

## Complaints and Appeals Policy

### Relevant Standards

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025	Standard 2.7 Standard 2.8
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### Purpose

The Pet Industry College is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs 2015). This policy provides the framework and general principles for complaints and appeals for The Pet Industry College. This policy is based on providing and maintaining training services that are fair and reasonable and afford a forum where issues or inadequacies can be resolved. The The Pet Industry College process provides adequate opportunity for complaints and appeals to be forwarded to The Pet Industry College management for resolution in a timely, confidential, and sensitive manner. The Pet Industry College will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be adhered to throughout the hearing of all complaints and appeals. The objective of this policy is to ensure that The Pet Industry College staff always act in a professional manner. This policy provides clients with a clear process to register a complaint. It ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

### Scope

The Pet Industry College acknowledges the student's right to lodge a complaint or appeal when they are dissatisfied with the training and/or assessment services and experiences that they have been provided by The Pet Industry College or by a third-party provider (if applicable). The Pet Industry College ensures that clients have access to a fair and equitable process for expressing complaints and appeals, and that The Pet Industry College will manage the complaint by implementing principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. With this The Pet Industry College ensures that:

1. It has a procedure for collecting and managing complaints and appeals in a constructive, timely, confidential, and sensitive manner.

2. These procedures are communicated to all staff, contractors, third party partners and students.
3. Each complaint and appeal and its outcome are recorded in writing.
4. Complainants and appellants are given written statements or communication of the appeal or complaints handling outcomes, including decisions and reasons for the decisions.
5. Outcomes of complaints and appeals are utilised to review current practices which may potentially lead to continuous improvement initiatives to mitigate the likelihood of complaints and appeals.

## **Policy Principles**

### **Complaints and Appeals Policy**

1. Details concerning the scope of The Pet Industry College Complaints and Appeals Policy are to be clearly displayed throughout the The Pet Industry College and contained within the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook and Website.
2. Complaints and appeals are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively and in confidence.
3. Complaints and appeals will be resolved on an individual case basis as the needs arise.
4. All The Pet Industry College students have the right to express a concern or problem and/or lodge a formal complaint if they are dissatisfied with the training and assessment services they have been provided, including through a third party (if applicable) or the behavioural conduct of another learner or The Pet Industry College.
5. The Pet Industry College supports the right of a student to lodge an appeal against any assessment decision and will not impair that right in any way. The Pet Industry College will do everything possible to address the appeal in an unbiased and professional manner.
6. The handling of a complaint or appeal is to commence within 10 working days of the lodgment of the complaint or appeal, and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
7. All complaints and appeals are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable. The Pet Industry College will aim to complete the complaints process

as quickly as possible and within a total of 30 calendar days. The Pet Industry College will keep the learner informed of the progress of the complaint throughout the process by phone communication, email correspondence, or face-to-face meetings.

8. If the complaint takes more than 60 calendar days to finalise, The Pet Industry College will inform the complainant in writing providing the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required.
9. All complaints will be recorded in the The Pet Industry College Complaints and Appeals Register and on the student record in the Student Management System. These records, including the outcomes, will be secured and maintained by The Pet Industry College.
10. The Pet Industry College shall not disclose information to any person without the permission of the National Education Manager. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the complainant is given permission for this to occur.

## **Types of Complaints**

A complaint or grievance may include allegations involving the conduct of:

1. the RTO, its trainers and assessors, or other staff members.
2. a third-party providing services on behalf of The Pet Industry College; or
3. a student at The Pet Industry College.

## **Grounds for Appeal**

Valid grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision (where the client feels the assessment decision is incorrect) could include the following:

1. the judgment as to whether competency has been achieved and demonstrated was made incorrectly.
2. the judgement was not made in accordance with the assessment plan.
3. alleged bias of the assessor.
4. alleged lack of competence of the assessor.
5. alleged wrong information from the assessor regarding the assessment process.
6. alleged inappropriate assessment process for the competency.
7. faulty or inappropriate equipment; and/or

8. inappropriate conditions.

#### Appeal Outcomes

1. Appeal is upheld; in this event the following options will be available:
  - a. The The Pet Industry College assessment will be reassessed, potentially by another assessor.
  - b. Appropriate recognition will be granted.
  - c. A new assessment shall be conducted / arranged.
2. Appeal is rejected / not upheld; in accordance with the The Pet Industry College assessment policy, the client will be required to:
  - a. undertake further training or experience prior to further assessment; or
  - b. re-submit further evidence; or
  - c. submit / undertake a new assessment

#### Complaints and Appeals Process

1. The Pet Industry College adopts the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness at every stage of the complaints and appeals process. The Pet Industry College handles and manages all complaints and appeals in accordance with the Complaints Handling Process and Appeals Process document.
2. Students are provided with a clear process to follow to lodge a complaint or appeal. All parties involved will be kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.
3. If a student has a complaint, they are encouraged to speak immediately with the trainer / assessor to resolve the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied that the issue has been resolved, they will be asked to complete a Complaints Form and lodge a formal complaint.
4. The complaint resolution procedure is based on the understanding that no action will be taken without consulting the complainant and respondent, using a process of discussion, cooperation, and conciliation. The rights of the complainant and respondent will be acknowledged and protected throughout the complaint resolution process, including the conduct of separate interviews initially.
5. In the interest of confidentiality, the number of people involved in the resolution process will be kept to a minimum. All complaints will be handled as staff-in-confidence and will not affect or bias the progress of the client in any current or future training.

6. Final decisions will be made by the National Education Manager of The Pet Industry College or an independent party to the complainant.
7. If the complaints process fails to resolve the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the matter will be referred to an independent third party for review, at the request of the complainant. The complainant will be advised of all costs incurred by the third-party review.
8. The Pet Industry College reserves the right to nominate or agree to the independent party and will cooperate fully with the independent third-party review.

### **Consumer Protection Officer**

At The Pet Industry College, the National Education Manager will be appointed as the Consumer Protection Officer. The Consumer Protection Officer will be the primary point of contact for all complaints and appeals. The National Education Manager may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint and appeal if necessary. The Pet Industry College will ensure that its staff and those acting on its behalf are in accordance with the The Pet Industry College's Code of Conduct and Appeals Policy.

### **Monitoring and Improvement**

All complaints and appeals will be discussed at Management Meetings and/or at Continuous Improvement Meetings to identify potential causes of complaints or appeals, to discuss appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of re-occurrence, and to identify an opportunity for continuous improvement of the processes.

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