

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures



Policy

Rationale:

This policy demonstrates Aura Education's commitment to transparency and accountability by ensuring a clear process for addressing concerns or grievances raised by students, trainers, or other stakeholders. Aura Education maintains that these policy and procedures are essential to fostering a positive learning environment, ensuring fairness, maintaining regulatory compliance, and continuously improving training quality.

This policy aims to:

- Provide a fair and unbiased mechanism for students to voice complaints or appeal decisions they feel are unjust.
- Ensure all individuals are treated fairly and their concerns are taken seriously.
- Identify areas for improvement and address systemic issues.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of training services.
- Create a positive learning environment where students feel safe expressing concerns.
- Enhance trust and confidence in the organisation.
- Adhere to regulatory requirements and quality assurance commitments.
- Demonstrate that Aura Education addresses complaints promptly and fairly.
- Protect Aura Education from legal implications by ensuring consistent handling in accordance with relevant laws.

Key Definitions:

- ESOS Act: The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.
- National Code: The National Code of Practice 2018.
- Provider: Aura Education (RTO No: 46301 | CRICOS: 04306E).
- Informal Complaint: An informal discussion regarding a grievance.
- Formal Complaint: A written statement or form lodged officially with the college.
- Complainant/Appellant: The person raising the grievance or lodging the appeal.
- Extenuating Circumstances: Matters relating to student welfare (e.g., severe medical issues, safety risks, or criminal investigations) that require immediate intervention.

Scope:

This policy applies to all international students and prospective international students at Aura Education. It covers the following:

- The right to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally.
- The requirement to maintain written records of all complaints and appeals.
- The opportunity for each complainant or appellant to formally present their case at minimal or no personal cost.
- The provision for each party to be accompanied and assisted by a support person at relevant meetings.
- The provision of a written statement of the outcome, including detailed reasons for the decision.
- The undertaking that the procedure will commence within ten (10) working days of formal lodgment.

Academic complaints and appeals include, but are not limited to:

- Course progress and attendance
- Issuance of Statements of Attainment or Certificates
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer (CT)
- Trainer and assessor conduct
- Assessments and results

Non-academic complaints and appeals include, but are not limited to:

- Fees, charges, and payments
- Student support services
- Staff or student behaviour
- Admissions, enrolment, and commencement
- Administration, marketing, and facilities

Staff Responsibility and Accountability:

Aura Education ensures information about these procedures is widely available. Complaints will be handled fairly, recognising the rights of the complainant, the RTO, and any person accused of misconduct. All parties will be treated with courtesy and confidentiality.

Aura Education maintains a Complaints and Appeals Register. All documentation is managed by the Compliance Manager. To support continuous improvement, the register is reviewed quarterly by the management team, including the:

- CEO
- Compliance Manager
- Student Support Officer

Maintaining Enrolment:

If a student accesses the internal complaints and appeals process, Aura Education must maintain the student's enrolment until the process is complete. A complainant may withdraw a complaint at any point.

External Appeals:

If a student is not satisfied with the internal outcome, they have the right to access an external appeals process through the Commonwealth Overseas Students Ombudsman. Aura Education will guide the student in this process at minimal or no cost.

Overseas Students Ombudsman Contact Details:

- Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au
- Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
- Phone: 1300 362 072 (within Australia) | +61 2 6276 0111 (outside Australia)
- Postal: GPO Box 442, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

If an internal or external process supports the student, Aura Education must immediately implement the decision or corrective action and advise the student.

Implementation:

- Staff Training: Staff involved in the process receive training during induction and professional development.
- Access: Prospective students can access this policy on the Aura Education website. Current students can access it via their Letter of Offer, student handbook, orientation, or at Reception.
- Cost: There is no cost to the student for lodging an internal complaint or appeal.
- Decision Making and Timelines:
 - All discussions and decisions will be documented.

- Decisions are based on relevant legislation, the Standards for RTOs 2015, and the principles of assessment.
- If a decision is made in favor of the student, Aura Education will implement the required actions within ten (10) working days.
- Aura Education must wait for the internal process to be completed before proceeding with a cancellation of enrolment, unless extenuating circumstances apply.

Procedures

Handling Informal Complaints:

This refers to any complaint received informally, such as a request to speak with a staff member, trainer, or manager. Aura Education staff will attempt to resolve these grievances internally before they escalate.

Steps to follow:

1. If a complaint is received orally, the staff member should attempt to resolve the issue immediately.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved, the complainant should be directed to the Compliance Manager.
3. If received in writing, the details must be recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register. If the complainant refuses to provide a written statement, the matter must still be investigated.
4. Determine if the complaint will be managed via the 'informal' or 'formal' process.
5. Review the complaint and discuss it with relevant parties to reach a resolution.
6. Once a resolution is reached, a draft outcome letter must be submitted to the CEO for approval.
7. The Admissions Officer or relevant staff member executes the resolution. A copy of the outcome letter is provided to the complainant and any other relevant parties. The letter must invite the complainant to acknowledge their satisfaction; if they remain unsatisfied, the matter becomes a formal complaint.
8. If the complainant is satisfied, the Complaints and Appeals Register and the student/staff files must be updated.
9. Records must be retained for five (5) years, ensuring strict confidentiality.

Handling Formal Complaints:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with an informal review, they may lodge a formal complaint using the Aura Education Complaints and Appeals Form, available on the website or via email at info@aura.edu.au

The following steps must be followed:

1. If the complaint is initiated orally, the complainant is directed to the Compliance Manager to begin the formal process.
2. All formal complaints must be registered in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
3. Confirm the matter is being handled through the 'formal' process.
4. Aura Education must acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within ten (10) working days.
5. The management team investigates the matter, liaising with HR if staff conduct is involved. The student must be given the opportunity to present their case and may be accompanied by a support person.
6. The assigned staff member communicates the written outcome within ten (10) working days.
 - The letter must include the reasons for the decision and invite the complainant to acknowledge their satisfaction.
 - If the complainant is unsatisfied, they must be advised of their right to an external review by the Overseas Students Ombudsman within twenty (20) working days of the internal appeal outcome.
7. If satisfied, records are updated in the Register and student/staff files, and retained for five (5) years.

Associated Policies and Procedures:

This policy aligns with the following Aura Education documents:

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer Policy
- Refund Policy and Procedures
- Deferral, Suspension, and Cancellation Policy
- Course Progress and Attendance Monitoring Policies
- Student Support Policy and Procedures

Version Control History			
Version	Date	Author	Change Description
3.0	25 Aug 2025	Compliance	Annual review: Amended the policy to align with SRTO 2025.
2.0	Click here to enter a date.	Compliance	Annual review
1.0	Click here to enter a date.	Compliance	Creation of the document