

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

The objective is for SIIT to provide appropriate mechanisms to its students to complain about or appeal various issues during their course of study. SIIT will act on each and every concern or appeal lodged by the student or any party concerned.

(Please note that some sections might apply to International Students Only).

Requirement

SIIT uses a systematic approach dealing with complaints, concerns and appeals. All concerns, complaints and appeals are dealt with fairly, honestly, without bias in a professional and fully documented manner.

The procedure for handling complaints, concerns and appeals, is disseminated to students prior to and at enrolment, we follow a process to assess complaints, concerns, and appeals and address them in a fair and equitable manner.

Once a formal application is received by SIIT, the CEO or his representative will contact the student within 24 hours to confirm receipt. The matter will be discussed by the CEO and relevant staff and a written response will be provided back to student within 10 working days from the lodgement of the Complaint or Appeal form. ***If student is dissatisfied with the decision of SIIT, they may access external appeals at no cost to them for this referral.***

This policy is applicable to all students (domestic and international).

The availability of this complaints and appeals process, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

Policy & Procedure

SIIT ensures that all students will have access to a fair and equitable process for dealing with complaints/concerns and will provide an avenue for students to appeal against such decisions, which affect the student's progress. There will be no charge to the student for access the internal complaints and appeal process.

Every effort will be made by SIIT to resolve the student's complaint or concern. To this end, the CEO will personally oversee the formal complaints/concerns processes and should be contacted with updates in

status or relevant information changes. At the time of enrolment the complaints, relevant procedure and appeals policy will be outlined to the students.

Where complaint/concern cannot be resolved internally, SIIT will refer the student to an external agency (please refer below for more information regarding external agency). There will be no cost to the student for this referral.

Directive

- All prospective students will be provided with a copy of the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure document (Student Handbook).
- All complaints, concerns, or appeals will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution.
- All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved in the complaints/concerns and appeals procedure.
- Current students are provided with details of external authorities they can approach if they are not satisfied with the college's decision.
- All complaints/concerns and appeals will be managed fairly and equitably and as efficiently as possible.
- All complaints/concerns and appeals and outcomes will be documented in writing.
- SIIT will attempt to resolve any complaints, concerns and appeals fairly and equitably within 10 working days from the lodgement of a Complaint or Appeal form
- Any parties may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at relevant meetings.
- *If an international student chooses to access SIIT's complaints and appeals processes, SIIT will maintain the student's enrolment whilst the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.*
- *If the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, SIIT will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.*
- *Where an international student has chosen not to access the complaints and appeals processes within the 20 working day period, withdraws from the process, or the process is completed and results in a decision supporting SIIT, that SIIT will notify the Secretary of DEEWR through PRISMS of the student not achieving satisfactory course progress or not meeting attendance requirements as soon as practicable.*

Procedures

Students have a right to raise any matters of concern relating to training delivery and assessment, the quality of the learning, course amenities, discrimination, sexual harassment and other issues that may arise during their course of study.

This policy provides an avenue for most complaints, concerns and appeals to be addressed. However in some cases alternative measures may need to be explored. It is advisable for the student to contact the CEO or his representative before lodging a formal complaint, to discuss other avenues available to them.

Steps for students:

- The student should firstly discuss any matter with their trainer/assessor and related staff. If they are still not satisfied, the student may then,
- Have the matter referred to the CEO or his representative for consideration.
- The student must complete the Compliant and Appeal form, ensuring that they provide sufficient details about themselves and the course, and the circumstances surrounding the concern, complaint or appeal, who was involved, any appropriate evidence and witnesses etc.
- The CEO or his representative will contact the student within 24 hours to confirm receipt of this form and to schedule a formal face-to-face meeting with the student. This meeting will take place within 5 working days or earlier from the date of receipt of the complaint or appeal application.
- The student will also be given an option to be accompanied or assisted a support person during this or any other meetings relating to the matter(s). Meeting minutes and appropriate notes will be taken during all meetings.
- The CEO or his representative will discuss the circumstances with the trainer/assessor or any other staff member and make an informed decision.
- The student will be contacted with the result within 10 working days from the lodgement of a Complaint or Appeal form, the student has a further 5 working days to respond to a formal decision.
- A written statement of the appeal outcome, including reasons for the decision will also be documented and provided to the student via email or a face-to-face interview.
- A record of this written statement will also be filed in the student admin folder. Furthermore, if the internal appeal process results in an outcome that supports the student, SIIT will take appropriate steps and will keep the student informed about the course of action in this regard in a timely manner.
- *Where a complaint, concern, or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, or if student is dissatisfied with the college decision, they may access external appeals at no cost to them for this referral (refer to external agency section for more details regarding this).*
- *If external appeal process results in an outcome that supports the student, SIIT will take appropriate steps and will keep student informed about the course of action in this regard.*
- *SIIT will maintain the student's enrolment whilst the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.*

