

Procedure Name	COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE		
Linked to policy	Complaints Handling Policy		
Scope	Young people, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as employers, contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements.		
References	AITC Complaints Handling Policy		
Status	Approved	Supersedes	All previous versions
Authorised by	CEO	Date of Authorisation	14 Sep 2022
Review Period	1 year	Next Review Date	Term 3, 2023
Owner	Executive Leadership Team	Version	3.1 ¹

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Definitions

Complaint	Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction, made directly or by social media, to or about:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Australian Industry Trade College (AITC) as an organisation, the services provided by the AITC, an AITC employee or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.²
Complainant	Any person who makes a complaint
Complaint handling/management system	Complaint handling/management system means all policies, procedures, practices, employees, hardware, and software used by us in the management of complaints.
Dispute	Dispute means an unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.
Feedback	Feedback means opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly, or implicitly, to or about the AITC, our services or complaint handling system, where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.
Grievance	Grievance means a clear, formal written statement by an individual employee about another employee or a work-related problem.
Parties to a Complaint	Parties to a Complaint includes the complainant (person making the complaint) and the respondent (either AITC or the person who is subject to the complaint)
Procedural Fairness	Procedural Fairness , also known as Natural Justice, requires decision-makers to be objective, free from bias, and have no personal interest in the matter being decided. An individual should be informed of the allegation/s against them and have the opportunity to respond to the allegation/s before a decision is made.
Respondent	Respondent refers to the person/s against who the complaint is made.

¹ Version 3.1 includes update to role titles within the policy

² (AS/NZ 10002:2014).

Organisational commitment

The Australian Industry Trade College (AITC) expects employees at all levels to be committed to fair, effective, and efficient complaint handling. The following table outlines the nature of the commitment expected from employees and the way that commitment should be implemented.

WHO	COMMITMENT	HOW
CEO/Executive Principal and Executive Leaders	Promote a culture that values complaints and their effective resolution	<p>Report to the governing body on our complaint handling.</p> <p>Provide adequate support and direction to key employees responsible for handling complaints.</p> <p>Regularly review reports about complaint trends and issues arising from complaints and provide regular feedback to the governing body on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Encourage all employees to be alert to complaints and assist those responsible for handling complaints (appropriate person) to resolve them promptly.</p> <p>Encourage employees to make recommendations for system improvements.</p> <p>Support recommendations for service, employees and complaint handling improvements arising from the analysis of complaint data.</p>
College Leaders (<i>particularly those listed as Appropriate Person - refer to Attachment 1</i>)	Demonstrate exemplary complaint handling practices	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Assist people to make a complaint, if needed.</p> <p>Comply with our policy and associated procedures.</p> <p>Provide regular feedback to the Executive Leadership Team on issues arising from complaints.</p> <p>Provide suggestions to the Executive Leadership Team on ways to improve our complaints management system.</p> <p>Implement changes arising from individual complaints and from the analysis of complaint data as directed by the Executive Leadership Team.</p>
All employees	Understand and comply with our complaint handling practices.	<p>Treat all people with respect, including people who make complaints.</p> <p>Be aware of our complaint handling policies and procedures.</p> <p>Assist people who wish to make complaints access our complaints process.</p> <p>Be alert to complaints and assist employees handling complaints resolve matters promptly.</p>

Procedure

All employees managing complaints are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

When responding to complaints, employees act in accordance with complaint handling procedures as well as any other internal documents providing guidance on the management of complaints.

Employees should also consider any relevant legislation and/or regulations when responding to complaints and feedback.

Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

The following is the appropriate procedure for managing all complaints at the AITC.

Raising a complaint in the first instance

In the first instance, the person wishing to raise an issue should consider an informal, face to face discussion with the person they have the concern with. This approach generally provides the best opportunity for a positive resolution through clarification of the situation and/or clear up any misunderstandings.

It is expected that most complaints will be resolved at this stage, but if the matter is not resolved, or the complaint is of a serious nature then the matter may be taken to the formal level. At this level, if the person is not comfortable raising the matter with the person concerned, they should direct the complaint to the appropriate person for dealing with it. (Refer to Attachment 1 – *Who do I raise a complaint with?*)

In the first instance if the source of the complaint is a young person

The young person is encouraged to raise a concern with any AITC employee that they feel comfortable with. The recipient (employee) then has the responsibility to pass the concern to the appropriate person. At the time of raising the issue and through the process, the young person may require the support from another young person or adult.

During the process, the Campus Leader may choose to meet with the young person without their parent/guardian present, as part of the due process and natural justice.

