



## Complaints & Appeals Policy & Procedure

### Background

This Policy and Procedure outlines Camden Haven Community College's commitment to effectively manage and proactively learn from feedback, complaints, and appeals. It ensures compliance with the **Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025**, which emphasise a focus on quality outcomes, continuous improvement, and robust student support.

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with the services, conduct, or operations of Camden Haven Community College, its trainers, assessors or other staff.

An **appeal** is a request for a review of a decision made by Camden Haven Community College (e.g., an assessment outcome, an enrolment decision, or a decision made in response to a complaint), where that decision adversely affects the learner.

### Policy Statement

Camden Haven Community College is committed to fostering a culture of quality, transparency, and continuous improvement, deeply integrating feedback, complaints, and appeals into our operational and strategic decision-making. We will:

- **Promote Open Feedback:** Actively encourage and value feedback, including complaints and appeals, as vital mechanisms for identifying areas for improvement and enhancing the quality of our training and services.
- **Fair and Impartial Processes:** Ensure all complaints and appeals are handled fairly, objectively, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. This means all parties are informed of allegations or reasons for decisions, have an opportunity to present their case, and decisions are made by an impartial person.
- **Accessibility and Transparency:** Make our complaint and appeal handling procedures clear, easy to understand, and readily accessible to all prospective and current students, staff, and relevant third parties via our website, student handbook, and at points of service.
- **Prompt Resolution:** Respond to and finalise all complaints and appeals as quickly as practicable, adhering to clear timeframes.
- **No Cost to Customer:** Handle internal complaints and appeals processes at no direct charge to the complainant or appellant.
- **Skilled Personnel:** Ensure all staff involved in handling complaints and appeals receive appropriate training to manage matters effectively, impartially, and in alignment with this policy.
- **Strategic Use of Feedback:** Utilise insights gained from complaints and appeals data to critically examine our performance, identify root causes of issues, address systemic and recurring problems, and inform our continuous improvement initiatives across all aspects of our RTO operations.
- **Leadership Accountability:** Maintain leadership accountability for the effectiveness of our complaints and appeals management system and for ensuring its outcomes drive improvements in quality outcomes for learners.

### Procedure

#### 1. Lodgement and Initial Acknowledgement

- **Channels:** Complaints and appeals can be lodged informally (e.g., verbally with the person involved) or formally in writing (e.g., via email, dedicated form, or letter). We provide multiple mechanisms for students to lodge appeals about decisions (e.g., in-person, telephone, email).

PREPARED/REVIEWED BY	J Troup	J Troup	J Troup	J Troup	J Troup	C'tee	J Troup
DATE	May 2002	May 2006	April 2012	Mar 2015	Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017	Aug 2020
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- **Acknowledgement:** All formal complaints and requests for an appeal will be acknowledged in writing within **five (5) business days** of receipt. This acknowledgement will outline the next steps in the process.

### 2. Informal Resolution (where appropriate)

- In the first instance, where suitable, attempts will be made to resolve the issue informally and directly with the person or department most closely involved. This may involve discussion and negotiation to reach a mutually agreeable outcome.

### 3. Formal Review and Investigation (internal process)

- If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or if the complainant/appellant prefers to proceed directly to a formal process, the matter will be referred promptly to the **Manager**.
- The Manager, or a delegated Program Manager or other suitable impartial person, will conduct a thorough investigation, gathering all relevant information and providing all parties involved with an opportunity to present their case.
- **Decision and Communication:** A decision will be made based on objective evidence and communicated in writing to the complainant/appellant, including the reasons for the outcome.

### 4. Timelines for Resolution

- All complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable, and **no later than 30 calendar days** from the date the formal complaint or appeal was first received.
- Should the resolution of a complaint or appeal require **more than 30 calendar days**, the complainant or appellant will be informed in writing, detailing the reasons for the delay, and will receive regular updates on the progress of the matter.

### 5. Internal Escalation (Committee Review)

- If the complainant/appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial formal review by the Manager, they may request an internal appeal to the governing body, the Committee.
- The complainant/appellant must submit their appeal in writing to the President of the Committee, addressed to the College, to be passed on by the Manager.
- The President will acknowledge receipt in writing and advise that the issue will be brought to the next Camden Haven Community College Inc Committee meeting.
- The Committee will consider the written appeal at its first meeting after receipt.
- The President will notify the complainant/appellant in writing of the Committee's decision regarding the appeal, including the reasons for the decision.

### 6. Independent Review (External Appeal)

- If, after exhausting Camden Haven Community College's internal complaints and appeals processes, the complaint/appeal remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the complainant/appellant, they may request a review by an appropriate **independent party**.
- This independent person or panel will have proven mediation/negotiation skills and/or industry expertise.
- Camden Haven Community College will advise the complainant/appellant of suitable independent bodies and outline any associated costs. While CHCC covers the costs of its internal processes, the cost of an external independent review will typically be borne by the complainant/appellant, unless otherwise determined by CHCC based on the circumstances of the case and its commitment to fairness.
- The RTO will fully cooperate with any independent review process.

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### 7. Record Keeping and Continuous Improvement

- All complaints, appeals, their investigations, outcomes, and any corrective actions taken will be securely recorded in a dedicated complaints and appeals register/system. These records will be maintained for a minimum of seven (7) years.
- Records will include details of the resolution and the reasons for the outcome.
- Regular reviews of complaint and appeal data will be conducted by management and the governing body to identify trends, root causes, and opportunities for continuous improvement in our policies, procedures, training, and support services. This informs our self-assurance model.

### External Avenues for Complaints and Appeals (Smart & Skilled and General)

If a complainant or appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of Camden Haven Community College's internal complaints and appeals processes, they may pursue the matter with external bodies:

- **For Smart and Skilled Funded Training:** Complaints related to Smart and Skilled training, fees, or consumer protection can be lodged directly with **Training Services NSW** via their official channels <https://education.nsw.gov.au/skills-nsw/students-and-job-seekers/support-to-help-with-your-studies/smart-and-skilled-consumer-protection#Who1>. CHCC will always provide information on how to contact Training Services NSW for Smart and Skilled related complaints.
- **For General RTO Compliance:** Concerns relating to CHCC's compliance with the **Standards for RTOs 2025** may be lodged with the national VET regulator, the **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)**.
- **Other Mediation Services:** Students may also explore independent mediation services, such as a local Community Justice Centre or other relevant consumer protection bodies, for further resolution.

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