



Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline Choice Business College'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, as well as compliance with the of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, Standard 10.

Definitions

ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET regulator and the RTO's registering body
Appeal	A request for a decision made by Choice Business College to be reviewed
DET	Department of Education and Training
Complaint	A person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by Choice Business College.
Complainant	Refers to a student or any other person who have lodged a complaint or appeal with CBC.
Formal Complaint	Feedback received from a student or other person expressing concern in regard to some aspect of CBC's operations, services, staff or other students which is presented formally, in writing and requires a formal response. This includes complaints which may have been initiated informally but attempts at resolution have failed resulting in escalation to a formal (written) complaint
Informal Complaint	Feedback received from a student or other person expressing concern in regard to some aspect of CBC's operations, services, staff or other students, which is ad-hoc or informal in nature and does not include a complaint which has been submitted in writing and which does not require a formal response.
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Students Management System
Overseas Student	Someone who is studying in Australia on a student visa. An overseas student is also called an international student.
Respondent	Refers to the person(s) who is required to respond to the complaint or appeal.
Services	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.
Standards	Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015

Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation and students are made aware of its availability.



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Policy

Informal and Formal Complaints

It is recommended that Complainants try to resolve a complaint informally. Where the concern relates to the training or assessment, the Complainant is encouraged to approach the trainer(s) of their course and/or where necessary the Student Support Officer at their Campus.

Where the Complainant is not satisfied with the results of this informal approach and wishes to take the matter further, the process described in this policy and procedure are followed.

Please note that it is not mandatory for Complainants to raise a complaint informally, before proceeding to a formal complaint.

Where someone wishes to lodge a formal complaint they are encouraged to do so using the Complaints and Appeals Form available from the Student Support Officer at the Campus or by requesting a form via email, from info@cbc.edu.au and sending it to:

**The Chief Executive Officer
CHOICE BUSINESS COLLEGE
Suite 2, Level 5, 460 Church St
Parramatta, NSW 2150,**

General Principles

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.

When making a complaint or appeal, the complainant is advised to provide as much information as possible to enable Choice Business College to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:

- Specific details regarding the complaint itself, or the decision that is being appealed – including dates and times, where possible.
- Any evidence that supports the complaint or appeal.
- Details about any steps already taken to resolve the issue.
- Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.

Choice Business College responds to all complaints regarding the conduct or practices of:

- The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
- Any third-party providing Services on behalf of Choice Business College and including education agents.
- Any student or client of Choice Business College.

Complaints may be made in relation to any of Choice Business College'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



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The Complainant and any Respondent(s) have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure.

An appeal is a request for a decision made by Choice Business College to be reviewed. This can include decisions relating to:

- course admissions
- refunds
- outcomes of a complaint
- assessment outcomes / results
- other general decisions made by Choice Business College

Complaint resolution

Choice Business College is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is objective and transparent and follows the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, Choice Business College ensures that complaints and appeals:

- Are responded to in a professional, consistent and transparent manner.
- Are responded to promptly, fairly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Are able to be resolved at no cost to the individual, where the matter is not referred to independent parties for review.
- Are used to identify potential opportunities for continuous improvement and implementation of strategies or systems to prevent the issues from recurring.

Choice Business College will communicate with and 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.

No complainant, staff, student or other stakeholder is disadvantaged in any way during the complaint and resolution process.

At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complaints and appeals are recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure are provided to the Complainant and/or any Respondent if requested.

Where CBC considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, CBC informs the complainant in writing, including the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and updates the complainant on the progress of their complaint.

1. Making a complaint or appeal

Timeframes for resolution

The complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing within 3 business days of receipt.

The complaints and appeals process will commence within 10 business days of receipt of the application. 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.



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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.

2. Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some members of the management team of Choice Business College may 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 also be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- Each party involved in the complaint or appeal may have a support person of their choice present at meetings scheduled to resolve the issue.
- 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. The complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the process and the reasons for the findings made.
- The enrolment status of student will be handled as follows:
 - For domestic students that choose to access this policy and procedure, Choice Business College will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.
 - For international students, Choice Business College will maintain a student's enrolment throughout the internal appeals processes without notifying DET via PRISMS of a change in enrolment status. In the case of an external appeals process it will depend on the type of appeal as to whether Choice Business College maintains the student's enrolment as follows:
 - If the appeal is against Choice Business College's decision to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance, the student's enrolment will be maintained until the external process is completed and has supported or not supported Choice Business College's decision to report.
 - If the appeal is against Choice Business College's decision to defer, suspend or cancel a student's enrolment due to misbehaviour, Choice Business College will notify DET via PRISMS of a change to the student's enrolment after the outcome of the internal appeals process

3. Independent Parties

- Choice Business College 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. 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 Choice Business College.
 - For domestic students, complainants and appellants are able to use their own external party at their own cost. Domestic students may also access the external complaint avenues indicated below free of charge.
 - For international students, the independent party is the Overseas Students Ombudsman. This service is free of charge. Where an international student is not satisfied with the



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outcome or conduct of the internal process, they are referred to the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). See information under external complaint avenues.

- Choice Business College 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, and any recommendations being actioned by Choice Business College.

4. External complaint avenues

If the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant is able to request a review from an appropriate independent third party by contacting the National Training Complaints Hotline: Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally or via Email: skilling@education.gov.au.

Alternatively, Complainants may request that their complaint is directly referred to an independent mediator by writing to:

**The Chief Executive Officer
Choice Business College
Suite 2, Level 5, 460 Church St
Parramatta, NSW 2150**

It is not the role of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to act as an advocate for individual student complaints.

The Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO)

International students may complain to the OSO if their complaint is in relation to Choice Business College:

- refusing admission to a course
- course fees and refunds
- course or provider transfers
- course progress or attendance
- cancellation of enrolment
- accommodation or work arranged by your provider
- incorrect advice given by an education agent.
- if you believe we have failed to take action or are taking too long to take some action. This might include (for example), failing to provide your results in the normal timeframe, or failing to provide services included your written agreement with Choice Business College.

The OSO may not be able to investigate your complaint if you have not already exhausted our formal internal complaints process as above.

Please refer to the following website if you are considering making a complaint:

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students#quality-of-education-provider>



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5. Records of complaints and appeals

Choice Business College will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes and reasons for the outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the Privacy Policy and Procedures.

6. Publication

This policy and procedure will be published in the Student Handbook and on Choice Business College's website.



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Procedures

1. Complaints management

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>A. Receive and acknowledge complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per policy, complaints are to be made in writing by the complainant, marked for attention to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). • The CEO should review all complaints upon receipt. • The CEO or delegate will acknowledge the complaint in writing by sending a letter to the complainant within 3 working days of receipt. Use <i>Complaint/ Appeal Acknowledgement Letter</i>. • The CEO or delegate will record details of the complaint on the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i>. • The CEO or delegate will commence a process of investigation, within 10 days of receiving the complaint. 	M and/or CEO
<p>B. Investigate the complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon receiving the complaint, the matter is to be investigated to ensure all relevant information is available and it is accurate and complete. • Further details from the complainant, respondent or other involved parties may be requested during this stage. This may be in writing, over the phone, or face-to-face. Where the meeting is face to face, the complainant may be accompanied by a support person. • The investigation will also identify corrective and preventative action which will be immediately implemented as per the next section of this procedure. • The CEO will review the information and decide on an appropriate response. Where deemed necessary by the CEO, the matter may be reviewed by other members of the management team to arrive at an appropriate resolution. • Note: The complaint must be completely resolved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original complaint. If the matter is particularly complex and it is going to take longer to resolve, the complainant is to be advised in writing along with reasons for the extra time. They must be provided with updates on progress on a weekly basis thereafter until the matter is resolved. 	O, GVCRM or delegate
<p>C. Advise of the outcome and update records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a written response to the complainant outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The RTO’s understanding of the complaint – The steps taken to investigate and resolve the complaint – Decisions made about resolution, with reasons for the decisions made – Areas that have been identified as possible causes of the complaint and improvements to be recommended – Their right to access the appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process. • Update the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i> so it includes the outcome of the complaint and showing the decision that has been made, as well as any corrective/preventative actions identify to address the issue. 	M and/or CEO



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Procedure	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the <i>Continuous Improvement Register</i> showing the decision that has been made in relation to the complaint, as well as any corrective/preventative actions identified to address the issue. Keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student or staff file (where relevant). Immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or corrective or preventative actions required. 	

