

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

College of Construction and Management Pty Ltd

1 Purpose and scope

CCM provides accessible, fair and timely processes for feedback, complaints and appeals. This policy applies to prospective, current and former students and other stakeholders, including employers and staff. It covers CCM services, staff, contractors, education agents and authorised third parties, including conduct, training, assessment, support, fees and adverse decisions.

A complaint expresses dissatisfaction with a service, action or omission. An appeal requests review of a decision that adversely affects a student, such as an assessment, RPL, credit, refund, disciplinary or enrolment decision. Feedback may include suggestions or concerns without a requested formal investigation.

2 Regulatory framework and document control

This policy is framed against the 2025 Standards for RTOs, effective 1 July 2025, particularly Outcome Standards 2.7 and 2.8. For overseas students, it also applies the ESOS framework and National Code 2018, particularly Standards 7, 8, 9 and 10 as relevant. Apply applicable privacy, anti-discrimination, consumer and safety obligations.

Document CAP 01 | Version 2.0 | Document date Aug 2025. Owner CEO Rajesh Ayer. Record approval and commencement in CCM's controlled document register. Review annually and earlier following regulatory change, significant findings or feedback. This version replaces the former 2015 Standards references.

3 Access and student rights

- Publish this policy and how to lodge a matter on the CCM website and in the Student Handbook. Explain the process at orientation and when notifying an adverse decision.
- Accept verbal, email or written complaints and appeals through Student Support, reception, a trainer or info@ccm.vic.edu.au. The Complaints and Appeals Form is optional; neither a signature nor use of a specific form is a condition of access. Staff assist with recording verbal matters and confirm the account with the person where practicable.
- Provide language, literacy, disability or communication assistance where needed. Permit a support person or representative at relevant meetings, subject to consent and appropriate confidentiality. Do not exclude a person solely because they are legally trained.
- There is no CCM charge for lodging, presenting or internally reviewing a matter. Provide independent appeal review at no or low cost; disclose any proposed cost in advance and address hardship so cost does not prevent access.

A person may proceed directly to a formal complaint without confronting another person or attempting informal resolution. No student may be disadvantaged, threatened or victimised for giving feedback, complaining or appealing. This policy does not limit legal rights or access to appropriate external agencies.

4 Responsibilities and impartiality

Student Support receives matters, provides assistance, records them and tracks communications. The CEO appoints an impartial investigator or reviewer and ensures resources, corrective action and oversight. A delegated compliance officer maintains the register, secure records and improvement actions. Staff and third parties promptly forward matters to CCM rather than withholding them.

An investigator or appeal reviewer must not be the subject of the matter or have an interest that compromises impartiality. A person must not decide an appeal against their own decision. Where the matter concerns the CEO, a director not involved in the matter appoints an independent reviewer; if no suitable unconflicted person is available, CCM engages an external reviewer. Record the allocation and any conflict management.

5 Timeframes

CCM acknowledges a complaint or appeal in writing within two working days. Begin assessment within ten working days of receipt and finalise as soon as practicable. CCM's ordinary target for an internal outcome is twenty working days from receipt; this is a service target, not a guarantee or statutory completion deadline.

If a target cannot be met, explain the reason, action being taken and revised expected date in writing before the target expires. Provide updates at least every ten working days while unresolved. Where a matter extends beyond sixty calendar days, give written reasons and weekly progress updates as a CCM control. Do not wait sixty days before explaining a delay.

Students should ordinarily lodge an internal appeal within twenty working days of receiving the decision. Consider later appeals where reasonable circumstances, access barriers or fairness justify it. Do not impose a shorter policy period where the National Code requires twenty working days. External agencies determine their own lodgement requirements.

6 Receiving and investigating a complaint

- Record the matter, date, preferred contact method, issues, relevant evidence and requested resolution. Allocate a reference and acknowledge the next steps, responsible officer and timeframe. Anonymous feedback is accepted; explain any limits on investigation or individual follow-up.
- Triage immediate safety, welfare, harassment or privacy risks and take proportionate protective action. Emergency or mandatory reporting action must not be delayed pending the complaint outcome. Preserve relevant records.
- Offer informal resolution where suitable and agreed. Capture material informal concerns and outcomes in the register or linked record so recurring problems can be identified. Unresolved concerns move to formal investigation.
- Investigate relevant facts and policies impartially. Give affected parties sufficient information and a fair opportunity to respond, balancing privacy and safety. Seek missing information, agree reasonable submission dates and consider necessary adjustments. Do not automatically stop the process indefinitely while waiting for evidence.
- Assess the evidence, document findings and reasons, and decide appropriate remedies. Notify the complainant in writing of the outcome, reasons, required actions and review options. Communicate relevant findings to other parties without disclosing unnecessary personal information.

7 Internal appeals and assessment review

Accept appeals against adverse decisions made by CCM or persons delivering services on its behalf. Ask the student to identify the decision, concerns, requested remedy and supporting information; assist where needed. Grounds may include incorrect facts, procedural unfairness, failure to consider evidence, inadequate support or an incorrect assessment judgement. An appeal is not restricted solely to procedural grounds.

