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Star Gazers Education Pty Ltd T/AS Danford College
ABN 80 125 139 433 | ACN 125 139 433 | RTO: 21979 | CRICOS: 02996A

Danford College: Academic ISO SOP-06: Complaints & Appeals Policy

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1. Governing Standard

- Standards for RTO's 2015: Standard 2,6 Clause 2.1, 2.2(a,b), 2.4, 6.1 (a-c), 6.2, 6.3 (a-e) 6.4 (a,b), 6.5 (a,b), 6.6
- CRICOS Standard No: 10

2. Purpose

The Purpose of this policy is to:

- Develop a procedure for lodging an appeal against a decision made by the College's Management in a complaints dispute
- Develop a procedure for lodging an appeal against an assessment result
- Assist clients and students with access to an appeal procedure and ensuring that appeal system is accessible and not unduly complex
- Allow students access to an independent assessment review by an outside body with appropriate qualifications should the need arise.

3. Scope

The following Procedure applies to all complaints and appeals of staff members and enrolled students. The complaint may be against another student/s and/or staff member/s. In certain circumstances, this Procedure may be used to deal with a complaint against a person who is not an employee or student, but who is involved in a training related activity.

4. Policy

The College seeks to continuously provide a high-quality education and training environment that is safe, fair and free from discrimination, in which all are encouraged to strive for excellence and fulfil their potential. It is committed to implementing effective complaint resolution procedures that, where possible, are managed quickly, at the local level and with a minimum number of people involved. The resolution process will focus on a rapid re-establishment of good educational working relationships and positive outcomes.

An essential part of developing that environment is ensuring that staff and students are encouraged to come forward with their complaints in the knowledge that the responsible staff member will take prompt and effective action to address complaints.

Complaints and appeals that are not addressed have the potential to grow into major problems that can cause tension, low morale and reduced learning and academic achievement. Unresolved or poorly handled complaints can also lead to legal action against the College.



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The procedures aim to avoid blame and undue investigation. This policy applies to all students undertaking training in courses offered by the College as well as College staff and clients. All parties have the right to be accompanied and assisted by a support person in every relevant meeting they attend.

This policy applies to all complaints requiring resolution except those covered under Equal Opportunity or Access and Equity.

In handling a complaint, whether formal or informal, confidentiality will be maintained to:

- Protect all parties involved in a complaint under the principles of natural justice
- Prevent the possibility of a defamation or other legal action
- Involve the minimum number of people possible

All students, staff are to be informed of the complaint resolution process.

Despite all efforts of the College to provide satisfactory services to its students, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The following procedures provide students the opportunity to have complaints resolved and resolutions reached.

Each complainant or appellant has an opportunity to formally present him or her case at no cost to him or herself.

The Complaints and Appeals process does not remove the right of the appellant to act under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws.

5. Methodology

The Complaints & Appeals Policy will be implemented through the Quality System and follow and be subsequently audited as a Procedure – Complaints and Appeals.

6. Stage 1: Informal Complaint Resolution

Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint, this may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue and the student's complaint. Any staff can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a student and/or staff member has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed.

To lodge a formal complaint, you must either complete a complaint and appeals form (by ticking the complaint box) available from College Reception and our website www.danford.edu.au, or submit a letter in writing (by email or post) that identifies the complainant (the person with the complaint e.g. yourself), the respondent (person you have the complaint against, if applicable), and the nature of complaint. The complainant must sign the complaint (an email signature will be sufficient). You must also attach any supporting documents or information with the complaint form or letter. The complaint form or letter must be lodged with the Training Manager addressed as follows:

Training Manager

Danford College
Level 8, 277 William St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Email (if applicable): ivona@danford.edu.au

If your complaint concerns the Training Manager, please lodge your complaint form or letter with the CEO instead, addressed as follows:

CEO: Danford College
Level 8, 277 William St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

All complaints and appeals are submitted to the Training Manager or at the reception, who has the responsibility to record the complaint in the first instance in the 'Complaints & Appeals Register'. Complaints are to include the following information:

- Submission date of complaint
- Name of complainant;
- Nature of complaint;
- Date of the event which lead to the complaint
- Attachments (if applicable);

The complaint is entered and updated into the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' by the Training Manager in the following format:

- Submission date of complaint
- Name of complainant;
- Description of complaint / appeal
- Determined Resolution; and
Date of Resolution.

