



## Complaints and Feedback procedure

Procedure number: **PL0401**

Version: **V3.0**

Policy Owner: **General Manager Organisational Services**

Subject Expert: **Director Planning & Reporting**

Next review date: **2 December 2022**

### 1. PROCEDURE

		Responsibility
<b>Receive</b>		
1.1	<p>South Metropolitan TAFE (SM TAFE) provides opportunity for feedback through multiple means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by email</li> <li>• through the online form on the college website</li> <li>• by completing a feedback form and lodging it at an SM TAFE Customer Service Centre or by mail</li> <li>• by writing a letter</li> <li>• by speaking to a staff member in person or by phone. The staff member can assist by completing a feedback form on the person's behalf if required</li> <li>• via social media platforms (as monitored by Marketing and Communications).</li> </ul>	All staff /students /stakeholders
1.2	<p>SM TAFE will provide additional assistance to students and stakeholders to give feedback by arranging services, adjustments or alternative format materials for people with individual requirements. This may include interpreting services to use a preferred language, flexible alternatives for access for people with disability, or other support to participate in the feedback process.</p>	All staff /Student Support Services
1.3	<p>SM TAFE staff will clarify with students and stakeholders whether feedback should be handled informally or entered as formal feedback in the Customer Comment Database. All written feedback should be regarded as formal and registered in the Customer Comment Database.</p> <p>For feedback posted on social media: where the customer is identifiable, Marketing will advise the customer of the process to lodge a formal complaint.</p> <p>A client may withdraw a complaint at any point in the procedure.</p>	All staff /Planning & Evaluation/Marketing



1.4	Informal feedback will be received, discussed and dealt with at a local level within the college by the relevant manager.	All staff /students /stakeholders
1.5	If a person wishes to give formal feedback or make a complaint, staff will inform the person of the process and refer the matter to the college's Planning & Evaluation unit within two working days to be registered in the college's Customer Comment Database.	All staff /P&E
1.6	SM TAFE will collect and record information in the Customer Comment Database including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal details</li><li>• Details of the issue and relevant or supporting information and outcome sought</li><li>• Demographics</li><li>• Course information</li><li>• Any support requirements</li></ul>	P&E
1.7	Comments of a defamatory nature or containing racist, sexist or other offensive material will be returned to the complainant for removal of the offensive material before being actioned. Anonymous feedback containing comments of a defamatory nature, or racist, sexist or other offensive material, will be discarded.	P&E
1.8	It is voluntary for people giving feedback to provide personal information. Students and stakeholders may request that their identity be kept confidential when addressing the issue with other parties such as another student or staff member. Feedback may also be given anonymously, however to fully resolve a complaint and communicate the outcome, providing contact details is encouraged.	All staff /students /stakeholders
1.9	Complaints received from a third party on behalf of an adult will be dealt with following the consent of the adult. Complaints received from a third party on behalf of a minor will be dealt with in consultation with the minor and progress updates given to both the person making the complaint and the minor. The Manager Student Support Services will be consulted regarding complaints made by International students, in line with TIWA International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy – DTWD. If the complaint involves a minor (student under 18 years of age), the Manager, Education Pathways should be consulted to determine whether the parent/guardian or responsible adult should be informed.	All staff /students /stakeholders/ Manager Education Pathways / Manager Student Support Services

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	<p>Any student under 18 years of age should be given the option to have a parent/guardian or responsible adult as support during any investigation in relation to the complaint.</p> <p>If the complaint involves a VETDSS student, the Manager, Education Pathways should be consulted to determine whether the school should be informed.</p>	
1.10	<p>The complainant and/or respondent has the right to an advocate such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) present at any meetings with the College.</p> <p>Such support will be at the complainant and/or respondent's cost.</p>	All staff /students /stakeholders
1.11	<p>SM TAFE staff will assess and prioritise feedback and complaints to identify if any immediate threat or serious risk is apparent. Where a complaint represents a significant or strategic risk, the Planning &amp; Evaluation Analyst or delegated officer will immediately bring this to the attention of the Managing Director or an appropriate member of the College Executive.</p>	All staff /P&E
1.12	<p>SM TAFE staff will identify any conflict of interest, grievances alleging misconduct or complaints, or public interest disclosure issues which may need to be referred to other internal or external mechanisms, at the point of allocating the feedback to the relevant manager.</p>	P&E Officer managing
<b>Record</b>		
1.13	<p>All documents relating to client correspondence will be forwarded to Planning &amp; Evaluation to be entered into the Customer Comment Database. Records of all complaints, decisions and outcomes of the complaints process are kept in accordance with the SM TAFE IS02 Records Management Policy.</p>	All staff
1.14	<p>SM TAFE staff will refer to IS09 Privacy Principles Policy and act within the bounds of confidentiality when recording information. Staff will only share information with consent and for the direct purpose of investigating and resolving the complaint.</p>	All staff
1.15	<p>Planning &amp; Evaluation / Officer managing the feedback will record formal feedback in the Customer Comment Database in its original form, where possible. All other information will be recorded simply, clearly and objectively, stating observations rather than opinions.</p>	P&E/ Officer managing



