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Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

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1. SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to outline Queensford College's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure for all academic and non-academic matters and applies to all Queensford College students, both international and domestic. Queensford College is committed to ensuring its complaints and appeals processes are freely accessible and managed in a fair, just and transparent manner.

2. Policy

The College undertakes to ensure that:

1. All disputes, complaints and appeals will be handled professionally, equitably, confidentially and in a timely manner, with a view to achieving satisfactory resolution;
2. All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved in the Complaints and Appeals procedure, prior to and during the carrying out of the procedure;
3. Prospective students are provided with a copy of the Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure document before making a contract to enrol, and again at course commencement;
4. There is no cost for a student to lodge an internal complaint or an appeal.
5. Queensford College is a member of the Resolution Institute's Student Mediation Scheme (Member No. 42713). Resolution Institute is an Australasian, not for profit membership organisation that promotes and facilitates the use of alternative dispute resolution.
<https://www.resolution.institute/>

Students are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. Queensford College teaching and administrative staff are available to assist students to resolve their issues at this level.

At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complaints, grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the complainant/appellant. Decisions will be made based on but not limited to current Government Legislation, Standards for RTOs 2017, Queensford College Policies and Procedures and, where applicable, The Rules of Evidence and The Principles of Assessment, providing a written report to the complainant/appellant within 20 working days, on the steps that will be taken to address the issue, clearly stating the reasons for the decision.

Complaints and Appeals Records

The Compliance Manger will maintain records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes.

The Compliance Manager will table complaints and appeals in Queensford College Management meetings, identifying potential causes of complaints and appeals, the action/s taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

All complaints and appeals paperwork is kept by the Compliance Manager in the Complaints and Appeals file and entered on the Complaints and Appeals Register.

3. Definitions

1. Academic Matters: student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards
2. Non-Academic Matters: including but not limited to those related to personal information, financial matters, behaviour of Queensford College staff and/or agents, and enrolment matters
3. Informal Complaint: informal discussion between a complainant and a member of the College.
4. Formal Complaint: A written statement from a complainant lodged with Queensford College
5. Appeal: A review of the outcome of a formal complaint by Queensford College
6. External Body Review: Organisation external to and independent of Queensford College who can review and consider a decision Queensford College has made regarding a formal complaint or appeal
7. Complainant: Anyone making a complaint or raising a grievance with Queensford College and accessing the complaints and appeals process.
8. Appellant – person lodging an appeal.

4. Procedure

The following procedure outlines the four stages in the complaints and appeals process. If a student chooses to access the complaints and appeals processes, Queensford College will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints/appeals process is being undertaken.

Queensford College will respond to any complaint or appeal the complainant/appellant makes regarding his or her dealings with Queensford College, Queensford College's Education Agents or any related party Queensford College has an arrangement with to deliver the overseas students course or related services.

4.1. Stage One: 1. Informal complaint

1. Any person wishing to make a complaint may do so in an informal manner by requesting to speak with any member of the Queensford College staff including trainers, administrative staff or a member of the management team. The complaint may bring a support person to accompany them to discuss their grievance.
2. Should the complainant feel that their grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, they may submit their complaint formally in writing.

4.2. Stage Two: Formal Complaint

1. If complainants are dissatisfied with the results of the informal discussions, they can make a formal complaint by submitting a Complaint and Appeals Form. This form is available on Queensford College's website under "Downloads" or complainants can request a copy from Queensford College's Student Services personnel. They can also submit a complaint via Queensford College's Feedback webform available at www.queensford.edu.au

2. The relevant Queensford College staff member will acknowledge in writing the formal complaint as soon as practicable.
3. The relevant Queensford College staff member may interview/meet with the student before the college finalises the student's request to appeal.
4. The relevant Queensford College staff member will review, assess and investigate the complainant's submission and respond with a written statement of the outcome of the complaint within 10 working days of the date the Complaint and Appeals Form was submitted.
5. The written response will contain full details of the reasons for the outcome.
6. The student will be advised of their right to an appeal, if they are still dissatisfied with the outcome at this stage.
7. If Queensford College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the student will be informed in writing of the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and will keep the complainant updated on the progress of the matter.

4.3. Stage Three - Internal appeal

1. If complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint or a formal decision made by Queensford College, they have 20 working days from the date of the written response to the formal complaint or decision made by Queensford College to lodge a written appeal for a review of the outcome by the Director of Operations or their designated personnel.
2. The relevant Queensford College staff member will acknowledge in writing the appeal as soon as practicable.
3. The relevant Queensford College staff member may interview/meet with the student before the college finalises the student's request to appeal.
4. The Director of Operations or their designated personnel will assess the original complaint or decision made by Queensford College, plus any extra evidence submitted as part of the appeal and respond with a written statement of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days of the date the written appeal was submitted.
5. The written response will contain full details for the reasons for the outcome.
6. If the appellant wishes to have their appeal heard in person or via teleconference, they may be accompanied or assisted by another person, at the appellant's cost.
7. If the appellant wishes to have the appeals decision reviewed by an independent, external body, the stages for an External Review are set out in Stage 4, below.
8. If Queensford College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the appeal, the student will be informed in writing of the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and will keep the appellant updated on the progress of the matter.

4.4. Stage Four - External review

1. If complainants are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal, they have 20 working days from the date of the written response to the internal appeal to lodge an appeal for a review of the appeal by an independent, external body.
2. Depending on the independent, external body appealed to and the student's individual circumstances, there may be a cost involved in an external review. For students who have enrolled in VET Student Loan-eligible courses and for international students, Queensford College is able to provide for a cost-free external review by an independent person or body with appropriate expertise. Please see below listings of independent, external review bodies. For other student cohorts, please contact Queensford College if you would like help to determine the costs of an external appeal.
3. If the appellant wishes to have their appeal heard in person or via teleconference, they may be accompanied or assisted by another person, at the appellant's cost.
4. If the independent, external body finds in favour of the appellant, Queensford College will comply with all recommendations made or instructions given by the body.
5. If the independent, external body finds in favour of Queensford College, Queensford College will ensure that a written copy of the decision is made available to the student, including full details of the reason for the decision.
6. The following is a non-exhaustive list of independent bodies with which appeals for external review may be lodged, depending on the individual complainant's circumstances:

Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman

<http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students>

1300 362 072

ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Students who are the subject of Queensford College initiated suspensions or cancellations will have access to Queensford College's Complaints and Appeals process. They will have 20 days in which to initiate the Complaints and Appeals process.

4.5. Assessment Results Appeals

Students wishing to appeal an assessment decision must submit their appeal in a period no longer than 60 days following the competency decision.

Please follow the procedure outlined above.