STAGE 2 – Formal Complaints and Appeals Resolution

- Once a complaint has been filed and logged in the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' the Training Manager shall send an acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant and notify the them to provide any further documentation related to the matter (if required)
- Training Manager shall assess the nature of complaint and assign a priority based on the urgency of the issue.
- The Training Manager will consider the formal complaint within 10 business days by reviewing, clarifying, investigating and discussing the matter with other relevant staff and all documentation provided by the Student. The student will be given all opportunities to respond.
- Complainants and/or appellants may be assisted or assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the complaint.
- Once a decision has been reached The Training Manager shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing.

- Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' by the Training Manager on the student's file.
- In the case of staff and client complaints, the process is managed by the General Manager and/or CEO, whose responsibility is to ensure a similar process to student/staff complaints is followed.
- Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the students and/or staff shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal the decision.
- If a student/staff is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process, they may initiate an internal appeal process by completing the 'Complaints & Appeals Form', this time ticking on the appeals box.
- Complaints are treated confidentially and the identity of the complainant is kept confidential. If the complaint is about any internal staff such as Trainer or Assessor, marketing or agent's the complainant's identity will not be disclosed. All parties involved in the issue will be treated with respect and will not be victimised or discriminated against during the process.

7. Stage 2: Formal Complaint Resolution

To lodge a formal complaint, you must either complete a complaint and appeals form (by ticking the complaint box) available from College Reception and our website www.danford.edu.au, or submit a letter in writing (by email or post) that identifies the complainant (the person with the complaint e.g. yourself), the respondent (person you have the complaint against, if applicable), and the nature of complaint. The complainant must sign the complaint (an email signature will be sufficient).

You must also attach any supporting documents or information with the complaint form or letter. The complaint form or letter must be lodged with the Training Manager.

If your complaint concerns the Training Manager, please lodge your complaint form or letter with the CEO instead.

All complaints and appeals are submitted to the Training and Compliance Manager or at the reception, who has the responsibility to record the complaint in the first instance in the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'. Complaints are to include the following information:

- Submission date of complaint
- Name of complainant;
- Nature of complaint;
- Date of the event which lead to the complaint
- Attachments (if applicable);

The complaint is entered and updated into the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' by the Training Manager in the following format,

- Submission date of complaint
- Name of complainant;
- Description of complaint / appeal

- Determined Resolution; and
- Date of Resolution

Once a complaint has been filed and logged in the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' the Training Manager shall send an acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant and notify the them to provide any further documentation related to the matter (if required)

Training Manager shall assess the nature of complaint and assign a priority based on the urgency of the issue.

The Training Manager will consider the formal complaint within 10 business days by reviewing, clarifying, investigating and discussing the matter with other relevant staff and all documentation provided by the Student. The student will be given all opportunities to respond.

Complainants and/or appellants may be assisted or assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the complaint.

Once a decision has been reached The Training Manager shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing.

Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' by the Training Manager on the student's file.

In the case of staff and client complaints, the process is managed by the General Manager and/or CEO, whose responsibility is to ensure a similar process to student/staff complaints is followed.

Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the students and/or staff shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal the decision.

If a student/staff is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process, they may initiate an internal appeal process by completing the Complaints & Appeals Form, this time ticking on the appeals box.

Complaints are treated confidentially and the identity of the complainant is kept confidential. If the complaint is about any internal staff such as Trainer or Assessor, marketing or agent's the complainant's identity will not be disclosed. All parties involved in the issue will be treated with respect and will not be victimised or discriminated against during the process.

