cancel enrolment.

Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about Skilled Up, related to its products, services, staff, or the handling of a complaint itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
- **Appeal:** A formal request for a review of a decision made by Skilled Up. This includes academic appeals (related to assessment outcomes) and administrative appeals (related to other decisions).
- **Procedural Fairness:** A set of principles ensuring that decision-making processes are fair and just. Key elements include the right to be heard, the right to an unbiased decision-maker, and the right for a decision to be based on relevant evidence.
- **Independent Party:** A person or organisation that is not employed by Skilled up and has no managerial or governance connection to it. An independent party is engaged to provide an impartial review of an appeal process or outcome, as required by Standard 2.8.
- **Business Day:** A day that is not a Saturday, a Sunday, or a public holiday in Victoria.



Stage 1: Informal Complaint Resolution

Students are first encouraged to raise their concern directly and informally with the person involved (e.g., their trainer/assessor or an administrative staff member). This approach is often the quickest and most effective way to resolve straightforward issues.

The aim of the informal process is to achieve a mutually agreeable resolution through open communication and discussion. Staff members are trained to listen respectfully and work collaboratively with the student to find a solution.

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal discussion, or if they feel uncomfortable raising the issue directly with the person involved, they have the right to proceed immediately to the formal complaint process (Stage 2).

Any staff member who handles an informal complaint that they believe may indicate a broader, systemic issue is required to report the matter to the Compliance Manager. This ensures that even informally resolved matters can contribute to Skilled Up's continuous improvement activities.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint Management Procedure

Lodging a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint must be submitted in writing to ensure a clear record of the issue. This can be done by:

- Completing the official *Complaint Form*, available on the Skilled Up website and from reception.
- Sending a detailed email to the designated complaints email address – info@skilledup.edu.au

The written complaint should include the student's name and contact details, a clear description of the issue, any relevant dates or names, and the desired outcome. Skilled Up will provide assistance to any student who requires help to formulate or submit their written complaint.

Maintaining enrolment during the complaints and appeals process

Skilled Up will maintain the enrolment of the student during the complaints and appeals process, unless there are extenuating circumstances relating to the student's welfare;

Extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student may include, but are not limited to; The student:

- is missing
- has medical concerns, severe depression or psychological issues which lead SKUP to fear for the student's wellbeing
- has engaged, or threatens to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student, other students or staff
- is at risk of committing a criminal offence

Evidence of the extenuating circumstances will be maintained in the student file.

Acknowledgment

Skilled Up will provide the complainant with a written acknowledgment of the receipt of their formal complaint within 5 business days. This acknowledgment will confirm that the matter is being

addressed under this policy and will provide the name and contact details of the staff member managing the complaint.



Investigation

The complaint will be investigated by the Compliance Manager who is independent of the matter being investigated. The investigation will be conducted in a manner that is thorough, objective, and upholds the principles of procedural fairness. This may involve interviewing the complainant, the subject of the complaint, and any relevant witnesses, as well as reviewing all relevant documents and records.

Outcome

Within 20 business days of acknowledging the complaint, Skilled Up will provide the complainant with a formal written statement detailing the outcome of the investigation. This statement will include:

- A summary of the complaint and the investigation findings.
- The decision made by Skilled Up.
- Clear reasons for the decision.
- Any actions Skilled Up will take as a result of the complaint.
- Information about the student's right to lodge an internal appeal (Stage 3) if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

If the investigation is complex and requires more than 20 business days, Skilled Up will notify the complainant in writing before the deadline, explaining the reasons for the delay and providing a new estimated timeframe for completion.

Records

A confidential record of the formal complaint, investigation, and outcome will be securely maintained in Skilled Up's Complaints and Appeals Register.

Stage 3: Internal Appeals Management Procedure

Grounds for an Appeal

A student may lodge an internal appeal if they:

- Are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint handled under Stage 2.
- Wish to formally challenge an academic decision (e.g., an assessment result).
- Wish to formally challenge an administrative decision (e.g., a determination of unsatisfactory course progress or a decision to cancel enrolment).

