

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy

1. Overarching Principles

- 1.1 APTC acknowledges that students, staff, and the general public have the right to make a complaint about products and services provided by the organisation, and that addressing complaints provides the organisation with an opportunity to improve its products and services.
- 1.2 APTC values the feedback and complaints provided by students, staff, employers, partners and the general public.
- 1.3 APTC will ensure fairness and equitable treatment for both those making and those subject to complaints, including the right of appeal, in a confidential and timely manner.

2. Receipt and Allocation of Complaints

- 2.1 APTC will ensure that information about its complaints management processes is made publicly available to students, staff, and the general public, to ensure that all stakeholders understand and are able to access APTC's complaints management system.
- 2.2 APTC will provide on-line facilities for students, staff, and the general public to submit complaints through the APTC website. APTC will also provide in-person facilities for complaints, through the Regional Head Office and each Country office.
- 2.3 Upon receipt of a complaint, APTC will maintain processes to register the complaint, and if necessary allocate the complaint to an appropriate officer.

3. Complaints Management Process

- 3.1 The process for managing complaints will include, but is not limited to:
 - 3.1.1 Conducting preliminary enquiries to determine appropriate options for complaint resolution
 - 3.1.2 Facilitated discussion, mediation, conciliation, or negotiation;
 - 3.1.3 Formal investigation and review;
 - 3.1.4 Referral to an appropriate external agency; and
 - 3.1.5 Other reasonable actions deemed appropriate to meet the circumstances of the complaint.

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4. Meeting Compliance Obligations

- 4.1 In managing complaints, APTC will ensure that it meets any relevant compliance requirements for the particular issue, in particular:
- 4.1.1 Addressing any relevant legislative and/or government policy provisions;
 - 4.1.2 Adhering to appropriate delegations when responding to or making a decision in relation to the complaint; and
 - 4.1.3 Reporting and managing any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- 4.2 APTC is required to notify DFAT if it reasonably suspects that corrupt conduct has occurred. Corrupt conduct would, if proven, constitute a criminal offence or disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person/s services, if the person were the holder of an appointment. All submissions to DFAT on behalf of APTC will be undertaken by the Chief Operating Officer.

5. Fairness and Transparency

- 5.1 APTC will manage complaints in a fair and transparent manner, including ensuring:
- 5.1.1 Objectivity: Complaints will be addressed by objective decision-makers without personal bias.
 - 5.1.2 Responsiveness: APTC will regularly communicate with complainants about the management and progress of complaints, including notification of anticipated timeframes for complaint resolution and any factors likely to affect the progress of a complaint.
 - 5.1.3 Procedural Fairness: All parties to a complaint will know what to expect during the complaint management process, and will be provided with an opportunity to participate in the complaint management process.
 - 5.1.4 Equity: When managing complaints, consideration will be given to the age, gender, cultural background, disability status, language, and religion of the parties to a complaint.
 - 5.1.5 Record Keeping: Full and accurate records will be maintained for each complaint, and stored in accordance with the appropriate records management requirements.
 - 5.1.6 Confidentiality and Privacy: The privacy and confidentiality of all parties to a complaint will be respected to the extent practicable and appropriate under law, and to enable the resolution of the complaint.
- 5.2 APTC also expects to be treated fairly during the receipt, processing, and management of complaints, including:
- 5.2.1 Staff are entitled to be treated with respect and courtesy when receiving and managing complaints; and
 - 5.2.2 Where a person involved in a complaint behaves in a rude, threatening, or harassing manner toward staff, the relevant delegated officer may decide to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the complainant or refer the matter to an appropriate external agency.
 - 5.2.3 Where APTC determines a complaint to be vexatious, repetitive, unreasonable or abusive, the complainant will be notified in writing that no further correspondence will be entered into on the matter in question.

6. Notification of Complaint Outcomes

- 6.1 All parties to a complaint will be notified of the general outcome of the complaint investigation (or the progress of a complaint investigation if a decision has not been reached) in writing within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint, unless otherwise agreed by all parties.
- 6.2 The notification of complaint decision will include the rationale and justification for the decision, and complaint outcomes.

7. Complaints Appeals (Internal and External Review)

- 7.1 APTC will attempt to resolve complaints informally in the first instance. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge a formal complaint within 20 business days of the date of the communication advising of the outcome.
- 7.2 Complainants have the right to seek internal review of a decision made by APTC about a formal complaint. The process for internal reviews includes the following minimum standards:
- 7.2.1 The reviewer will be independent to and no less senior than original decision-makers;
- 7.2.2 The reviewer will have the necessary expertise to review the particular matter; and
- 7.2.3 The reviewer will have access to relevant material and personnel, and full cooperation within APTC at all levels.
- 7.3 All parties to an internal review of a complaint will be notified of the general outcome of the review in writing within 20 business days of the receipt of the internal review application.
- 7.4 After internal review, complainants have the right to seek external review of a complaint. APTC will advise the complainant of options for external review of complaint outcomes, including referral to appropriate external agencies.

8. Complaints Reporting and Continuous Improvement

- 8.1 APTC will collate complaints management information from country offices on a quarterly basis and at the conclusion of each financial year. At a minimum, the following information will be reported after each financial year to TAFE Queensland through the APTC Chief Executive Officer:
- 8.1.1 The number of complaints in the year;
- 8.1.2 The number of those complaints resulting in further action; and
- 8.1.3 The number of those complaints resulting in no further action.
- 8.2 APTC will undertake trend reporting of its complaints management outcomes, in order to identify business improvement opportunities in APTC's products and services.
- 8.3 APTC will undertake an annual review of its complaints management systems and processes to ensure a continuous improvement approach to complaints management.
- 8.4 APTC will support the maintenance and continuous improvement of its complaints management systems and processes through:
- 8.4.1 The provision of appropriate technological and other resources to ensure the maximum effectiveness of complaints management systems and processes; and
- 8.4.2 The delivery of training to relevant staff.

Who or what does this policy apply to?

Note: This Policy is jointly owned by the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Operating Officer. Any changes to the Policy must be done in consultation with both the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Operating Officer.

This document applies to:

- All APTC staff (including consultants), students and graduates
- Individuals seeking to enrol in a course of study with the APTC.
- APTC key stakeholders such as partner organisations, employers and industry representatives
- Members of the general public

Associated documents

Work instructions

[W-MG09 Management of Complaints and Appeals](#)

Definitions and acronyms

[Glossary](#)

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