1.16	Planning & Evaluation / Officer managing the feedback will allocate feedback to the relevant Officer managing within two business days.	P&E/ Officer managing
1.17	The Officer managing the feedback will record notes on all actions and discussions in the Customer Comment Database, throughout the process of managing the feedback.	Officer managing
<b>Acknowledge</b>		
1.18	SM TAFE will provide the student or stakeholder with written acknowledgement within five business days of receipt by the Planning & Evaluation unit.	P&E
<b>Resolve</b>		
1.19	Upon allocation, the Officer managing the feedback will review the feedback and seek further information from staff involved and/or the student or stakeholder to clarify details. The Officer managing will confirm that the student or stakeholder understands the general process to be followed to investigate and find the best solution to the problem.  Officer managing will investigate and resolve complaints within 10 business days and in accordance with the college's Customer Comment Database process on the Planning & Reporting Feedback & Complaints intranet page.	Officer managing
1.20	Feedback will be categorised by type and assessed in relation to severity, safety issues, and likely impact to determine actions to be taken.	Officer managing
1.21	Complaints from students or stakeholders about the conduct of a student will be considered in relation to the student Code of Conduct and those about the conduct of staff will refer to the SM TAFE Staff Code of Conduct. Those involved will be spoken to separately in the first instance, so that all parties can give their version of events.	Officer managing
1.22	Any complaint relating to the conduct of staff members, whether informal or through the formal feedback and complaints management system, must be referred to their supervisor, who may involve Human Resources as appropriate.	All staff /Officer managing
1.23	Where a complaint is made anonymously this will be regarded as feedback and incorporated into the	All staff/Officer managing



	<p>college's continuous improvement processes where appropriate.</p> <p>Where a complainant has requested not to be identified to the person/s involved, the resolution process will be limited by the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, allowed to the person/s against whom an allegation is made.</p>	
1.24	<p>Feedback and complaints are tracked, and reminders sent to the relevant manager at each milestone. Extensions of time will only be considered where necessary. If the Officer managing considers that more than 10 business days are required to manage a complaint, the student or stakeholder will be advised beforehand in writing.</p>	P&E / Officer managing
1.25	<p>Once investigated, the relevant manager will check that SM TAFE policies and procedures have been followed and identify the outcome, any remedies offered, and reason/s for the decision made.</p>	Officer managing
1.26	<p>Any improvements in policies and processes will be identified by the relevant manager and recorded in the Customer Comment Database</p>	Officer managing
<b>Communicate Resolution</b>		
1.27	<p>The allocated Officer managing the feedback will inform the student or stakeholder of the outcome. Where possible, the relevant manager will discuss the outcome verbally with the student or stakeholder. If an email or mailing address is provided, the relevant manager will outline the resolution in writing, including the reasons for the decision, and the remedies that will be made available.</p> <p>All correspondence will be recorded in the comment database, including copies of emails.</p>	Officer managing
1.28	<p>The complainant will be kept informed of the status of their complaint unless privacy constraints prevent the release of certain information (e.g. where the complaint is about a person).</p>	Officer managing
1.29	<p>A satisfaction survey will be sent to the student or stakeholder within two weeks of the closure of a complaint to measure satisfaction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. the outcome of the feedback management process</li><li>b. the feedback management process itself.</li></ul> <p>The student or stakeholder will also be provided with information about the Complaints and Feedback policy</p>	

