

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



11.6: STUDENT GRIEVANCES, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all complaints and appeals raised by students are handled in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. The policy aims to promote a culture of integrity and continuous improvement.

This policy applies to all complaints received from students regarding the services, operations, or conduct of the organisation.

The organisation is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and high-quality environment for all stakeholders. All complaints will be managed professionally, confidentially, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice, ensuring that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully.

a. Supporting Documentation/Forms/Links

- Student Handbook
- Staff and Trainer Handbook
- www.asqa.gov.au
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025

b. Definitions

Access and Equity - Responding to the diverse needs of individual students, including people who face barriers due to age, gender, cultural difference, disability, language, literacy and numeracy, unemployment, imprisonment or isolation and any other clients who are experiencing barriers in relation to access, participation and outcomes.

AQF – Australian Qualifications Framework

ASQA – Australian Skills Quality Authority

Manager – The person undertaking the role of Manager or Executive Officer at Cobram Community House.

National Recognition - Acceptance of valid qualifications issued by other RTOs in a state or territory of Australia.

RTO – Registered Training Organisation

Student - An individual who is formally enrolled or registered in an approved course, program, or class delivered by Cobram Community House.

Trainer – An individual employed by Cobram Community House to train and impart skills and knowledge to students. Can also be used to indicate a Trainer and Assessor, or Assessor.

Grievances - an actual or supposed circumstance regarded as just cause for complaint. This may be a result of issues such as perceived discrimination, victimisation, and harassment; or communication and interpersonal conflict.

c. Scope

This policy applies to any appeal or grievance as can be made by students at Cobram Community House including the conduct of:

- CCH, its trainers, assessors or other staff
 - A third party providing services on CCH's behalf, its trainers assessors or other staff.
- Staff, including Trainers must make any appeal or submit any grievance through the "[2.8: Staff Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure](#)".

d. Purpose

This policy outlines the process any student appeal or grievance is to take.

PROCEDURES

a. Responsibilities

The **student** is responsible for;

- Following the outlined processes for any and all appeals, complaints and grievances.
- Collecting and collating all evidence and documentation to support their appeal or grievance,

All **trainers and staff members** are responsible for;

- Making themselves available to all students who wish to discuss an assessment appeal or an informal complaint or grievance

The **Manager** or their delegated officer is responsible for;

- Making themselves available for discussions with students regarding an informal complaint or grievance.
- Following up all formal appeals, **or** formal complaints and grievances by students by using the following processes
- Assembling appropriate documentation for the process
- Responding within 10 days of a formal appeal or a formal complaint or grievance to the student

The **Manager** is responsible for:

- Receiving all A112: Grievances, Complaints and Appeals forms and ensuring appropriate action is undertaken.
- Ensuring all formal appeals, grievances or complaints have been followed through to resolution with the below processes.
- In the event of a complaint about the Manager, the complaint will be referred to the Committee of Management who will appoint an investigating officer. The investigating officer can be a committee member, or they may choose to engage an external investigating officer depending on the nature of the nature of the complaint.

b. Process

I. STUDENT GRIEVANCES and COMPLAINTS

(Note: Staff members including Trainers are to refer to the "[2.8: Staff Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure](#)")

It is the policy of Cobram Community House to maintain a harmonious environment which is free from intimidation and harassment, and which affords equality of opportunity. Cobram Community House encourages students to express concern about study-related issues and to raise concerns with their Trainer on an informal basis in the first instance and if not resolved, to seek recourse to more formal grievance and dispute procedures.

Cobram Community House's complaints process is free, and easily available, to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- Cobram Community House, its trainers, assessors or other personnel, or
- A Cobram Community House contracted third party providing services, including the third-party representatives' trainers, assessors or other personnel, or
- A student of Cobram Community House.

Complaints-handling procedures ensure that those complained against are treated objectively. This includes:

- Informing them immediately and completely on any complaint about their performance.
- Giving them the opportunity to explain the circumstances and allowing them appropriate support.
- Keeping them informed of the progress in the investigation of the complaint and the result.

It is vital that those against whom a complaint has been made are given full details of the complaint before they are interviewed. However, confidentiality should be observed.

Cobram Community House personnel are reassured that they are supported by the process. Personnel are encouraged to learn from the complaints-handling experience and to develop a better understanding of the complainant perspectives.

Complaints/Grievance Procedures

Informal Complaint/Grievance Process

Students should first try to achieve resolution of any grievance (academic or non-academic) through an informal approach to the staff member or person responsible for the action. Alternatively students can speak to the Manager. If all or part of the grievance remains unresolved, a student may wish to submit a formal appeal to resolve the grievance.

Formal Complaint/Grievance Process

Cobram Community House is open to receiving feedback and complaints and ensures information about how to provide feedback and make complaints is publicly available and easily accessible, including via the Student Handbook and website.

If a student has been unable to resolve their grievance through the informal process, they have the right to submit a written complaint using form A112: Grievance, Complaints and Appeals. This Form will be submitted to the Manager for action. All complaints are to be recorded in Cobram Community House's Complaints Register.

Cobram Community House is required to acknowledge receipt of complaints in writing immediately, as soon as practicable, and:

- Arranges a suitable time if needed to discuss the complaint,
- Advises complainants of expected timeframes, and
- Gives complainants the contact details of the allocated contact person they can speak to about their complaint.

Cobram Community House ensures the privacy of complainants, and the confidentiality of information included in a complaint.

The Manager will notify the relevant staff member of the grievance and, depending on the nature of the complaint, will decide the appropriate action to resolve the grievance.

Cobram Community House maintains a student complainants enrolment during any complaint process.

