

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Students, employers and other stakeholders | Version 26.09.4 | Effective 15 September 2026

1. Your right to be heard

EQC welcomes feedback and complaints from prospective, current and former students, employers, staff and other affected people. This process covers EQC, its staff, contractors, education agents, other service partners and matters involving other students. Students may appeal any adverse decision, including assessment, RPL, credit transfer, admission, fees, support, discipline and enrolment decisions.

A complaint raises dissatisfaction or a concern. An appeal asks for review of a decision. You do not need to choose the correct label: staff will clarify your concern and the outcome you seek. This policy is available free before and during enrolment on our website, and on request in an accessible format.

2. How to contact us

Use the Complaints and Appeals Form, available from Student Services, as the preferred way to lodge a formal complaint or appeal. Submit it to **team@equinimcollege.com** or Student Services. A written email containing the relevant details is also acceptable. For help, call **1800 338 883** or use our [contact page](#).

Provide your name and contact details, the decision or issue, relevant dates, reasons for the complaint or appeal, supporting information and the outcome sought. Staff will help you put the matter in writing where needed, including reasonable adjustments. Verbal concerns and feedback are recorded and considered; if formal review is needed, staff will assist with the written record and confirm its accuracy where practicable. A person will not be excluded because they need help completing the form. Missing details will be requested without delaying acknowledgement or any required commencement of review.

You may discuss a concern with your trainer first, but may go directly to Student Services or management. For sensitive matters, request confidential referral to Executive Management. If that person is involved, ask for an uninvolved senior officer or an independent reviewer. You do not have to confront the person concerned.

3. Support and protection

There is no charge for our internal process. Ask Student Services for assistance or reasonable adjustments. You may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at relevant meetings. Meeting arrangements will take account of access needs and procedural fairness.

No person will be penalised merely for making a complaint or appeal. Unsuccessful or repeated complaints are not automatically misconduct. Any necessary restrictions on abusive or unsafe conduct must be proportionate, explained with reasons and review options, and preserve a usable complaint channel. In an emergency call 000. Staff must act on immediate safety concerns and comply with reporting duties without waiting for this process to finish.

4. Receipt, investigation and decision

Receive and acknowledge: Student Services records formal complaints and appeals and acknowledges receipt within five working days, identifying the responsible officer and expected next steps. Staff also capture informal feedback and concerns. Relevant complaints received by service partners or education agents must be referred to EQC.

Allocate: the Operations Manager appoints a person with suitable authority and competence who is not implicated in the matter or reviewing their own decision. Actual or apparent conflicts must be declared and managed. If management is conflicted, Executive Management must arrange an appropriate independent person.

Investigate: review the matter promptly within the timeframes below. Give affected parties a fair opportunity to explain their position and respond to relevant adverse material. Consider the evidence impartially, request relevant missing information and record the reasons for the decision. An allegation need not be proven before it can be considered.

Communicate: provide a written outcome, reasons, relevant evidence considered, corrective action and review options. Complaint outcomes are communicated appropriately to the parties; appeal outcomes to the appellant. Do not disclose another person's unnecessary private information or disciplinary details.

5. Service timeframes

EQC aims to provide a complaint outcome within 15 working days of receipt and an appeal outcome within 10 working days. Any further internal review has a 15-working-day target from the request. These are process targets for reasonable and timely handling, not statutory deadlines for all students. The mandatory overseas-student timeframes in section 8 take precedence where applicable. Working days exclude weekends and public holidays at the office handling the case.

If a target cannot be met, advise the person of the reason, revised expected date and next steps. Keep them informed of material progress or further delay, and finalise as soon as practicable. Requesting additional information does not restart the receipt date or postpone any legally required commencement of review.

6. Asking for an internal appeal

Ask for review within 20 working days after you receive the decision and reasons. Tell us which decision you challenge and why. We will consider later requests fairly, including illness, disability, language barriers, delayed notice or newly available evidence; explain any refusal and further review options. Complaints have no automatic five-day cut-off. Statutory appeal rights and longer applicable time limits are not reduced by this policy.

For assessment appeals, an appropriately credentialled and competent assessor who was not responsible for the original judgement reviews the assessment evidence and process. EQC retrieves records it already holds; students are not required to resupply an unavailable assessment copy. Credit-transfer and RPL appeals follow their respective recognition and assessment rules.

7. Further review and independent assistance

If dissatisfied with an internal decision, request an uninvolved senior review through the Operations Manager. Executive Management may appoint a suitable panel or Academic Board member where available. Additional internal panels are not compulsory barriers to independent review. You may request an independent review of an appeal by contacting Student Services at the details on page 1.

On request, EQC provides an avenue for review of an appeal by an appropriate independent party. **For a student who has applied for, or is receiving, a VET Student Loan, there is no charge for any internal or external stage of this process.** For other students, external review is at no or low cost, and Student Services will give the party's contact details, how to access the review, expected timeframes and any cost before the student proceeds. A cost must not undermine access to the review. Where a public body cannot deal with the matter, EQC will identify a suitable alternative independent reviewer. Overseas-student external review must be available at minimal or no cost.