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	and procedure on the SM TAFE website for options available.	
<b>Appeal and Review</b>		
1.30	<p>If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of a student or stakeholder, they may appeal the decision and request that the investigation and decision is reviewed by the relevant manager's supervisor.</p> <p>Appeals must be lodged using PL040102 Complaint Appeal Form within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the original complaint.</p> <p>Appeals may be made on the grounds of lack of procedural fairness only. Procedural fairness, also known as natural justice, is a principle of law concerned with the procedures used by the decision maker, rather than the outcome reached. An appellant has no right of appeal simply because they do not agree with the decision.</p>	P&E / Director Planning & Reporting
1.31	<p>Appeals will initially be assessed by the Planning &amp; Evaluation Analyst and Director Planning &amp; Reporting to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for appeal.</p> <p>Where an appeal relates to a complaint involving Planning &amp; Reporting, the advice of an independent manager will be sought to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for appeal.</p>	<p>Planning &amp; Evaluation Analyst Director Planning &amp; Reporting</p> <p>Other suitable manager</p>
1.32	Appeals assessed as eligible will be forwarded to the supervisor of the managing officer of the original complaint for review and response to the customer.	Supervisor of managing officer of original complaint
1.33	Appeals will be resolved within 10 working days and a written outcome provided to the appellant.	Supervisor of managing officer of original complaint
1.34	The outcome of the appeals process is final.	
1.35	<p>If the student or stakeholder remains unsatisfied with the outcome, they will be advised of relevant external bodies to contact.</p> <p>International Student complainants will be informed of their right of review by TAFE International WA (TIWA). Please refer to International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy – DTWD.</p>	P&E / Director Planning & Reporting
1.36	If the grievance is related to a Commonwealth VET Student Loan, and the student remains unsatisfied, the	Manager, Admissions / P&E /

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	Complainant may contact the VET Student Loans Ombudsman.	Director Planning & Reporting
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>		
1.37	Proposed business improvements are documented and actioned on a case-by-case basis.	Officer managing/all staff
1.38	Complaints and feedback data will be collated, analysed and reported quarterly to Corporate Executive and business areas for actioning. The report will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statistics on feedback and complaints received</li> <li>• survey results from students and stakeholders on their satisfaction with the process</li> <li>• identified improvements in policies, processes and training delivery</li> </ul>	Planning & Evaluation/all staff

## 2. KEY DEFINITIONS

**Feedback** – opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern.

**Complaint** – an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about SM TAFE where a response or resolution is requested, expected or legally required. A complaint may relate to SM TAFE products, services or training delivery, something the college has failed to do, or the handling of a complaint. A complaint may also relate to the conduct of SM TAFE staff, a third-party providing services on behalf of the college or a breach of the Student Code of Conduct by an SM TAFE student.

**Appeal** - is typically a request from a student requesting feedback/further reconsideration of decision made by SM TAFE lodged in accordance with PL04 Complaints and Feedback Policy.

**Appellant** - a person specified in the scope of this policy who makes an appeal in accordance with this policy.

**Stakeholder** – a person, organisation or their representative giving feedback or making a complaint. As well as learners, this may include SM TAFE staff, employers, customers, advocates, parents or other members of the community.

**Resolution** – the matter is settled or concluded, and the parties are notified of the outcome, regardless of whether this is in the favour of one party or another. Students and stakeholders may appeal if they are not satisfied with the resolution.

**Natural justice and procedural fairness** – requires fair and proper procedure to be used when making a decision. Procedural fairness requires a fair hearing appropriate to the circumstances; lack of bias; evidence to support a decision; and inquiry into matters in dispute.

## 3. DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THIS POLICY

### 3.1. Policies

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- PL04 Complaints and Feedback Policy
- IS02 Records Management Policy
- IS09 Privacy Principles Policy
- TS01 Student Code of Conduct Policy
- HR01 Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- CS08 International Students Policy
- TIWA International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy – DTWD

### 3.2. Procedures

- TS0101 Student Code of Conduct – Process for managing breaches and appeals

### Forms

- PL040101 Customer feedback form (available as webform and downloadable as hardcopy at [www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au](http://www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au))
- TIWA Complaint Review Form (available from TIWA)
- IS090001 Record of Conversation
- PL040102 Complaint Appeal Form

### 3.3. Other

## 4. POLICY REVIEW AND COMMUNICATION

Staff will be notified of new policies and changes. Current versions will be available on QMS

## 5. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description
V1.0	16 May 2017	Managing Director	Complaints and Feedback procedure
V1.1	18 May 2017	General Manager Organisational Services	Minor changes made to point 1.32; point 1.33 redundant.
V2.0	26 June 2018	General Manager Organisational Services	Full review on the policy set.
V2.1	20 September 2019	General Manager Organisational Services	Updates to 1.10, 1.37, 1.32 and 1.36
V3.0	2 December 2020	General Manager Organisational Services	Full policy set review with minor changes

