1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable students enrolled or seeking to be enrolled at Pacific College of Technology (the RTO) in VET courses to pursue perceived grievances of either an academic or non-academic, personal nature, by following procedures which allow for any alleged or perceived grievances, disputes or complaints to be effectively resolved.

2. Grievances and/or appeals

Grievances are any concerns which students feel they should not face during their study at this college. The RTO is committed to providing an environment where every student is treated equally and has access to a system which provides the opportunity to raise any issue or concern they may have. For this purpose, students may raise any matter of concern relating to quality of teaching, student amenities, discrimination or any other issue that may arise. This includes the process of delivery and assessment. The RTO encourages all parties to approach a complaint with an open mind and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.

The process of appeal is the process students must follow when they are not satisfied with a decision made at the college on their behalf. The decision may be regarding anything such as fees refund, attendance, course progress, etc. It is in order to respect the rights to review a decision, that the RTO has established the appeals process. Students can access the appeals process whenever they feel they are disadvantaged by a College decision.

3. Scope

This policy is designed to cover all complainants including:

    Individuals who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP loan assistance (Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders who are resident in Australia for the duration of a VET unit of study);

    Individuals who are not eligible for VET FEE-HELP loan assistance (permanent residents who are not permanent humanitarian visa holders and New Zealand citizens).

    Students or those persons seeking to enrol with the RTO are entitled to access the student grievance procedures, regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student’s place of residence or the mode in which they study.
4. Before an issue becomes a formal grievance

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There is staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level.

Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the RTO in person or by phoning the RTO reception at 02 9649 7767 and asking to speak to the Compliance Officer.

5. Procedure

This procedure can be utilised by complainants to submit a grievance of an academic or non-academic nature. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters including grievances in relation to personal information that the RTO holds in relation to an individual.

During all stages of this procedure the RTO will take all steps to ensure that:

- the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case and each party to a grievance may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
- a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
- where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, the RTO will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome;
- there is no costs or fees charged to the complainant to access grievance procedures at any stage;
- ensure that records of grievances are treated as confidential.

Steps in the Grievances/Appeals Process:

Students may ask for assistance or bring a person for support, if they wish, in all steps involved.

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<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>5.1 Stage one – formal grievance:</th>
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<td>Formal grievances must be submitted in writing on the Grievance Reporting Form (available in the <a href="http://www.pct.edu.au">www.pct.edu.au</a>) addressing to the attention of the Compliance Officer as follows:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Compliance Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific College of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L1, 91-95 Rawson Street Auburn NSW 2144.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Director of Studies is nominated Complaint Officer for this purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within 10 (ten) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as</td>
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soon as practicable.

The Compliance Officer, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant.

The Compliance Officer, or their nominee, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve.

Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview the complainant or respondent may ask another person to accompany them.

The Compliance Officer, or their nominee, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within 10 (ten) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

### Step 2 (if not resolved in Step 1)

#### 5.2 Stage two – internal appeal:

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance they may lodge an appeal with the Principal (who is senior to the original decision maker) within twenty (20) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance. The Principal will appoint an appropriate person or committee to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten working days.

Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews.

Following the consultation, the Principal, or their nominee, will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

### Step 3 (if not resolved in Step 2)

#### 5.3 Stage three – external appeal:

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may lodge an external appeal to an Independent Arbitrator/Mediator appointed to conduct such appeal within twenty (20) working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal.

**Contact details for Independent Arbitrator/Mediator**

Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan  
Solicitor | Notary | Migration Agent | Nationally Accredited Mediator  
P: (02)96311155 | F: (02)96311183 | M: 0433 099 000
Complainants who wish to lodge an appeal must complete an external appeal form which is available by contacting the Independent Arbitrator.

Once an application has been made the Independent Arbitrator will advise the RTO of the external review application made by the complainant. Both the complainant and the RTO will be requested to provide documents in support of the application within fourteen (14) days including student files and records. The Independent Arbitrator will then consider the documents and make a determination which will be sent to both parties. Turnaround time for an appeal is 4-6 weeks of lodgement.

The RTO agrees to be bound by the Independent Arbitrator’s recommendations and the Principal will ensure that such recommendations are implemented within 30 (thirty) days of receipt of the report from the Independent Arbitrator.

Further action

If a grievance still remains unresolved after the external appeal, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to the National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the RTO will maintain that person’s enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

7. Record keeping

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least 5 (five) years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Principal.

These records will be maintained at: Pacific College of Technology, Level 1, 91-95 Rawson Street Auburn NSW 2144.

All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the RTO’s Privacy Policy.
8. **Fairness in the process**

No complainant, appellant or respondent will be victimised or discriminated against in the course of the carrying out of the complaints, grievances and appeals processes, either internal or external, delineated in this policy.

9. **Confidentiality**

Grievances and decisions are reviewed at management meetings. Results of all complaints/appeals are communicated in writing to the student and a copy of this communication is also kept on file, both in the complaints register and in the student’s individual file clearly stating the reasons for the decision and its outcomes. Records of all grievances and appeals will be maintained, in strict confidence.

10. **Responsibilities and delegations**

All staff need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with this procedure. The CEO and Director of Studies are responsible for the training of staff in these procedures.

11. **Policy approval**

This policy and procedures has been authorised by the Principal Executive Officer on 01 January 2016.

12. **Review of policy**

This policy and procedures will be reviewed from time to time (will be reviewed at least once a year). The RTO will publish and make publicly available the student grievance policy and procedures through its website.