PIONEER COLLEGE
RTO: 45763 CRICOS: 03956A

Complaints and Appeals

Policy and Associated Procedures

September 2026

Pioneer Education Institute Pty Ltd t/a Pioneer College

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1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy and associated procedures outline Pioneer College (hereafter, referred to as 'Pioneer')'s approach to managing complaints and appeals. This is to ensure that complaints are handled in a transparent way, as well as fairly, efficiently and effectively.

1.1.1 This policy and associated procedures meet the requirements of Standard 2.7 and 2.8 of the Outcome Standards for RTOs, as well as Standard 10 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.

1.1.2 Note that mechanisms for providing feedback is addressed in our Quality Assurance Policy and Associated Procedures.

1.1.3 This policy applies to all students, staff, contractors, education agents and other stakeholders who interact with Pioneer.

2. Related Documents

Complaints and Appeals Form
Continuous Improvement Register
Student Handbook
Student Enrolment and Completion Policy and Associated Procedures

3. Related Legislation

3.1 *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*, specifically the *National Code 2018*

3.2 *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVETR) Act 2011*, specifically the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)*

This policy and associated procedures will contribute to Pioneer complying with other requirements such as included in the:

- *ELICOS Standards 2018*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Mental Health Act 2014 (WA)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*

4. Definitions

Complaint	An objection to something that one finds unfair, unacceptable or otherwise not up to satisfactory standards.
Appeal	A serious or formal request to a person or authority for a change in decision, or for information or assistance.

5. Policy Statements

5.1 Approach

5.1.1 Complaints may be made against Pioneer, its trainers and assessors and other staff, a learner of Pioneer, as well as any third party providing services on behalf of Pioneer including education agents.

5.1.2 Complaints can be in relation to any aspect of Pioneer's services provided.

5.1.3 Appeals can be made in respect of any decision made by Pioneer. An appeal is a request for Pioneer's decision to be reviewed in relation to a matter, including assessment appeals.

5.1.4 In managing complaints, Pioneer will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint process. This means reviewing each complaint or appeal in an objective and consistent manner.

5.1.5 Pioneer will appoint relevant person/s to manage complaints and appeals.

5.1.6 The internal complaints and appeals process will be conducted at no cost to students.

5.1.7 Potential causes of complaints and appeals will be investigated and corrective and preventative action will be taken in relation to complaints and appeals. Complaints and appeals will also be seen as an opportunity for improvement.

5.1.8 All individuals, including third parties will be informed of allegations made and will have the opportunity to present their case.

5.1.9 Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

5.1.10 Pioneer encourages complainants to first seek to address the issue informally by discussing it with the person involved. However, if the person is not comfortable with this or has tried this unsuccessfully, they are to follow the procedures below.

5.1.11 All records of complaints and appeals will be kept by Pioneer and entered into the complaints and appeals register.

5.2 Complaints and Appeals Process

5.2.1 Complaints and appeals are to be made as follows:

5.2.1.1 Submit complaint or appeal in writing using the complaints and appeals form. The complaints and appeals form outlines the information that should be provided.

5.2.1.2 Submit complaint within 30 calendar days of the incident or in the case of an appeal within 30 calendar days of the decision being made.

5.3 Response to Complaints and Appeals

5.3.1 Complaints and appeals will be responded to as follows:

5.3.1.1 The complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt.

5.3.1.2 Review of the complaint or appeal will commence within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

5.3.1.3 Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or within 30 calendar days.

5.3.1.4 Where the complaint or appeal is complex and is expected to take more than 60 calendar days to process, Pioneer will write to inform the complainant or appellant of this including the reasons for such. Following this update, regular updates will be provided of progress.

5.3.1.5 The outcomes of the complaints and appeals process will be communicated in writing to the person making the complaint or appeals. This will also include the reasons for the outcome.

5.4 Complaints and Appeals Handling

5.4.1 Each individual involved in the complaint may have a support person of their choice present at any meetings to resolve the complaint or appeal.

