



VCAL STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

This policy describes the commitment of Skillinvest to ensure an effective and confidential process for addressing and resolving student complaints and appeals.

SCOPE

This Policy and Procedure applies only to Skillinvest VCAL students.

All Non VCAL students are bound by the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure available on the Skillinvest website at www.skillinvest.com.au

All Employees of Skillinvest (including VCAL Staff) are bound by the Skillinvest Employee Grievances and Complaints Policy available on the Skillinvest Extranet.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal is a request for a review of the determination of a complaint

Appeal against an outcome decision is a request for a review of an outcome result

Complaint refers to dissatisfaction with the standard of all educational services provided by Skillinvest in relation to all learning and outcome activities and processes

Home School refers to the Secondary School in which the student is enrolled in partnership with Skillinvest

Outcome refers to any mark or assessment result provided to a student based on the work or assessments undertaken as part of their VCAL course

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure VCAL students understand their right to lodge a complaint or appeal
- To ensure VCAL students understand the procedure to lodge a complaint or appeal

POLICY

Skillinvest understands that a situation may arise when a student wishes to lodge a complaint in relation to services provided by Skillinvest, or to appeal against a decision (including outcome decisions).

Complaints

A complaint may arise in relation to:

- the conduct of a Skillinvest staff member or student
- student selection and enrolment process
- delivery of education

- assessment of outcome
- student services and amenities
- equal opportunity, including bullying or harassment
- the conduct of a visitor or guest providing services on behalf of Skillinvest

Appeals

An appeal may be lodged against a decision reached in the hearing of a complaint or against an outcome result.

Communication of Complaints and Appeals Process

Upon enrolment, Skillinvest will ensure that all students are made aware of the VCAL Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure via the issuance of the VCAL Student and Parent Information Handbook which refers to the location of the policy and procedure. Both prospective and continuing students will also have access to the VCAL Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure via the Skillinvest website.

Management of Complaints and Appeals

Skillinvest will manage and respond to all complaints and appeals (including those against outcome decisions) in a professional and confidential manner and will ensure a fair, equitable and efficient investigation in its efforts to achieve a satisfactory result for all parties.

Skillinvest is committed to resolving the complaint and/or appeal in a timely manner. Skillinvest will ensure complaints and appeals are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.

Skillinvest will establish a Complaints and Appeals Committee which may be made up of;

- A VCAL Educator
- The VCAL Coordinator
- The VCAL Wellbeing Officer
- A representative of the Host school

The purpose of the Complaints and Appeals Committee is to investigate and decide upon appropriate outcomes. Where Skillinvest is unable to resolve the complaint or appeal, the matter may be referred to the Host school for input into the decision.

At all times, where a student is under 18 years of age, parents or guardians will be informed of the complaint or appeal and the status of the process or decision.

Complaints Register

Skillinvest will maintain a confidential register of all complaints and appeals.

Outcomes Review

The outcomes of complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager as required as part of the continuous improvement process.

PROCEDURE

Complaints

Before lodging a complaint, the student is encouraged to try and settle any complaint directly with the person(s) concerned.

However, if talking directly to the person concerned does not assist the student or if such communication is not possible, then the student is to lodge a formal complaint. This must be done in writing to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au
- Hand delivered to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro

Alternatively, if for any reason the student is unable to make a written statement, the student may make an oral statement about the incident to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro. An appointment should be made by contacting Skillinvest reception either face to face or via phone: 1300 135 008.

Within five (5) working days the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro will contact the student to acknowledge receipt of the student's complaint. The VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro will conduct a formal investigation in relation to the complaint.

The investigation will offer the complainant the right to be heard and may include interviews with other relevant persons and a review of documentation. The subject of the complaint will not be involved in the investigation process.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

At all times, where a student is under 18 years of age, parents or guardians will be informed of the complaint or appeal and the status of the process or decision.

Appeals

Should the student be unsatisfied with the complaint process, or the complaint remains unresolved, the student has the right to appeal.

Appeals must be lodged within seven (7) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the complaint. This application must set out the grounds of appeal, including any supporting evidence. Students must put appeals in writing and forward to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager for resolution, in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au
- Hand delivered to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro

Alternatively, if for any reason the student is unable to make a written statement, the student may make an oral statement about the incident to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro. An

appointment should be made by contacting Skillinvest reception either face to face or via phone: 1300 135 008.

Within (7) working days the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro will contact the student to acknowledge receipt of the written appeal.

An appeals committee will be formed, which will comprise at least three of the following people:

- An Educator with the expertise in the area concerned
- A student enrolled in the area concerned
- The Skillinvest General Manager
- A representative from the Host school
- The VCAL Coordinator

If appropriate, additional participants may include:

- An advocate of a student with a disability
- An interpreter where required

The appeals committee will offer the appellant the right to be heard. The appeals committee will also conduct investigation of the matter including reviewing any interviews/documents forming part of the initial complaint investigation; and any additional interviews and/or review of documents that the Committee sees fit. The subject of the appeal will not be involved in any investigation process prior to the appeals committee hearing.

Skillinvest will ensure all discussions, investigations and findings relating to the appeal are documented and the appellant/complainant provided with a written statement of the outcome, including reasons for the decision, within five (5) working days of the decision being made.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

Appeals against Outcome Decisions

The student has the right to appeal against an outcome decision made by Skillinvest. An appeal must be made in writing to the VCAL Coordinator or the Training Manager Metro, in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au
- Hand delivered to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro

Alternatively, if for any reason the student is unable to make a written statement, the student may make an oral statement about the incident to the VCAL Coordinator or Training Manager Metro. An appointment should be made by contacting Skillinvest reception either face to face or via phone: 1300 135 008.

If the student lodges an appeal against an Outcome decision, they may have the opportunity to be reassessed. An appeal against an Outcome decision will initiate a formal hearing in which the student will have the right to be heard. The Skillinvest Training Manager will examine the relevant evidence and make a determination and may consult with the VCAL Coordinator, or a representative of the Host school.

A decision will be made regarding the appeal against the Outcome decision as soon as practicable. Once a decision has been reached, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome within (5) working days.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

External Mediation

Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion, conciliation or via the appeals committee, Skillinvest acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties. In this instance, Skillinvest will provide students with the details of external authorities that they may approach with respect to the issues if required.

Where all internal avenues have been exhausted and the matter remains unresolved, Skillinvest (in negotiation with the student) will seek the input of an external independent mediator.

Where the student chooses to seek support or advice from alternative sources, they will be required to meet any costs in doing so.

Where a student is not satisfied with the Skillinvest VCAL Students Complaints and Appeals Policy or Procedure, students have the right to lodge a complaint with the **Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA)**. Details can be found at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Students may also lodge a complaint to the **Ombudsman Victoria** if they are unsatisfied with a complaint decision either Skillinvest or the VRQA has made. Contact details are; Phone: (03) 9613 6222, Website: www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Complaints Register

A register of all Complaints and Appeals lodged is maintained confidentially by the relevant Skillinvest General Manager and includes:

- Names of relevant parties
- The complaint being made / decision being appealed
- Outcome of the Complaint / Appeal (including reasons, in the case of an Appeal)
- The name and position of the person/s making the decision

Outcomes Review

The outcomes of complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager as required as part of the continuous improvement process. Where relevant, recommended actions will be recorded and actioned via the continuous improvement register.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE EVALUATION & REVIEW

This policy and procedure were last updated in Term 3 2019 and is scheduled for review in Term 3 2023.