In the first instance if the source of the complaint is a parent/guardian

Parents/guardians are encouraged to raise an issue or complaint in person, by telephone, by email or in writing. In all instances, the issue should be raised with the appropriate person for dealing with it. (Refer to Attachment 1 – *Who do I raise a complaint with?*)

Complaints management phases

There are four key phases in handling a complaint, with the fifth phase for review of a complaint outcome:

1. Receive: Receiving and clarifying the complaint
2. Acknowledge: Deciding how to handle the complaint
3. Assess and investigate: Finding out about the complaint
4. Determine outcome: Making a decision about the complaint
5. Close complaint: Document and analyse data

1) Receiving and clarifying the complaint

Receiving a verbal complaint (face-to-face or over the phone)

The manner for receiving verbal complaints is to be characterised by:

- being respectful and helpful
- giving the person undivided attention
- not being defensive or apportioning blame
- remaining positive, and
- not perceiving anger as a personal attack.

When an employee receives a verbal complaint, the employee should:

- listen carefully to the issues being raised
- summarise the issues to clarify and check that they understand what the complainant is saying
- empathise and acknowledge the complainant's feelings
- find out what the complainant wants to happen as a result of the complaint
- resolve the complaint if possible, or assure the complainant that an appropriate employee will address their complaint
- advise the complainant what will happen with their complaint, and
- thank them for their complaint.

If a complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complaint is referred to the appropriate person for dealing with it as soon as is practicable.

An employee who receives a verbal complaint that cannot be resolved informs the complainant of the further options of:

- putting their complaint in writing (in general, if the complainant agrees to put the complaint in writing, the employee takes no further action unless or until a written complaint is received), or
- assisting the employee receiving the complaint to record, in writing, the particulars of the complaint.

If the complainant indicates that they would like to register a formal complaint verbally

- The employee makes a written outline of the issues concerned
- The record is read to the complainant, with opportunity for appropriate amendments to be made
- The complainant is asked to sign, where possible, the written version of the complaint.

For verbal complaints recorded over the phone, no signature is required, however, the complainant is asked to confirm the complaint by providing a name and contact details as well as an endorsement of the issues as recorded.

If the complainant refuses to sign or confirm a written recording of a verbal complaint, the employee notes the refusal on the written complaint. The complainant is told that this refusal will be noted and that the process will be reliant on the employee's interpretation only.

Receiving a written complaint

When a written complaint is received, it is date-stamped and forwarded to the appropriate person for dealing with it.

2) Deciding how to handle the complaint

When an employee receives a complaint, they:

- make an assessment in the first instance about whether the issue can be dealt with as a concern or a complaint
- if the complaint is within the recipient's authority, attempt to resolve the complaint

- if they are unable to resolve the complaint, refer the complainant or the complaint to the appropriate person for dealing with it.

The appropriate person for dealing with it will decide whether to:

- take no further action
- attempt to resolve the complaint by taking appropriate action or through resolution strategies such as mediation
- initiate an investigation of the complaint, if further information is required, or
- refer the complaint to the appropriate member of the executive leadership team or the CEO/Executive Principal.

AITC Deputy Heads have the responsibility for the coordination and documentation of all complaints that relate to their campus/es or business unit/s.

3) Finding out about the complaint

The appropriate person gathers all necessary facts about the complaint by following these steps and while keeping in mind the principles of natural justice of all parties concerned:

- collecting and analysing information relevant to the matter
- working collaboratively with all people involved
- finding the facts relating to the matter
- identifying any contributing factors to the matter
- where required, documenting the investigation report or outcome.

4) Making a decision about the complaint

Based on the facts gathered about the complaint, and in line with relevant AITC policies and/or procedures, the appropriate person will make a decision on the complaint.

Notifying the complainant of the decision

Within 14 days of the receipt of the complaint, the AITC provides the complainant with an appropriate response either:

- a verbal response via a phone call
- a written response, including reasons for the decision, or
- a written notification that their complaint has been referred to an internal or external agency.

5) Review phase

If the complainant is not satisfied with this response, they are encouraged to discuss it further with the decision maker or contact the CEO/Executive Principal.

6) Continuous improvement

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by employees
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

Documentation of complaint

In all instances, the AITC representative will record the issues and the steps taken to resolve the complaint. Once a complaint has been received, all interested parties have a right to be heard. This includes both the complainant and the person being complained about.

All complaints documentation, including supporting materials and copies of all correspondence, will be submitted to the Executive Assistant. It is the responsibility of the Executive Assistant to maintain the College's register of complaints and store the documentation in a secure location.