8. Formal Appeals

All students/staff have the right to appeal decisions made by the College where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by the College may include:

- Assessments conducted
- Reported breaches of academic progress, misbehaviour of fee payment requirements
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment
- Workplace issues
- Or any other conclusion that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by the College in the first instance for staff or student.



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To activate the appeals, process the student/staff is to complete an Appeal Application Form (this time ticking on the appeals box) which is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the student/staff feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained.

Help and support with this process can be obtained from Student Administration or from reception staff.

All appeals are submitted to the Training Manager or at the reception, who has the responsibility to record the appeal in the first instance in the 'Complaints & Appeals Register'.

The Training Manager shall organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.

The process for all formally lodged internal appeals will be finalised within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.

Where an appeal has been lodged it will be defined into one of the following categories and the appropriate procedures followed.

Appeals lodged by staff and clients will be managed by the Training Manager, in accordance with the above processes.

Assessment Appeals

Where 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 gained. If this is still not to the student's satisfaction the student shall formally lodge an appeal, outlining their reasons for the appeal. Above formal appeal process to be applied.

The Training Manager shall be notified and shall seek details from the assessor involved and any other relevant parties. A decision shall be made regarding the appeal either indicating the assessment decision stands or details of a possible re-assessment or involve a 'third party'. The third party shall be another assessor appointed by the College. The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' updated.

Appealing Decisions to Report Breach of Academic, misbehaviour or fee payment Requirements

Where a student wishes to appeal the decision of the College of a breach of general, fees, academic or attendance requirements the student shall lodge a Complaint & Appeal Form outlining the details of their appeal. The student should have compelling circumstances as to why they have breached their requirements and must be able to provide evidence of these circumstances.

The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints & Appeals Register' updated.

Appealing Deferrals, Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment Decisions

Where a student wishes to appeal a decision relating to deferment, suspension, or cancellation of their enrolment they are required to lodge an Appeal Application Form, outlining the details of their appeal. Students should have extenuating circumstances as to why the decision should be reviewed

and any supporting documentation supporting their appeal.

Above formal appeal process to be applied.

The Training Manager shall seek details regarding the initial documentation of the decision and shall decide based on the grounds of the appeal.

The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated.

9. Stage 3: External Appeals

If you have exhausted the above internal complaints processes and procedures and the dispute is unresolved or you feel dissatisfied with the outcome, you may wish to raise your complaint with the Ombudsman. The complainant or appellant has an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost to him or herself.

The decision of this independent mediator is final and any further action the student wishes to take is outside the College's policies and procedures. The student shall be referred to the government agencies and this information can be obtained from the Compliance Manager.

Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student the College shall follow the required action to satisfy the student's complaint as soon as practicable.

Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the College, you may also seek legal redress through the usual court processes if you feel dissatisfied. You must bear the costs of initiating or defending any legal proceedings. These Terms do not remove your rights (if any) to act under the consumer protection laws

Where Danford College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, Danford College will:

- inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and
- regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.
- If you have exhausted the above internal complaints processes and procedures and the dispute is unresolved or you feel dissatisfied with the outcome, you may wish to raise your complaint with the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman ("Commonwealth Ombudsman"). The complainant or appellant has an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost to him or herself. The contact details of the Commonwealth Ombudsman are as follows:

Commonwealth Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
Tel (in Australia): 1300 362 072

Tel (outside Australia): +61 2 6276 0111
Website: <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au>

- The decision of this independent mediator is final and any further action the student wishes to take is outside the College's policies and procedures. The student shall be referred to the government agencies such as DEEWR (now Department of Education) and DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION and this information can be obtained from the Compliance Manager.
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student the College shall follow the required action to satisfy the student's complaint as soon as practicable.
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the College, you may also seek legal redress through the usual court processes if you feel dissatisfied. You must bear the costs of initiating or defending any legal proceedings. These Terms do not remove your rights (if any) to act under the ACL or any other Australian consumer protection laws
- Where Danford College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, Danford College will:
inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter

10. Related Documents

- Complaints & Appeals Form
- Complaints & Appeals Register
- Appeals Form

End of Document