

Complaints and Appeals Policy



Purpose:	This policy and procedure has been developed to ensure The Animal Academy has a system in place so that complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged, and dealt with fairly, efficiently, and effectively.
Reference:	ASQA – Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 Manage complaints and appeals (Clause 6.1 – 6.6) National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 – Standard 10: Complaints and Appeals
Who is responsible:	The CEO is responsible for implementing and ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.
When:	Upon submission of a complaint or appeal.
Definitions	<p>ACCC meaning the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC)</p> <p>Appeal means a request for a decision made by The Animal Academy to be reviewed</p> <p>Complaint means a person’s formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by The Animal Academy</p> <p>OSO meaning Overseas Student Ombudsman</p> <p>PRISMS means Provider Registration and International Student Management System</p>
Informal Complaints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Animal Academy provides all students information about the complaints and appeals process through the orientation program, their website and it is also available in the Student Handbook. 2. Complaints can be made in relation to The Animal Academy services and activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the application and enrolment process. • marketing information. • the quality of training and assessment provided. • training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements. • the way someone has been treated. • the actions of another student. 3. Where possible, all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint. The Animal Academy encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Therefore, any student with a complaint is encouraged to raise the matter directly with the other party concerned to attempt to resolve the issue mutually or they can contact The Animal Academy. 4. Advice, discussions, and general mediation may take place in relation to the issue and complainant/student complaint. 5. The Animal Academy will note the informal complaint on the Complaints and Appeals Register accordingly. The CEO will determine and ensure that the appropriate action will be taken if necessary. 6. Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but if the student wishes to place a formal complaint, then the process below must be followed.

Formal Complaints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any student, potential student or 3rd party may submit a formal complaint to The Animal Academy with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated fairly with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process. A complaint may have a direct connection to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Animal Academy, its trainers/ assessors, and other staff. b. Any third-party providing Services on The Animal Academy’s behalf and including education agents or related party. c. Any student or client of The Animal Academy. 2. A student can submit a formal complaint by completing the ‘Grievance Form’ located on The Animal Academy website or they can obtain a copy by calling The Animal Academy on 1300 290 609 3. All formal complaints must be submitted to The Animal Academy and contain as many details as possible: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Date complaint was submitted. b. Name of complainant. c. Nature of complaint. d. Date of the event which led to the complaint. e. Attachments (if applicable). 4. Once a complaint has been received, the information will be inserted into the ‘Complaints and Appeals Register’ spreadsheet which is monitored by The Animal Academy until resolved. The information to be inserted and retained on the register includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Date the complaint was submitted. b. Name of complainant. c. Description of complaint. d. Determined resolution. e. Date of resolution. 5. Once a complaint has been logged in the ‘Complaints and Appeals Register’, the CEO will be notified of the complaint and will be provided with all relevant documentation related to the matter. 6. The CEO will begin assessing the complaint within 10 working days and will confer and decide on the appropriate action in order to ensure a successful resolution is achieved. 7. Where applicable, the student will have the opportunity to present their case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person if necessary. 8. The relevant staff member/s and/or trainer/assessors will be informed on the complaint and they will have the opportunity to present their side of the matter. 9. Once a decision has been reached, the CEO will notify all of the relevant parties involved of the decision and outcome which is to be concluded in writing within 15 working days from the date the complaint was first received. The written notification will include the reason for the outcome and the student will be informed that they have the right to appeal the decision made by The Animal Academy. Students will be referred to the appeals procedure as outlined below. 10. The CEO will ensure that The Animal Academy will act immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, The Animal Academy must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required and advise the student of the outcome.
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	<p>11. The outcome will be placed on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' and copies of relevant documentation will be stored in the Student Management System and in the Student's File.</p>
<p>Formal Appeals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome from the formal complaint, then they have the right to appeal the decision made by The Animal Academy where reasonable grounds can be established. 2. An appeal is a request for a decision made by The Animal Academy to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course admissions. • Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to a student's enrolment. • Response to a complaint. • Assessment outcomes/results. • Other general decisions made by The Animal Academy. 3. To activate the appeals process, the student must submit an 'appeal application' by completing the 'Grievance Form' located on The Animal Academy website or they can obtain a copy by calling The Animal Academy on 1300 290 609. 4. The student is required to provide a summary of the grounds that the appeal is based on and the reason why they feel that initial decision made is unfair within 10 working days from the time they received the outcome for their initial written formal complaint. Help and support with this process can be gained from The Animal Academy. 5. Once the appeal has been received, the CEO will determine the validity of the appeal and where necessary, organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate. 6. The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 10 working days from the date that the appeal was lodged. 7. The CEO will ensure that The Animal Academy acts on any substantiated appeal immediately. 8. The CEO will review the initial documentation of the complaint and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal. 9. The student will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of the appeal of the outcome with reasons for the decision. The 'Complaints and Appeals Register' will be updated. The student will also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. 10. If the appeal relates to cancelling an overseas students' enrolment, The Animal Academy will wait for the internal and external complaints and appeals process to be finalised before reporting the cancellation through PRISMS. 11. If the outcome is not in favour for the overseas student, The Animal Academy will advise the student of their right to access the external complaints and appeals process at minimal or no cost. This information will be provided to the overseas student within 10 working days of the completion of the internal complaints and appeals process. 12. The Animal Academy will not report the overseas student through PRISMS for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance until the overseas student has accessed the internal and external complaints and appeals process within the stated time frame, and the decision or recommendation supports The Animal Academy.

