

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT

It is always best to deal with a problem while it is small.

Institutes and their staff work hard to ensure that international students have a positive experience while they are studying with TAFE NSW. Sometimes, however, students can feel worried because of misunderstandings or because they are confused about how things work in Australia.

Most of these problems can be resolved quickly if you are prepared to speak with someone about the issue as early as possible. This type of concern or complaint is usually referred to as an Informal Complaint.

This document is a summary of how TAFE deals with complaints. You can find full details in the document *Internal Appeals process* available at http://www.detinternational.nsw.edu.au/tafe/downloads/int_appeals.pdf. It may be updated or varied from time to time. If so, the text as at the date of a complaint being made will prevail.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS relating to an issue at your Institute:

If you have a complaint about anything related to your course you should first try to resolve the problem by speaking to your teacher or head teacher.

If you feel that you cannot do this or, if your complaint or concern is about something that is not directly related to your course, you should speak with the International Office staff at your Institute. They can advise you about the most appropriate person to resolve your problem.

If you cannot resolve your problem by informal discussions you can make a Formal Complaint using the appropriate form – ask your Institute International Office for a copy of this form.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS:

What is a formal complaint?

A formal complaint can be written or verbal and is usually of a serious nature, such as complaints about the way TAFE dealt with a student who did not comply with Course progress requirements.

Verbal complaints require a formal interview where the details of the complaint will be recorded in writing. You can ask a support person to come with you to any interviews to assist you.

If you make a complaint or appeal you will receive a written statement of the outcome. This statement will include the reasons why decisions have been made.

If actions need to be taken as a result of a complaint or appeal, these actions must be implemented immediately and you will be advised about the outcome.

You must continue attending classes during the complaints or appeals process. If it is appropriate you may be permitted to continue studies outside the classroom. For example, if the complaint is about a teacher it would be difficult for you and/or the teacher if you continued attending classes.

What happens if I make a Formal Complaint?

After you make a formal complaint using the appropriate form, an investigation will commence within 10 working days.

You can expect to receive a response from a Senior Manager at your Institute within 20 working days. A copy of this response will also be sent to the Director of the International Students Centre (ISC).

If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint you have the right to appeal further in accordance with the internal appeal procedures stated in the document *Internal Appeals process* available at http://www.detinternational.nsw.edu.au/tafe/downloads/int_appeals.pdf.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the internal appeal process you have the right to appeal to an independent external party. If you decide to appeal externally, you will be advised of the contact details of the external appeal body. The purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether TAFE NSW has followed its policies and procedures. The purpose of the external appeal is not to make a decision in place of the provider.

APPEALS ABOUT COURSE PROGRESS POLICY

Under the National Code, if you have not met the course progress requirements you may be reported to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. You have the right to appeal and your appeal must be lodged within 20 working days of the date on the Intention to Report letter sent to you.

Your appeal will be handled by the Institute in accordance with the internal appeals procedure stated in the document *Internal Appeals process* available at http://www.detinternational.nsw.edu.au/tafe/downloads/int_appeals.pdf, you will be given access to an external appeals process. According to the National Code the purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether the provider has followed its policies and procedures – it is not to make a decision in place of the provider.