Lodging an Appeal

An appeal must be lodged in writing within 20 working days of the student being notified of the original decision or complaint outcome. The written appeal should clearly state the grounds for the appeal and provide any new or additional evidence for consideration.



Review Process

The appeal will be reviewed by a senior manager of Skilled Up (e.g., the CEO) who was not involved in the original decision-making process or the formal complaint investigation. This ensures a fresh, high-level, and impartial review of the matter. The reviewer will consider all evidence from the original decision and any new evidence submitted by the appellant.

Outcome

The appellant will be provided with a written statement detailing the outcome of their appeal within 20 business days of its lodgement. This statement will include comprehensive reasons for the decision. This outcome represents Skilled Up's final decision on the matter. The written outcome will also provide clear information on the student's right to access an external review process (Stage 4) if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 4: External Review and Appeal Options

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeals process, they have the right to seek an external review of the matter. This policy provides clear pathways for independent review, ensuring compliance with both national standards and state funding contract obligations.

Independent Mediation

In accordance with Standard 2.8(a)(iv) of the *Standards for RTOs 2025*, Skilled Up provides all domestic students with access to an independent, external mediation or dispute resolution service to review the appeal. This service is provided at no cost to the student. The purpose of this review is to provide an impartial assessment of the matter and the process undertaken by Skilled Up. Skilled Up will cooperate fully with the independent party and give due consideration to any recommendations made. Details of Skilled Up's designated independent mediation service are provided in Table 2.

Specific Pathways for Different Cohorts

Students are advised to contact the most appropriate external body for their specific circumstances, as outlined in the table below.

Table 2: External Review and Support Contacts

Organisation	Jurisdiction / Purpose	Contact Details
Independent Mediation Service – Mediation Institute	For all domestic students seeking an independent review of SKUP's appeal process and decision, as per Standard 2.8.	The student must inform the CEO in writing to inform them that they would like to go for External mediation
Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO)	The designated external appeals authority for international students on a student visa who have a complaint about a private education provider in Australia.	Phone: 1300 362 072 Website: www.oso.gov.au
TAFE and Training Line (Victoria)	The primary contact point for students undertaking Skills First subsidised training.	Phone: 131 823 Email: tafe.courseline@djsir.vic.gov.au



Organisation	Jurisdiction / Purpose	Contact Details
	Provides information and can receive complaints about Skills First providers.	
Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	The national VET regulator. ASQA does not resolve individual disputes but accepts information about RTOs that may indicate systemic non-compliance with the national standards.	National Training Complaints Hotline: 13 38 73 Email: skilling@education.gov.au

Record Keeping and Systemic Improvement

Complaints and Appeals Register

All formal complaints and appeals, along with all related correspondence, investigation notes, and outcome documentation, will be recorded and stored securely in Skilled Up's central Complaints and Appeals Register. This register is confidential and serves as the official record for compliance and quality assurance purposes.

Linking to Continuous Improvement

The Complaints and Appeals Register is a critical input to Skilled Up's quality management system. The Compliance Manager is responsible for analysing the data in the register on a quarterly basis to identify any trends, recurring issues, or potential systemic problems that may require corrective action.

Actioning Improvements

Where a systemic issue is identified through the analysis of complaints and appeals data, it will be formally logged in Skilled Up's Continuous Improvement Register. A formal action plan will be developed, implemented, and monitored to address the root cause of the issue. This ensures that Skilled Up learns from feedback and proactively enhances the quality of its services.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** Holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring Skilled Up maintains a compliant, effective, and fair complaints and appeals system. May act as the final decision-maker in the internal appeals process.
- **Compliance Manager:** Responsible for the overall management and administration of the formal complaints and appeals process, maintaining the official register, conducting quarterly trend analysis, and ensuring identified issues are integrated into the continuous improvement system.
- **Trainers/Assessors and Student Support Staff:** Act as the first point of contact for informal complaints. Responsible for attempting to resolve issues at the local level and for providing students with clear information and support regarding the formal process.

- **All Staff:** Responsible for upholding professional and ethical standards in all interactions to minimise the potential for complaints. All staff are required to cooperate fully and constructively with any investigation process.



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