

1 Complaints

Extract from Policy Manual v11.3

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

Vital Training Solutions complaints process is available to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- Vital Training Solutions, its trainers, assessors or other personnel; or
- A Vital Training Solutions contracted Third Party providing services of Vital Training Solutions, including the Third Party representatives trainers, assessors or other personnel; or
- A student of Vital Training Solutions.

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

Vital Training Solutions will maintain a student complainant's enrolment during any appeal process.

Vital Training Solutions' complaints process is publicly available on the Vital Training Solutions website and is provided to all prospective clients via the relevant handbook for each stakeholder group prior to enrolment. Where Vital Training Solutions uses third parties to deliver services, complaints information is also made available to prospective clients of these Third Party representatives.

Vital Training Solutions' complaints process follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness by allowing anyone subject to a decision by Vital Training Solutions, 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 Vital Training Solutions in a VET course or unit of study.

No fees are applicable or levied to the student or other complainant for any stage of the complaints process.

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 Vital Training Solutions 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 Vital Training Solutions 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).
3. Vital Training Solutions will commence assessment of the complaint within 5 working days of it being made and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable. Vital Training Solutions ensures the assessment of the complaint is conducted in a professional, fair and transparent manner

4. The Vital Training Solutions 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.
5. The Chief Executive Officer will investigate the complaint or refer the matter to appropriate Vital Training Solutions 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.

All complainants are given an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

6. All complainants are given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including detailed reasons for the outcome. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.
7. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the complaint in writing to the Vital Training Solutions Chief Executive Officer.
8. 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).
9. The Vital Training Solutions 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.
10. 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 Vital Training Solutions. The *default* external body available is: ASQA.

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.

11. All complainants are given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including detailed reasons for the outcome. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.
12. 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 Vital Training Solutions *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 Vital Training Solutions.
 - Vital Training Solutions 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.
13. All complainants are given a written statement of the outcome of the complaint, including detailed reasons for the outcome. With this notification, all complainants will receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.

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 is recorded in writing and stored on the *Complaints Register*. This register is located in the Management Register at:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/191UtWNbuT62-GWSEc0eusOGLQ0ZK9AYi>

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

- 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 a complainant is not successful in the Vital Training Solutions' internal complaints handling process, Vital Training Solutions advises the complainant within 5 working days of concluding the internal review of the complainant's right to access an external complaint handling and appeals process at no cost. Vital Training Solutions gives complainants the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body.

If the internal or any external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of a complainant, Vital Training Solutions immediately implements the decision(s) or recommendation(s) and/or takes the preventive or corrective action(s) required by the decision, and advises the complainant of that action in writing.

Vital Training Solutions keeps a written record of each complaint, including a statement of the outcome and reasons for the outcome.

Parties who have participated in a complaints or grievance process have access to the records of their use. At all times records of complaints and grievances are maintained confidentially. Vital Training Solutions 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 |
| NSW Department of Education & Training | www.training.nsw.gov.au |