Allocate a reviewer who was not responsible for the original decision. Consider the original record, the appellant's evidence, responses and applicable requirements. Permit the appellant to present their case and respond to relevant adverse information. The reviewer may confirm, vary or set aside the decision, require additional investigation or arrange appropriate reassessment.

For assessment or RPL appeals, appoint an appropriately credentialed assessor with relevant vocational competence and currency who was not responsible for the disputed judgement. Review the evidence, assessment tools, benchmarks, conditions and adjustments against the training product. Arrange further evidence or reassessment where justified. Talking to the original assessor is optional and does not replace access to a formal appeal.

Give the appellant a written outcome with detailed reasons, any revised result or remedy, action dates and independent review details. Update records and communicate necessary corrections to affected staff. Use findings to improve assessment practice or other services.

8 Independent review and external avenues

If requested by the appellant, CCM facilitates review by a party independent of the matter and CCM's decision-making, at no or low cost. Student Support coordinates an appropriately skilled independent reviewer, discloses the proposed role and costs and supplies contact and lodgement details. An academic review requiring a competency judgement must use an appropriately qualified assessor. Do not require the student to pay half of unrestricted mediation expenses.

External agencies have different powers. Before referral, check jurisdiction and provide the appropriate contact. If an agency cannot review the merits of an assessment decision, CCM must still provide a suitable independent appeal avenue. A student may also seek legal advice or exercise other rights.

- Overseas VET students of private providers: Commonwealth Ombudsman, Overseas Student complaints service. Website ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints; telephone 1300 362 072. The service is free. It can consider provider handling of complaints and appeals and relevant administrative matters, but does not substitute its own academic judgement for a grade or mark.
- Domestic students: CCM's independent review pathway remains available. Consumer Affairs Victoria at consumer.vic.gov.au may assist with consumer matters such as course fees and refunds, within its jurisdiction. Other specialist bodies may be appropriate for privacy, discrimination or loan matters.
- Regulatory concerns: ASQA at asqa.gov.au accepts information about potential provider non-compliance. ASQA does not resolve individual student disputes or act as a student advocate. A report to ASQA is not a substitute for independent appeal review.

9 Additional overseas student requirements

Commence assessment of a complaint or appeal within ten working days and finalise as soon as practicable. Allow the student to present their case with assistance at minimal or no cost and provide a written internal outcome with detailed reasons. If the internal process is unsuccessful, advise the student within ten working days of concluding the review of the right to external review at minimal or no cost, and provide the appropriate body's contact details. Include these details in the outcome letter wherever possible.

Immediately implement a decision or recommendation in favour of an overseas student and any required preventive or corrective action, and advise the student. Do not postpone implementation by treating ten working days as an allowed delay.

Maintain enrolment during internal complaints and appeals in accordance with applicable ESOS requirements. Explain study and support arrangements while a matter is pending. Apply the specific National Code rules to the disputed decision rather than treating every external complaint as an automatic stay of every action.

- Unsatisfactory course progress or attendance: provide the required written notice and twenty working days to access the internal process. Do not report in PRISMS until the applicable internal and external processes are completed and uphold the decision, or the student does not access, elects not to use, or withdraws from the relevant process as permitted by Standard 8. Document the basis for reporting.
- Provider-initiated suspension or cancellation under Standard 9: give written reasons and twenty working days to appeal internally. The action cannot take effect until the internal appeal is completed, unless the student's health or wellbeing, or that of others, is likely to be at risk. Document any safety exception and apply the required notices and reporting procedures.
- Transfer refusal: follow Standard 7 and CCM's Transfer Policy, including written reasons, appeal rights and restrictions on finalising refusal while the applicable appeal process remains available or is underway.

10 Records confidentiality and implementation

Maintain a secure register and linked case file showing the reference, receipt date, issues, parties, investigator/reviewer, evidence, correspondence, meeting records, conflicts, findings, reasons, remedies, notifications and closure. Link student-related outcomes to the student file while restricting sensitive investigation details to authorised staff.

Retain complaint and appeal records for seven years after closure as CCM's recordkeeping control, and longer where another applicable obligation or legal hold requires it. Protect access and backups. Explain privacy and the limits of confidentiality; share only what is necessary for fair handling or lawful disclosure.

Assign an owner and due date to each remedy or improvement. Implement substantiated outcomes promptly and verify completion. Review de-identified trends at least each term, including informal feedback, recurring concerns, delays, third-party issues and ineffective remedies. Record systemic changes and check their effectiveness. Train staff at induction and during updates; review third-party escalation arrangements.

11 Related documents and primary references

Related CCM documents: optional Complaints and Appeals Form; Student Handbook; Training and Assessment; RPL and Credit Transfer; Student Support and Wellbeing; Refunds; Course Progress; Transfer; Deferment Suspension and Cancellation; Critical Incident; Privacy and Records Management.

References: 2025 Outcome Standards 2.7 and 2.8; ASQA Feedback Complaints and Appeals practice guide; National Code 2018 Standards 7–10; Commonwealth Ombudsman international student appeals guidance; ASQA concerns about training providers guidance. Version 2.0 Aug 2025 updates branding, accessibility, timeframes, impartiality, independent review, ESOS requirements and improvement controls.