The Manager investigates complaints or refers matters to appropriate Cobram Community House personnel for investigation. In either case, investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the complaint as soon as practicable and within twenty (20) working days of the complaint being received in writing.

Complainants are given an opportunity to formally present their case at no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings. Any people involved in the complaint are given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information before a decision is made.

An up-to-date status must be made available to the complainant upon request and at regular intervals.

Complainants are advised on the outcome of complaints in writing, including detailed reason(s) for the outcome, explanations for decisions and remedies where appropriate. A copy of the communication is placed in the student file.

If a student considers that the response to their complaint or grievance is not ~~un~~satisfactory, they have the right to appeal directly to the Manager. A student who wishes to undertake this process will need to submit the appeal in writing to the Manager and make an appointment with the MANAGER to try and resolve the matter (refer Appeals Process).

If a student still feels that the Manager's decision is unsatisfactory they can contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and make a formal complaint against Cobram Community House. www.asqa.gov.au. This information will be provided to students in their student handbook.

II. APPEALS PROCEDURE

Cobram Community House is committed to providing a fair and transparent appeals process that allows individuals to seek a review of decisions that directly affect them. All appeals are managed in a timely, impartial, and confidential manner.

- A student may appeal decisions made by Cobram Community House, including but not limited to:
 - Application outcomes
 - Assessment outcomes
 - Disciplinary actions
 - Complaints resolution outcomes.
- Cobram Community House ensures that students are made aware of the appeals process through multiple accessible channels. Information on these processes is clearly outlined in the Student Handbook, organisational website, and enrolment documents.
- Appeals may be considered valid and accepted for review under the following grounds:
 - Procedural fairness or irregularity. Where it is believed that the original decision was made without following established procedures or policies, resulting in an unfair or biased outcome.
 - New evidence. When new, relevant evidence becomes available that was not considered during the original decision-making process, and this evidence has the potential to affect the outcome.
 - Incorrect or unjust application of policies or standards. If it is believed that the policies, procedures, or standards were incorrectly applied or interpreted, leading to an unjust decision.
 - Bias or conflict of interest. If there is evidence of bias, discrimination, or a conflict of interest by the person(s) involved in making the original decision.
 - Assessment outcome disputes. When a student believes that an assessment decision was unfair, inconsistent with assessment criteria, or not conducted in accordance with the organisation's assessment policies and standards.
 - Severity of outcome or penalty. If the appellant believes the outcome or penalty applied was disproportionate, harsh, or unreasonable in relation to the situation.
- Before lodging an appeal, assessment outcomes must first have been discussed with the relevant Trainer. The trainer may allow a student to submit their work up to three times per assessment task.
- If a student has discussed the assessment with their trainer and still wishes to appeal an assessment outcome, then the appeal must be submitted within 20 days of the original assessment decision being advised to the student.
- If an appeal is not lodged within the specified time frame of 20 days the result will stand.
- The appeal is to be put in writing using the A112: Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Form and submitted to the Manager within the time frame of 20 days from the original assessment decision.
- The student must attach all evidence of the assessment, feedback and any further supporting documentation with the A112: Grievance, Complaints and Appeals form.

- Cobram Community House must acknowledge receipt of appeals in writing immediately, as soon as practical, and:
 - Arranges a suitable time if needed to discuss the appeal,
 - Advises appellants of expected timeframes, and
 - Gives appellants the contact details of the allocated contact person they can speak to about their appeal.

An up-to-date status is to be made available to the appellant upon request and at regular intervals.

- The Manager or their delegated officer will assemble information and documents for the appeal. This may include the following:
 - Past Student record;
 - Attendance registers;
 - Assessment tools and assessment data; and
 - Any other supporting documents.
- The Manager will organise a review of the assessment decision. Where possible an assessor other than the original assessor will undertake the re-evaluation of the assessment decision.

- Appeal investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the appeal as soon as practical and within twenty (20) working days of the appeal being received in writing.

Appellants are given an opportunity to formally present their case at no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

Decisions and outcomes of all appeals are merit-based decisions that consider all available evidence. Cobram Community ensures appeals are considered with an open mind and without bias arising from any past issues with the appellant.

Issues raised in appeals are analysed to determine cause(s) and the root cause evident.

- Appellants are advised of the outcome of the appeal in writing, including detailed reasons for the outcome. With this notification, appellants also receive information on how they can progress their appeal if still unhappy.
- This is the last course of appeal at Cobram Community House. However, if a student is not satisfied with the appeal outcome, they may seek further assistance from the following additional parties as relevant:

Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA)	1300 701 801 www.asqa.gov.au
Victorian Department of Education and Training	www.skills.vic.gov.au

Modification History

All Documents at CCH are version controlled as per policy [8.2: Document Control](#)

Current Version Date	Policy Name	Comments
02/09/2025	11.6 Student Grievances and Appeals	Additional points detailing the Complaints and Appeals process.
Previous Version Dates	Policy Name	Comments
Reviewed 17/3/2021	11.6 Student Grievances and Appeals	Additional points in the Scope to highlight that students also have the right of grievance against CCH staff and third-party providers. Ratified: 17/3/2021
Reviewed 30.05.2019	11.6: Student Grievances and Appeals	Clarification of number of submissions for each piece of work. For purposes of clarity the 3 submissions include the initial submission.
Reviewed: 15.03.2019	11.6: Student Grievances and Appeals	Removal of references to Training Co-ordinator.
Ratified: 19/02/2014 Reviewed: 20/01/2015	11.6: Student Grievances and Appeals	New Stand-Alone Policy developed from Cobram 2.2: Students
12/09/2010	Cobram 2.2: Students	Section 22
May 2006	CCHPP 1.5: Client Complaints and Appeals	