

Complaints, Appeals and Grievances

Personnel must comply with the Integrity Business College complaints, appeals and grievance policy.

This procedure applies to all staff, clients and stakeholders. The grievance, complaints and appeals process consists of a number of stages and may involve various members of the RTO staff and administration, depending on the nature of the grievance, complaint or appeal. Relevant legislation, including:

- the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) and associated regulations
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
- the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 (Vic)
- the Ombudsman Act 1973 (Vic)
- the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
- the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)

It is imperative that strict confidentiality be maintained in all matters relating to a student complaint. Information shall be given only on a "need to know" basis and students must be made fully aware of the strict confidentiality that will be applied during all stages of the complaints process.

Nature of complaints and appeals

- Integrity Business College responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - Any third party providing Services on behalf of Integrity Business College.
 - Any student or client of Integrity Business College.
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of Integrity 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
- An appeal is a request for a decision made by Integrity Business College to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
 - course admissions
 - refund assessments
 - response to a complaint

- assessment outcomes / results
- other general decisions made by CMS Training Australia

Evidence is to be provided recording all grievances, complaints and appeals in the Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Register and advises the Managing Director of developments and shows that resolution has been demonstrated.

The following details will be recorded in the register:

- Submission date of grievance, complaint or appeal
- Nature of grievance, complaint or appeal
- Date/s when cause of grievance, complaint or appeal occurred
- Attachments (if applicable)
- Determined Resolution
- Date of Resolution

The Managing Director will also use the grievance, complaints and appeals data to review Integrity's operations and must act on any substantiated claims.

Grievances, complaints or appeals are to be monitored and reviewed to prevent their recurrence and to improve the operations or services.

Principles of resolution

- Integrity Business College is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, Integrity Business College ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
 - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - Are able to be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
- Integrity Business College will 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.
- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, Integrity Business College will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.

Timeframes for resolution

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. 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.

Making a complaint or appeal

- Complaints about a particular incident should be made within ninety (90) calendar days of the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or other written format and sent to Integrity Business College.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable Integrity Business College to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal.
 - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
 - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- All complaints and appeals will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 7 days.

Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some or all members of the management team of Integrity Business College will 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 be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- 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.

Independent parties

- Integrity 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 Integrity Business College
- Integrity Business College may also appoint the independent party to be involved in the resolution of a complaint or appeal where it is deemed necessary.
- The independent party recommended by Integrity Business College is **Commercial Arbitration and Mediation Centre who have a cost of \$950 per matter; however complainants and appellants are able to use their own external party at their own cost.**
- Integrity 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.**

External complaint avenues

- Integrity Business College agrees to respond to and cooperate in good faith with any complaints handling mechanism or process established by ASQA or the Department from time to time for the purpose of resolving student complaints or other issues in relation to the delivery of services.
- Complaints can be made externally through the following avenues:
- National Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- **Phone:** 13 38 73, Monday - Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- **Email:** skilling@education.gov.au

For more information about the National Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: <http://www.industry.gov.au/skills/nationaltrainingcomplaintshotline/Pages/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.aspx#>

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to Integrity Business College's RTO's registering body: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

However, ASQA will only use the information you provide to inform its regulatory approach and will not contact CMS Training Australia on behalf of the complainant or act as their advocate. For more information, refer to the following webpage:

<http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-a-complaint---domestic-students/make-a-complaint---domestic-students1.html>

- **Department of Education and Training**

Complaints relating to government funded training under the Skills First Funding Contract can be made to the Department of Education and Training. The Department is principally concerned with complaints regarding RTO misconduct including unethical and fraudulent practices. If a party wishes to make a complaint to the Department, they can do so by:

- Downloading the Department's complaint form, available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/compliancecomplain.aspx>; and
- Returning the completed form to the following email address vtg.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au; or
- Alternatively, the party can post the completed complaint form to:
Deputy Secretary, Higher Education and Skills Group
c/- Executive Director, Training Market Operations
GPO Box 4367
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Assessment appeals

Clients may appeal assessment decisions by assigned Assessors. All appeals must be in accordance with the following process:

- STEP 1: The client must submit their appeal in writing (using the grievance, complaint and appeal advice) within 7 days of being notified of the assessment decision.
- STEP 2: The Training Manager will investigate the appeal and may arrange for re-assessment by an independent assessor. The Training Manager must act on any substantiated claim and record the appeal in the Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Register.
- STEP 3: The Training Manager will advise the client of outcome in writing within 21 days of receipt of the appeal.
- STEP 4: If the client remains unsatisfied with the decision then he/she may seek a re-determination under the Grievance/ Complaints and Appeals process.