5.4.2 An independent assessor will be identified to conduct a review of an assessment decision that is being appealed.

5.5 Enrolment During a Complaints Process

5.5.1 Domestic students' enrolment will be maintained throughout the complaints and appeals process unless the complaint is in relation to misconduct.

5.5.2 International students' enrolment will be maintained during the applicable complaints and appeals process, and any change to enrolment status will be reported through PRISMS in accordance with the ESOS Act and the National Code 2018.

5.5.3 Additionally, for international students:

5.5.3.1 If the appeal is against Pioneer's decision to report the student for unsatisfactory course progress or attendance, the student's enrolment will be maintained until

the external process is completed and has supported or not supported Pioneer's decision to report.

5.5.3.2 If the appeal is against Pioneer's decision to defer, suspend or cancel a student's enrolment due to misbehaviour, Pioneer will notify Department of Education via PRISMS of a change to the student's enrolment after the outcome of the internal appeals process.

5.6 Independent Appeal Process

5.6.1 Where the internal process has failed to resolve the complaint or appeal, the matter will be referred to an independent mediator.

5.6.2 Where a student is not successful in the internal complaints and appeals process, Pioneer will advise the student in writing, within 10 working days of concluding the internal review, of their right to access an external complaints handling and appeals process at minimal or no cost, and will provide the contact details of the appropriate external body.

5.6.3 For domestic students, all associated costs are to be met by the complainant/appellant unless it is Pioneer that made the decision to appoint the independent party.

5.6.4 The independent party recommended by Pioneer for cases involving domestic students is the Resolution Institute. However, another mediator of the student's choice can be appointed.

5.6.5 For international students, the external mediator is the Overseas Students Ombudsman (OSO). International students can access the OSO at no cost in relation to matters that cannot be resolved through internal processes. Further information and contact details are included below.

5.6.6 During the mediation process, Pioneer will cooperate in full and commits to immediately implement the decision or recommendation made by the external mediator and/or take preventative or corrective action required by the decision or recommendation.

5.6.7 All actions taken will be communicated in writing to students.

5.7 Information About External Bodies to Whom Complaints Can Be Made

5.7.1 Complaints can also be made to the organisations indicated below:

5.7.1.1 NATIONAL TRAINING COMPLAINTS HOTLINE:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Access to the Hotline is through:

Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally

Email: ntch@education.gov.au

5.7.1.2 AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to Pioneer's registering body, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). It is important to understand that ASQA does not act as an advocate for individual students and is not responsible for resolving disputes between students and training providers. ASQA only uses information from all complaints as intelligence to inform regulatory activities. More information can be found at: https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints

5.7.1.3 THE OVERSEAS STUDENT OMBUDSMAN (OSO):

International students may complain to the OSO about a range of circumstances including:

(i) Being refused admission to a course;

(ii) Course fees and refunds;

(iii) Being refused a course transfer;

(iv) Course progress or attendance;

(v) Cancellation of enrolment;

(vi) Accommodation or work arranged by Pioneer;

(vii) Incorrect advice given by an education agent;

(viii) Taking too long in certain processes such as issuing results;

(ix) Not delivering the services indicated in the Offer Letter and Student Agreement.

More information can be found at:

https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/complaints/international-student-complaints

6. Procedures

6.1 Process Complaints and Appeals

6.1.1 File the complaints and appeals form received.

6.1.2 Send out an acknowledgement within 3 working days of receiving the complaint or appeal.

6.1.3 Record details of the complaint or appeal on receipt on the complaints and appeals register.

6.1.4 Determine whether the complaint or appeal can be resolved quickly and easily. If so, take immediate action to resolve the complaint or appeal and inform the student in writing of the outcome

6.1.5 If the complaint is more complex, organise relevant staff to review the complaint and commence investigation.

6.1.6 Commence the assessment of the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of receiving the complaint or appeal.