Assessment related matters

If the student has been advised that they are Not Competent, but they believe that:

1. They genuinely do have the required degree of competency; and
2. That they have provided reasonable proof of this to SIIT, and

3. They are not fully satisfied with the fairness and accuracy of our assessment processes.

- The student should firstly discuss the matter with their appointed assessor. If they are still not satisfied, the student may then,
- The student should have the matter referred to the CEO and/or Academic Manager for consideration.
- The student must complete the Compliant and Appeal form and ensure that they provide sufficient details about themselves and the course, and the circumstances surrounding the concern, complaint or appeal, e.g. who was involved, any appropriate evidence and witnesses and attach any statements etc.
- The CEO and/or Academic Manager will contact the student within 24 hours to confirm receipt of this form and to schedule a formal face-to-face meeting with the student. This meeting will take place within 5 working days or earlier from the date of receipt of the complaint or appeal application.
- The student will also be given an option to be accompanied or assisted by a support person during this or any other meetings relating to the matter(s).
- The CEO and/or Academic Manager will discuss the circumstances with the trainer/assessor or any other staff member and make an informed decision.
- The student will be contacted with the result within 10 working days from the lodgement of Complaint or Appeal form, the student has a further 5 working days to respond to a formal decision.
- A written statement of the appeal outcome, including reasons for the decision, will also be documented and provided to the student via email or a face-to-face interview.
- A record of this written statement will also be filed in the student admin folder. Furthermore, if an internal appeal process results in an outcome that supports the student, SIIT will take appropriate steps and will keep the student informed about the course of action in this regard.
- Where a complaint, concern, or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, SIIT acknowledges the need for a student to go for an external appeal process (refer to external agency section for more details regarding this).
- If an external appeal process results in an outcome that supports the student, SIIT will take appropriate steps and will keep the student informed about the course of action in this regard.
- SIIT will maintain the student's enrolment whilst the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

Note: *SIIT will accept an appeal against an assessment decision for a period of no longer than 2 months after the assessment decision date.*

External Agency

For International Students:

If a student is not happy with the internal appeal outcome the college will refer them to the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). OSO helps international/overseas students. The OSO investigates complaints about problems that overseas students or intending overseas students may have with private education and training in Australia.

Table listed below provides more information about Ombudsman and its variety of service:

Description	Web link
About Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO)	http://www.oso.gov.au/about-us/
Making a complaint	http://www.oso.gov.au/making-a-complaint/
More information regarding Overseas Students	http://www.oso.gov.au/overseas-students/
More information regarding Private Education Providers	http://www.oso.gov.au/private-education-providers/
Frequently asked questions	http://www.oso.gov.au/frequently-asked-questions/

Description	Web link
Ombudsman contact us email	Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Phone	1300 362 072* within Australia Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111
Fax	02 6276 0123 within Australia Outside Australia +61 2 6276 0123
Postal	GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601
Student enquiry time	9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)
Ombudsman online complaint form	https://forms.business.gov.au/aba/ombudsman/overseas-students-ombudsman-complaint-form

For Domestic Students:

If a student is not happy with internal appeal outcome they can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the online Complaint form. Except in exceptional circumstances, students must attach evidence to their complaint form showing:

- that they have followed SIIT formal complaints and appeals procedure, and
- SIIT's response/outcome.

Note:

ASQA's processes require students to identify themselves to ASQA as a complainant, although student may request that their identity is kept confidential throughout any investigation that ASQA undertakes.

Furthermore, external contacts provided below are a list of contacts that students may approach if they feel that the college has not handled or dealt with their complaint as per their expectations:

Description	Web link
NSW - Fair Trading	http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/
ACT – Office of Regulatory Services	http://www.ors.act.gov.au/
NT – Consumers Affairs	http://www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au/Pages/default.asp
QLD – Office of Fair Trading	http://www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au/
SA – Consumer and Business	http://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/wcm/
TAS – Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading	http://www.consumer.tas.gov.au/
VIC – Consumer Affairs	http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/
WA – Department of Commerce	http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumerprotection/

Note:

1. If students want to make a complaint in their language, they can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 or visit the following link <http://www.oso.gov.au/publications-and-media/brochures/>
2. There will be no cost to the student for this referral.
3. SIIT will maintain student's enrolment whilst an internal or external appeal process is ongoing. Students are strongly advised that they do come to class during this process and thereby maintain their attendance and course progress requirements.

SIIT will file records of all informal and formal complaints and appeal in student's folder.

Where SIIT requires more than 60 calendar days to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, SIIT will:

- 1) **inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and**
- 2) **regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.**