

Educare Complaints Policy

During course activities, students may have some concerns with the processes they are being exposed to or they may be unhappy with an aspect of the program. Educare College undertakes to provide a mechanism allowing allows for the fair and equitable resolution of any issues.

Educare College complaints process is available to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- Educare College, its trainers, assessors or other personnel; or
- A Educare College contracted third party providing services of Educare College, including the third-party representatives, trainers, assessors or other personnel; or
- A student of Educare College.

Allowing students to easily engage with the personnel of Educare College about any concerns they have can stop minor issues becoming larger. There is no fee or charge levied for any complaint processed.

Educare College’s complaints process is publicly available on the Educare College website (www.educare.edu.au) and is provided to all prospective clients via the relevant handbook for each stakeholder group prior to enrolment. Where Educare College uses third parties to deliver services, complaints information is also made available to prospective clients of these third-party representatives.

Educare College’s complaints process follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness by allowing anyone subject to a decision by Educare College, or anyone who has allegations made against them, to tell their side of the story before a decision is made.

1.1 Complaint & Grievance Procedure

The following problem resolution framework has therefore been implemented for all stakeholders raising a complaint or issue, with a desire to resolve matters as positive adults. This procedure applies to all complaints about:

- Academic matters from students;
- Non-academic matters from students; and
- Non-academic matters from persons seeking to enrol with the Educare College in a VET course or unit of study.

1. In the first instance a student should discuss the matter with the personnel member or responsible person concerned. Where this is not considered appropriate then the complainant is encouraged to discuss the matter with management.

If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the discussion, it would mean that the matter is resolved.

2. Any client may submit a formal complaint to Educare College in writing. Complaints are to include the following information:
 - Submission date of complaint;
 - Name of complainant;
 - Nature of complaint;
 - Date of the event which lead to the complaint; and
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable).

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3. The Educare College Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within five working days and arrange a suitable time if needed to discuss the complaint.
4. The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint or refer the matter to appropriate Educare College personnel to investigate. In either case, the investigation will be resolved, and decisions made on the complaint within 20 working days of the complaint being received in writing.
In all cases, each party may be accompanied and assisted by a third party at any relevant meeting.
5. The complainant will be informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded in writing, with reasons provided for the decisions or outcomes. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.
6. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the complaint in writing to the Educare College Chief Executive Officer.
7. Escalated complaints are to include the following information:
 - Submission date of complaint;
 - Name of complainant;
 - Nature of complaint;
 - Reasons why the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the original complaint; and
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable).
8. The Educare College Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge receipt of the escalated complaint in writing within five working days and arrange a suitable time if needed to discuss the complaint.
9. The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint or refer the matter to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by Educare College. In either case, the investigation will be resolved, and decisions made on the escalated complaint within twenty working days of the complaint being received in writing.
10. The complainant will be informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded in writing, with reasons provided for the decisions or outcomes. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.
11. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, and the complaint is yet to be mediated by an external dispute resolution process, they may escalate the complaint in writing to the Educare College *Chief Executive Officer*. In this situation, the *Chief Executive Officer* will:
 - Acknowledge receipt of the escalated complaint in writing within five working days; and
 - Refer the matter to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by Educare College.
 - Educare College will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review within ten working days of the receipt of the recommendations.
 - The investigation will be resolved, and decisions made on the complaint within thirty working days of the escalated complaint being received in writing.
12. The complainant will be informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded in writing, with reasons provided for the decisions or outcomes. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.

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All stages of the complaints process are documented, and notes provided to all parties involved, including the outcomes of the complaint at each stage and reasons for the decisions made. Each complaint and its outcome are recorded in writing and stored on the *Complaints Register*.

If at any stage Educare College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, Educare College:

- Informs the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and
- regularly updates the complainant on the progress of the matter.

If the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, Educare College immediately implements any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advises the student of the outcome.

At all times records of complaints and grievances are maintained confidentially. Educare College retains records of all complaints and grievances for a period of at least five years, allowing parties to the complaint or grievance appropriate access to these records.

1.2 Complaints Key Contacts

If the student is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, they are directed to seek further assistance from the following additional parties:

Organisation	Details
Vocational Education & Training Programs Australia Skills & Quality Authority (ASQA)	1300 701 801 enquiries@asqa.gov.au
International students Overseas students Ombudsman (OSO)	1300 362 072 ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
QLD Department of Education, Training & Employment	www.training.qld.gov.au

1.3 Improvement Actions

Educare College confirms its commitment to investigate and act on any complaint raised, and also to take appropriate action in any case where complaints are substantiated. In cases where a complaint is upheld, Educare College endeavours to identify the cause of the complaint and implement steps to prevent the situation happening again.

All improvement actions arising from complaints are raised via an *Improvement Record*. Educare College maintains a *Continuous Improvement Register* for recording the receipt and management of improvement records.

Once improvement records are raised, activities review complaints and their causes, evaluate corrective actions to resolve the issue and prevent reoccurrence, implement appropriate actions, record results of actions undertaken and review these actions to ensure effectiveness after implementation.

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1.4 External Appeals

If a student is dissatisfied with the internal appeal decision, Educare College will nominate ACPET as an independent external person or organisation to hear the complaint and propose a final resolution. This person or body will not be the same as any person or body that heard the original complaint.

The purpose of an external appeal process is to consider whether Educare College has followed the correct policies and procedures in making the appeal decision but is not to review the decision previously made by Educare College. Students who wish to have their case heard by an external body, must notify the Principal Executive Officer of their External Appeals lodgement detail within 5 business days from the date on the written notification of the outcome of the student’s internal appeal.

If an appeal is lodged regarding Educare College’s decision to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or unsatisfactory attendance, Educare College will maintain the student’s enrolment (i.e. not report the student for unsatisfactory progress or attendance) until the external appeals process is complete and has supported the provider’s decision to report.

If an appeal is lodged regarding Educare College’s decision to suspend or cancel a student’s enrolment or suspend a student’s enrolment due to misbehaviour, Educare College only needs to await the outcome of the internal appeals process (supporting the provider) before notifying DET through PRISMS of the change to the student’s enrolment. Once DET has been notified of a suspension or cancellation of a student’s enrolment, the student has 28 days in which to either leave Australia, provide Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) with evidence that he or she has accessed an external appeals process or show DIBP a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE).

Nothing in this procedure inhibits student’s rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies. Students wishing to take this course of action are advised to contact a legal representative and will incur all costs of this action.

1.5 Ombudsman:

The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for overseas students who have a complaint or want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by their private education or training provider. See the Overseas Students Ombudsman website www.oso.gov.au, email ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072 for more information. The Overseas Students Ombudsman will investigate complaints at no cost to the provider or student. The Overseas Students Ombudsman can investigate complaints about action taken by private providers in connection with overseas students. Complaints might, for example, be about:

- refusing admission to a course;
- fees and refunds;
- course or provider transfers;
- course progress or attendance;
- cancellation of enrolment;
- accommodation or work arranged by a provider;
- incorrect advice given by an education agent.

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