<p>Informal Assessment Appeals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a student wishes to appeal an assessment, they are required to notify their assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate, the assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is made. The assessor will be required to complete a written report regarding the re-assessment outlining the reasons why assessment was or was not granted.
<p>Formal Assessment Appeals</p>	<p>If the informal assessment appeals process is still not to the student's satisfaction, the individual can formally lodge an appeal by completing and submitting the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' to The Animal Academy which can be downloaded from The Animal Academy' website or the student can obtain a copy by ringing the office 1300 290 609</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once the application has been received, The Animal Academy will document the information in the Complaints and Appeals Register and obtain details from the assessor and any other parties involved. 2. A decision will be made regarding the appeal which will either indicate that the assessment decision remains as is or, details of a possible re-assessment by a 'third party'. The third party will be another assessor appointed by The Animal Academy. 3. The student will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of their appeal regarding the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. 4. The student will also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome (Address Below) 5. The Student will be informed that they must inform The Animal Academy within 10 working days of their intention to pursue an external appeal.
<p><u>External Appeals</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the student is still dissatisfied regarding the outcome that The Animal Academy has provided, they may wish to refer the matter to an external/independent/third party mediator at their own expense. 2. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions and they can also relate to other matters such as the decision to exclude a student from a training program. Students are encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through The Animal Academy complaint mechanism prior to consulting external parties. 3. If the student is not satisfied by the complaints and appeal outcome, they can contact: <p style="text-align: center;">Legal Aid W.A. 32 St Georges Terrace Perth 6000 WA Telephone 1300 650 579 PO Box L916 Perth 6842 WA</p> <p>The Animal Academy must be informed within 24 hours of an external appeal lodgement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This final stage will be addressed within 30 days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes from the Legal Aid mediation in relation to a grievance will be implemented immediately.</p>

<p>External Complaints and Appeals (Overseas students)</p>	<p>The Animal Academy provides overseas students with details about the external complaints and appeals body in the Student Handbook.</p> <p>Further complaints and appeals</p> <p>If the overseas student is still dissatisfied regarding the outcome that The Animal Academy has provided, they may wish to refer the matter to an external complaints body. However, The Animal Academy does not have to assist the student with finding further appropriate sources.</p> <p>The external complaints body is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Overseas Student Ombudsman (OSO) – 1300 362 072 Please refer to the following website if you are considering making a complaint: http://www.ombudsman.gov.au/making-a-complaint/overseas-students#quality-of-education-provider</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The service provided by OSO is free of charge.</p> <p>Where the issue/complaint is not covered by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) or the OSO, The Animal Academy will make specific arrangements for an independent review of the complaint.</p> <p>The Animal Academy will inform students in the Student Handbook that in most cases, the purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether The Animal Academy has followed its policies and procedures, rather than make a decision in place of The Animal Academy.</p> <p>Once the external appeals process has concluded, The Animal Academy will immediately implement the decision or recommendation and/or take the preventative or corrective action required by the outcomes of the external complaints or appeals process. The overseas student will be informed in writing of the outcome.</p> <p>PRISMS</p> <p>The Animal Academy will only report an overseas student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance in PRISMS after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overseas students has chosen not to access the internal complaints and appeals process within the 10 working day period. • The overseas student has chosen not to access the external complaints and appeals process; or • The overseas student withdraws from the internal or external appeals process, by notifying The Animal Academy in writing. • The internal and external complaints processes have been completed and the breach has been upheld.
<p><u>Extensions</u></p>	<p>If more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the Animal Academy will inform the individual in writing, including reasons why more than 60 days are required and regularly update the individual on the progress of the matter.</p> <p>In most cases this would not be necessary as the timeframes identified in the above processes keep well under 60 days. It may need to happen if an appeal was to reach an external stage.</p>
<p><u>Record Management</u></p>	<p>1. <i>Electronic records:</i></p>

	<p>a. Electronic records are safe from loss as the CEO performs electronic backups of server information at least once a week on site at The Animal Academy premises.</p> <p>b. Confidentiality is maintained as limited staff have access to the database (password protected), and all student / client information is only released as per The Animal Academy' privacy policy. All staff employed by The Animal Academy will be required to apply themselves to the following written procedures and safeguard confidential and personal information according to the Privacy and Protection of Personal Information Act 1998</p> <p>2. <i>Hard copy records:</i></p> <p>a. Confidentiality is maintained – matters relating to a complaint or appeal are stored on the SMS where only the CEO and director have access to</p> <p>b. Contents of files are not discarded unless the state and national storage requirements for retention, archiving and retrieval of information have been met.</p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <p>In the instance that The Animal Academy receives complaints and or appeals which demonstrate a pattern or trend, The Animal Academy and CEO will take the appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.</p> <p>The form of corrective action applied will be determined on a case by case basis where there are continuing trends and patterns.</p> <p>Clause 6.6. ~ Where the RTO is an employer or a volunteer organisation whose students solely consist of its employees or members, does not charge fees for the training and/or assessment, and does not have in place a specific complaints and appeals policy in accordance with Clauses 6.1 & 6.2, the organisation has a complaints and appeals policy which is sufficiently broad to cover the services provided by the RTO.</p> <p>Clause 6.6 is not applicable to The Animal Academy.</p>
<p>Relevant Records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Published policy on The Animal Academy' website ▪ Student Handbook ▪ Grievance application form ▪ Course Progress and Attendance Policy ▪ At risk Students - Procedure