6.1.7 Conduct an investigation that includes:

6.1.7.1 Checking of all facts and accuracy of information.

6.1.7.2 Requesting further information as required.

6.1.7.3 Organising a meeting with the complainant/appellant.

6.1.7.4 Identifying relevant corrective/preventative action.

6.1.7.5 Confirming a solution.

6.1.8 Where the matter is an appeal about an assessment decision, the investigation process will include an independent review of the assessment evidence and decision by another assessor. A relevant independent assessor should be organised.

6.1.9 The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable, with a target completion timeframe of 30 calendar days. Where Pioneer considers that more than 60 calendar days will be required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, Pioneer will inform the complainant or appellant in writing, provide reasons for the extended timeframe, and provide regular updates on the progress of the matter.

6.1.10 Where the process finds in favour of the student, organise a management meeting to discuss:

6.1.10.1 The process and its outcome; and

6.1.10.2 Actions to be taken to implement the decision, including both corrective/preventative actions.

6.1.11 Following the meeting, agreed actions will be immediately implemented.

6.1.12 Update the complaints and appeals register.

6.1.13 Once the investigation is complete, the complainant or appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome. Where the response is in relation to a complaint, the letter will advise that the internal appeals process may also be accessed**.** Where the student is not successful, the letter will also advise, within 10 working days of concluding the internal review, of their right to access the external appeals process.

6.1.14 Archive the complaint or appeal documentation.

6.2 Organise External Appeals

6.2.1 In cases where the student has organised the mediator, it will be responding to the mediator's requests.

6.2.2 Cooperate with all requirements of the mediator, providing all information as required.

6.2.3 Where the mediator finds in favour of the student, organise a management meeting to discuss:

6.2.3.1 The external process and its outcome; and

6.2.3.2 Actions to be taken to implement the decision, including both corrective/preventative actions.

6.2.4 Following the meeting, agreed actions will be immediately implemented.

6.2.5 Advise the student of the action that Pioneer will take in response to the external mediator's decision.

6.2.6 Where the external mediator supports Pioneer's decisions regarding international students, for example, in relation to cancellation, notify Department of Education via PRISMS.

7. Policy Review

7.1 Policy review is undertaken by the CEO with input from relevant staff.

7.2 Policy reviews are identified by an annual review cycle, or through audit and continuous improvement activities. An earlier review may occur if legislative or regulatory changes occur, or if a significant incident or near miss occurs.

7.3 The CEO actions the changes and updates the policies and associated procedures manual accordingly.

7.4 The CEO communicates amendments to policies and associated procedures to all relevant staff via email and/ or staff meetings.

7.5 Changes will be recorded in the updated version control and Document History.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 The CEO/ PEO is responsible for, but not limited to:

8.1.1 Investigating complaints and appeals.

8.1.2 Making decisions about complaints and appeals in conjunction with others.

8.1.3 Authorising actions and implementing systemic improvements.

8.1.4 Ensuring timeframes and regulatory obligations are met.

8.2 The Academic Manager/ Trainer Co-ordinator is responsible for, but not limited to:

8.2.1 Managing academic complaints and appeals.

8.2.2 Making decisions about complaints and appeals in conjunction with others.

8.2.3 Facilitating external decisions and implementing remedial actions.

8.3 The Administration and Student Support Officer are responsible for, but not limited to:

8.3.1 Processing complaints and appeals forms.

8.3.2 Filing all documentation.

8.3.3 Assisting students in accessing forms and support.

8.3.4 Directing complaints to senior management.

8.4 Trainers and Assessors are responsible for, but not limited to:

8.4.1 Co-operating in investigations.

8.4.2 Providing evidence for assessment appeals.

8.4.3 Supporting resolutions.

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this document should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer in person or by email to: ceo@pioneercollege.edu.au

Document History:

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1.2	20 Oct 2025	Review made. Additional items added.	CEO
1.3	09 Dec 2025	Added definitions. Adjusted Table of Contents. Elaborated on: • Purpose and Scope section • Responsibilities section	CEO
1.4	16 Jul 2026	Review made. Minor updates on cover page.	CEO
1.5	03 Sep 2026	Minor Corrections have been made.	CEO

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