Mediation may be used where appropriate and agreed, but does not remove the right to an independent appeal review. You may seek legal advice or contact a regulator, police, consumer body or another appropriate agency. Each external body determines its own jurisdiction and process.

External contacts

Queensland: the Queensland Training Ombudsman offers a free, independent service for VET complaints from students, apprentices, trainees, employers and others. Call **1800 773 048** or use the [Queensland student complaints page](#). That page also directs fee/refund matters to Fair Trading and apprenticeship matters to Apprenticeships Info.

Western Australia: for concerns about WA funded training, seek advice from the [Department of Training and Workforce Development](#) using its current contact options. For consumer disputes see [WA Consumer Protection](#). EQC is ASQA-regulated; TAC is not automatically the regulator for an EQC complaint merely because the student is in WA.

Overseas students: the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) provides a free service for complaints concerning private education providers. Call **1300 362 072**. Normally use the provider's internal process first. The Ombudsman can examine fairness and procedure but does not substitute an academic-merit assessment.

VET Student Loans students: the [VET Student Loans Ombudsman](#), operated by the Commonwealth Ombudsman, provides a free, independent service for complaints about VET Student Loans, including how EQC has handled a loan-related matter. Call **1300 362 072** or visit ombudsman.gov.au. The Ombudsman usually asks you to raise the matter with EQC first. EQC is part of the VET Student Loans Ombudsman scheme and must cooperate with it.

Training regulation: provide concerns about potential non-compliance to [ASQA](#), **1300 701 801**. ASQA uses information for regulation; it does not resolve individual student-provider disputes or act as your advocate. Student Services will assist with an appropriate referral for matters outside these bodies' roles.

8. Additional overseas-student safeguards

For overseas students, begin assessment of a complaint or appeal within 10 working days and finalise it as soon as practicable. Provide a written internal appeal outcome with detailed reasons. If the internal process is unsuccessful, advise the student within 10 working days of its conclusion of the appropriate external process, contact details and access at minimal or no cost. Do not require paid mediation before access to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Immediately implement an internal or external decision or recommendation in the overseas student's favour, take the required corrective or preventive action and tell the student what was done.

Course progress or attendance: give a reasoned written notice of intention to report, allowing 20 working days to access the internal process. Do not report in PRISMS unless the applicable internal/external processes are completed in EQC's favour, the student chooses not to access the relevant process, or withdraws in writing. Record which condition permits reporting.

Provider-initiated suspension or cancellation: provide written reasons and 20 working days for internal appeal. The action cannot take effect before the internal appeal is completed unless the student's health or wellbeing, or others' wellbeing, is likely to be at risk. Record the basis and any protective arrangements. This is distinct from the progress/attendance reporting rule. Transfer refusals must also give written reasons and the applicable 20-working-day appeal opportunity.

The international-student officer must check the specific National Code provision before changing enrolment or reporting, maintain required protections, and advise the student to seek Immigration advice about visa effects. A complaint does not automatically freeze every unrelated enrolment action; no action may be retaliatory.

9. WA and Queensland funding matters

The Operations Manager and contract manager must identify the student's actual program, commencement cohort, applicable funding agreement, schedules and variations. Record the relevant requirements and any departmental response deadlines. A funding dispute must not prevent access to this process or to external assistance.

For Queensland SAS delivery, provide fair and timely complaint avenues for students and employers where applicable. Include appeals about apprentice/trainee co-contribution fee-waiver decisions. Check the applicable SAS policy and agreement before deciding fees, claims or remedial action; the national complaints process does not replace funding obligations.

For WA delivery, apply the relevant award, CPS, Business Rules and contract conditions. Seek clarification from the departmental contract manager where necessary. Preserve relevant evidence and address substantiated fee, training or reporting errors through the responsible officer.

10. Records, privacy and improvement

Keep a secure case register and file recording receipt, issue, consent/support needs, allocation/conflict check, evidence, correspondence, dates, reasons, outcome, referral and action completion. Log informal feedback and resolved concerns proportionately, so recurring issues can be identified. Limit access to authorised people.

Handle personal information carefully. Absolute secrecy cannot be promised: relevant information may need to be shared for fair investigation, safety or legal obligations. Explain necessary disclosure where appropriate and consider confidentiality requests. Record information accurately and only to the extent needed.

Retain case records for at least five years, and longer where required under applicable legal and funding-contract requirements and EQC's controlled retention schedule. The responsible officer must confirm the applicable retention period before disposal and preserve evidence needed for any open review or legal hold. Separate requirements apply to assessment and certification records.

The Operations Manager uses feedback and complaint and appeal outcomes to identify necessary improvements, allocate action and check completion. Address serious or systemic issues promptly and retain evidence of corrective action. Favourable overseas-student outcomes require immediate implementation under section 8.

This policy applies consistently with applicable student agreements and existing rights; it does not retrospectively remove a contractual protection.

EQC only enrolls students aged 18 or older, with no under-18 exceptions. This is our admission rule, separate from government funding eligibility. It does not restrict complaints from any affected person, including a person who is not eligible to enrol.