Alternative avenues for dealing with complaints

The following matters should be managed as follows:

- Child protection concerns or risks of harm to children should be dealt with in accordance with the law and the AITC Child Protection Policy.
- Young person bullying complaints should be dealt with under the AITC Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Young person discipline matters, including matters involving suspension or expulsion, should be dealt with under the AITC Discipline Policy.
- Employee complaints related to their employment should be directed to their supervisor.
- Young person or employee violence or criminal matters should be directed to the appropriate person who will involve the Police as appropriate.
- Complaints or concerns relating to school compliance may be directed to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board, <https://www.nssab.qld.edu.au/Complaints/index.php>.

Unresolved Complaints

If the matter remains unresolved after following the first instance procedures, or the complaint is of a very serious nature, the Complainant may make an appointment to see the relevant executive leader. If this meeting brings no resolution, the Complainant may make an appointment to meet with the CEO/Executive Principal.

When complaints are raised with the relevant Executive leader, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Complaints must be made in writing. It must contain sufficient detail for it to be addressed and recorded, including:
 - a. The names of both the Complainant and Respondent
 - b. The Complainants contact details
 - c. The nature and details of the complaint including dates, times, and any witnesses
 - d. Any previous attempts to resolve the matter
 - e. The complainant's desired outcome or suggestion for resolution
2. Upon receipt, the Executive Leader may contact the Complainant to arrange a meeting to accompany the written complaint.
3. The Executive Leader will determine how best to investigate and manage the complaint. This may include handling the complaint under a specific AITC policy; investigating the complaint internally or through an external provider; or mediation.
4. The Executive Leader will meet with the Respondent to notify them of the complaint and supply a copy of the written complaint.
5. During the investigation, the Executive Leader may meet with the Complainant for further discussions.

6. All parties are encouraged to have support persons at any stage of the process.
7. The Executive Leader (or nominated external provider) will assess the evidence to establish whether the complaint is substantiated or not.
8. The Executive Leader will inform the Complainant and Respondent in writing of the consequences, outcomes, and remedies of the investigation.

Note: If the complaint or grievance remains unresolved, the ultimate decision maker will be always guided by principles of procedural fairness.

Attachment 1 – Who do I raise an issue with?

This table outlines the most appropriate person to deal with complaints if they cannot be resolved with the person concerned. *(Last updated: 7 June 2022)*

TOPIC OF CONCERN	APPROPRIATE PERSON TO DEAL WITH THE CONCERN	APPROPRIATE PERSON CONTACT DETAILS
General young person wellbeing concern	Principal for your campus Alternative person: Director of Industry Education	AITC - Redlands 07 3086 0516 AITC – Brisbane Andrew Dutton Andrew.Dutton@aitc.qld.edu.au
Inappropriate employee behaviour concern	Principal for your campus Alternative person: Director of People	AITC – Ipswich and AITC – Toowoomba 07 4592 8727 AITC – Sunshine Coast Nick Harrison Nick.Harrison@aitc.qld.edu.au 07 5357 8602
Learning and teaching concern	Principal for your campus Alternative person: Director of Industry Education	AITC – Gold Coast Mark Bohan Mark.Bohan@aitc.qld.edu.au 07 5635 0474
Service/support concern	Principal for your campus Alternative person: Director of Industry Education	Andrew Dutton Andrew.Dutton@aitc.qld.edu.au 07 3153 5137
Industry concern	Head of Industry Operations Alternative person: Director of Industry Education	Refer to Child Protection Policy
Child protection matter (Refer to Child Protection Policy)	Principal for your campus [Principal] or other as outlined in the <i>Child Protection Policy</i>	
Financial concern	Head of Corporate Services Alternative person: Director of Business and Operations	Fay London Fay.London@aitc.qld.edu.au 07 3153 5124
Customer Experience (including enrolment services) concern	Customer Experience Manager Alternative person: Director of Brand and Community	Neil Donnelly Neil.Donnelly@aitc.qld.edu.au

		07 3153 5119
Brand concern	Brand Manager Alternative person: Director of Brand and Community	Rebecca Reis Rebecca.reis@aitc.qld.edu.au
		07 3153 5141
Facilities or fleet concern	Head of Corporate Services Alternative person: Director of Business and Operations	Fay London Fay.London@aitc.qld.edu.au
		07 3153 5124

To contact an *Alternative Person* (listed above) or the CEO/Executive Principal, please contact the College at 07 5635 0441.