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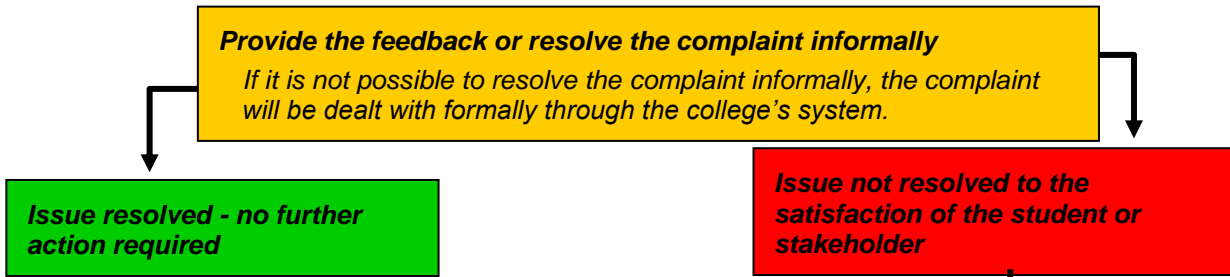




## Appendix – Complaints procedure

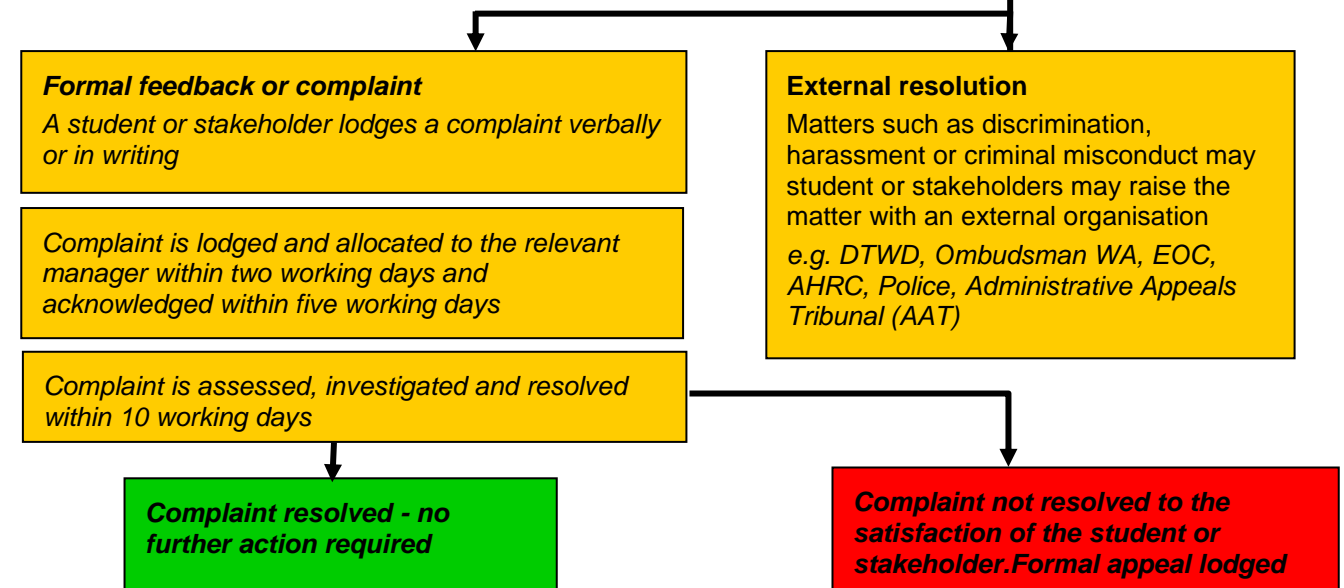
### Informal

Student or stakeholder may raise a concern directly with the person or persons responsible for the relevant situation, behaviour or action.



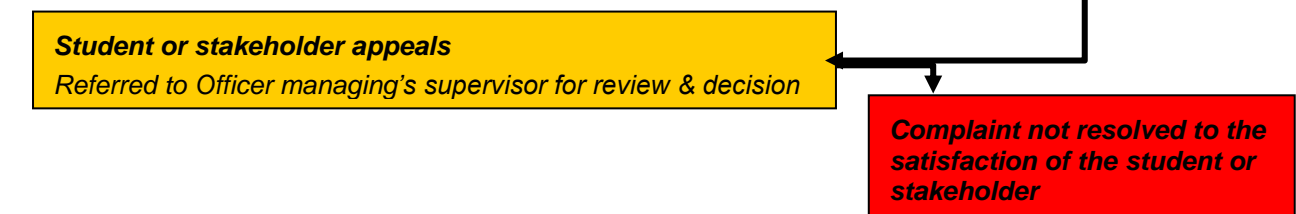
### Formal feedback or complaint

The relevant manager will look into a complaint that has not been resolved informally.



### Appeal

The outcome will be reviewed internally by relevant manager's supervisor..



### Referral for external review

