

Complaints and Appeals- Policy & Procedure – VET Student Loans (VSL)

POLICY 2015 Standard 6	The registered training organisation provides appropriate mechanisms and services for learners to have complaints and appeals addressed efficiently and effectively.
DESCRIPTION	<p>Sarina Russo Institute (SRI) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints handling system which is easily accessible and offered at no charge.</p> <p>The policy ensures the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at each stage of the complaints & appeals process.</p>
SUMMARY	<p>In order to ensure that complaints are handled in an effective, timely, fair and equitable manner SRI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a culture that views complaints as an opportunity to improve our organisation and how we work; • Set in place a complaints handling system that is client focussed and helps us to prevent complaints from recurring; • Ensure that any complaints are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality; • Ensure that the views of each complainant or respondent are respected and that any party to a complaint is not discriminated against nor victimised; • Ensure that we are consistent in our response to complaints; • Ensure we have in place a process that ensures transparency & reporting on the above points. <p>A complaint can be defined as a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with an aspect of SRI’s*services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the enrolment, induction/orientation process; • the quality of education provided; • academic issues, including student progress, assessment decisions, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study; • handling of personal information and access to personal records; • the way someone has been treated. <p>* This includes the services or activities of a third party providing services on SRI’s behalf.</p>
RESPONSIBILITIES	All
TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are trained in the scope and detail of these complaints procedures • Time limits are to be strictly adhered to in the implementation of these complaints procedures • Responses are to be provided to the student in writing and required to outline the reasons associated with the outcome • All correspondence is to be recorded • Confidentiality of records is to be treated with priority.
ABBREVIATIONS	<p>SRI – Sarina Russo Institute VET – Vocational Education and Training AQTF – Australian Quality Training Framework VSL – VET Student Loans</p>

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<p>POLICY COVERAGE</p>	<p>This policy is designed to cover all complainants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP and/or VET Student Loans assistance (Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders who are resident in Australia for the duration of a VET unit of study); • Individuals who are not eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance and/or VSL (permanent residents who are not permanent humanitarian visa holders and New Zealand citizens); • Individuals who are classified as international students as defined by the <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> (who are not eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance and/or VSL). <p>The term “complainant” applies to current students of SRI; persons seeking to enrol and persons associated or affected by students and staff.</p> <p>Complainants are entitled to access the complaints procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus at which the complaint has arisen, the mode in which they study or their place of residence.</p>
<p>PROCEDURE</p>	<p>Before an issue becomes a formal complaint</p> <p>Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. Staff are available to assist with the resolution of issues at this level. Complainants are encouraged to speak to staff members including: their Teacher/Trainer, Student Concierge, Administration, Academic Counsellor, or the nominated Senior Manager for the relevant program area.</p> <p>This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a complaint of an academic or non-academic nature. Complaints of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study. Complaints and appeals of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including complaints in relation to personal information that SRI holds in relation to an individual and appeals against decision to report students to immigration or suspend or exclude a student.</p> <p>During all stages of this procedure SRI will take all steps to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against; • the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a complaint may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings; • complaints and requests for appeal are acknowledgement in writing or by electronic means as soon as practicable • a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent; • where the internal or external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, SRI will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome; • there is no cost to the complainant to utilise this complaints procedure. • If more than 60 days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, SRI will inform the complainant or appellant in writing including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required and will regularly update the complainant or appellant of the progress of the matter <p>Stage one – formal complaint:</p> <p>Formal complaints must be submitted in writing as follows:</p>

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Sarina Russo Institute
Director – SRI Careers
349 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days. The complaints handling process will commence within ten working days of the receipt of the formal complaint and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

The Director– SRI Careers, RTO Director, or their nominee (who must be independent of the complaint), will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview both the complainant and any respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Director of Studies - Pathways Program, RTO Director, or their nominee, will endeavour to resolve the complaint and will provide a written report to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint on the steps taken to address the complaint, including the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint.

Stage two – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal complaint they may lodge an appeal with the Education Group CEO (who is senior to the original decision maker) within 20 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal complaint.

Appeals must be submitted in writing marked to the attention of the CEO as follows:

Education Group CEO
349 Queen St
Brisbane QLD 4000

The CEO will appoint an appropriate person or committee (who is independent from the complaint) to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. Both the complainant and any respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the CEO, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant within twenty working days of receipt of the appeal advising the further steps taken to address the complaint, including the reasons for the decision. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

Stage three – external appeal:

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may lodge an external appeal within 20 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal.

Students may lodge an appeal or complaint with an independent dispute resolution body. Sarina Russo Institute recommend a body such as

Contact details for external appeals:

LEADR. To find out fees and charges associated with a referral to LEADR contact 1800 651 650
<http://www.leadr.com.au>

Further action

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	<p>The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.</p> <p>You have the right to be accompanied by a support person of your choice at any stage</p> <p>Enrolment status Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, SRI will maintain that person's enrolment while the complaints handling process is ongoing.</p> <p>Record keeping & confidentiality A written record of all complaints handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Director - SRI Careers.</p> <p>All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by SRI's <i>Privacy and Personal Information Procedures</i>.</p>
<p>PUBLICATION</p>	<p>This Policy and Procedure will be made available to complainants through publication in the Student Handbook, Student Orientation Manual, Student Welcome Handbook and SRI's website (www.sri.edu.au)</p> <p>For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this Policy and Procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and form part of the staff induction process (which will be facilitated by the Director – SRI Careers)</p>

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<p>EXTRA INFORMATION</p>	<p>Flow Chart</p> <pre> graph TD A[1. Talk with a staff member] -- If Unhappy --> B[2. Write down your problem Submit your formal written complaint Director – SRI Careers] B -- If Unhappy --> C[3. Lodge appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)] C -- If Unhappy --> D[4. Contact an Independent External Body LEADR] </pre>
<p>RELATED DOCUMENTS</p>	<p>Code of Practice Welfare and Support Policy Transfer Between Providers Policy Deferring, Suspending or Cancelling Enrolment Policy Student Code of Conduct Privacy and Personal Information Procedures Fair Treatment and Equal Benefits and Opportunities Change Class Request Attendance and Course Progression Monitoring Policy Course Progression Process Diploma Flowchart Course Progress warning intervention strategy 2018 Trainer Weekly Report Younger Student (under 18) Policy Student Orientation Policy</p>
<p>RELATED STANDARDS</p>	<p>Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 – Standard 6 National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (The National Code) ELICOS National Standards National standards for ELICOS providers and courses</p>

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RELATED LEGISLATION	<p>National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 The VET Quality Framework consisting of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015• Australian Qualifications Framework• Fit and Proper Person Requirements• Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements, and• Data Provision Requirements. <p>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) The NEAS Quality Assurance (QA) Framework</p> <p>Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012</p>
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