2. Appeals management

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>A. Receive and acknowledge appeal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, acknowledge receipt of appeal in writing by sending a letter to appellant within 3 working days of receipt to ensure appellant receives it within 7 days. Use <i>Complaint/Appeal Acknowledgement Letter</i>. Record details of appeal on the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i>. 	M and/or CEO
<p>B. Respond to assessment appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of appeals against assessment decisions, the original assessment decision will be reviewed by having an assessor independent of the original decision, mark the assessment task again. The assessment decision made during the appeals process will be considered the actual assessment outcome for the task. Advise the student of the outcome of the appeal. 	SSM and/or CEO or delegate
<p>C. Respond to appeals against non-academic decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon receiving the appeal, the matter is to be investigated to identify the original decision made and the reasons for the decision. Further details from the complainant/appellant, respondent, the person who made the original decision, or other involved parties may be requested during this stage. This may be in writing, over the phone, or face-to-face. If the matter is in relation to a third-party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO, the third party should be involved in the resolution of the appeal. The complainant/appellant may request for an independent party (mediator) to be involved in the process. Where this is requested by the appellant, they will bear the costs associated. Additionally, Choice Business College may decide to call upon an independent mediator to assist to resolve the issue where a decision cannot be reached internally. This will be at Choice Business College's cost. Choice Business College's Management team will review all relevant information and decide on an appropriate response. The investigation will also identify corrective and preventative action, which will be immediately implemented as per the next section of this procedure. Note: The appeal must be resolved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original appeal. If the matter is particularly complex and it is going to take 	CEO and CBC Management team



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Procedure	Responsibility
longer to resolve, the appellant must be advised in writing along with reasons for the extra time. They must be provided with progress updates on a weekly basis thereafter until the matter is resolved.	
<p>D. Advise appellant of the outcome and update records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a written response to the appellant outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The RTO’s understanding of the reasons for the appeal – The steps taken to investigate and resolve the appeal – Decisions made about resolution and reasons for the decisions – If relevant, areas that have been identified as possible causes of the appeal and improvements to be recommended – Their right to, and information on, the external appeals process. – For international students, the effect on their enrolment status (see enrolment status in policy – 10). • Update the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i> so it includes the outcome of the appeal and showing the decision that has been made, as well as any corrective/preventative actions identify to address the issue. • Update the <i>Continuous Improvement Register</i> showing the decision that has been made in relation to the appeal, as well as any corrective/preventative actions identify to address the issue. • Keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student or staff file (where relevant). • Immediately implement actions related to decisions that supports the student and/or corrective or preventative actions required. 	SSM and/or CEO

3. External complaint or appeal

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>A. External complaint or appeal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If dissatisfied with the internal processes, the complainant/appellant may initiate an external complaint or appeal. • Additionally, a complainant or appellant who has been through the internal processes may request Choice Business College to appoint an independent party to review the matter. • For domestic students, complainants and appellants are able to seek their own external parties at their own cost. Domestic students may access the external services listed in the policy free of charge. • For international students, the independent party advised is the Overseas Students Ombudsman, which is free of charge. • Co-operate fully in the process of the external party to investigate and review the matter. This will include and not be limited to providing full access to the relevant student file/s and the internal complaints records where permitted to do so by law. All staff will be instructed to cooperate in such instances and to give an accurate account of the events as they understand them. 	SSM and/or CEO and GVCRM



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where the decision of the external party supports Choice Business College, Choice Business College will notify DET via PRISMS of the change in enrolment status.	
<p>B. Review external complaints or appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In the event that the external party finds in favour of the student, immediately organise a management meeting to discuss the external process and its outcome.At the meeting, discuss the decision made and actions to be taken to implement the decision, including both corrective/preventative actions.Following the meeting immediately implement actions.Advise the student of the outcome of the complaint or appeal and the actions taken.Record the details in the Student Management System,	M

Document Control

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