Pacific College of Technology	Pacific College of Technology	Authorised by	Principal
		Effective Date	12 January 2026
	Student grievance and appeals policy and procedures		

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable students enrolled in, or seeking to be enrolled in, vocational education and training courses provided by the Pacific College of Technology to ask for and obtain recourse for perceived grievances of an academic, non-academic or personal nature, by following procedures which allow allegations about grievances, disputes or complaints to be investigated and resolved effectively. Any grievance matters relating to fees not listed on this policy will be governed by Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy v1.4
A copy of these policies is also available on the College web-site: www.pct.edu.au

2. Grievances and/or appeals

The College is committed to providing an environment where every student is treated equally, and has access to a policy and procedures which provide opportunities to raise any issue or concern they may have.

Grievances are concerns about incidents and events which students feel they should not encounter during their study at the Pacific College of Technology.

At the Pacific College of Technology, students may raise any matter of concern relating to quality of teaching, student amenities, discrimination or any other issue that arise. This includes learning and teaching delivery and assessment.

The College has established an approach that respects students' rights to seek reviews of decisions that are made, or actions that have been taken. Students can lodge a grievance or an appeal whenever they feel they may have been disadvantaged by a College decision which may involve fees refunds, attendance, course progress, etc.

The College encourages all parties to approach complaint resolution with an open mind and attempt to address matters through discussion and conciliation.

3. Scope

This policy is designed to cover complainants including:

- persons who are, or would be, entitled to access *Smart and Skilled* funding (Australian permanent residents, citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders resident in Australia for the duration of a vocational education and training programme);

- persons who are not eligible for *Smart and Skilled* funding (Australian permanent residents, citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders resident in Australia for the duration of a vocational education and training programme); and

- students or those persons seeking to enrol with the Pacific College of Technology are entitled to access student grievance procedures, regardless of the location where 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

There are College staff available to assist in resolving issues and everyone is encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned.

Anyone who has a complaint is encouraged to raise it initially at the point of, or as close to the point of, becoming aware of it as possible and to raise it with the part of the College, or with the service where the issue arose.

Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the Pacific College of Technology in person or by telephoning reception on **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 progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in vocational education and training courses. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters, including those relating to personal information that the Pacific College of Technology holds on individuals.

During all stages of the grievance and appeals procedure, the Pacific College of Technology will take all steps to ensure that:

- complainants have an opportunity to formally present their case, with all parties to a grievance accompanied and assisted by support person at any meetings if they wish;
- matters are treated seriously and with fairness i.e. individuals have the right to a fair and transparent procedures when decisions are being made;
- complaints and grievances are treated consistently across the College and subject to the principles of fairness and natural justice;
- a full explanation in writing is provided for decisions and actions taken as part of the process if requested by complainants or respondents;
- where an internal or external grievance or appeal process results in a decision supporting a complainant, the College will immediately implement ways of rectifying matters, and/or take the corrective and preventive action required and advise complainants of the outcome;
- there are no costs or fees charged to complainants to access grievance procedures at any stage; and
- records of grievances are treated as strictly confidential.

Steps in the grievances/appeals process

Students may ask for assistance or bring a person for support, if they wish.

Step 1	**5.1 Stage one – formal grievance** Formal grievances must be submitted in writing using the *Grievance Reporting Form* (available at the www.pct.edu.au) and addressed to the College Compliance Officer. *The Compliance Officer* *Pacific College of Technology* *Level 1, 91-95 Rawson Street Auburn NSW 2144.* The College Director of Studies is the nominated compliance officer for grievances and complaints. Receipt of a grievance will be acknowledged in writing. Managing the grievance will commence within 10 working days of receipt of a formal grievance, and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable. The compliance officer, or delegate, will if necessary, seek information about the outcome that a complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought in writing or verbally, or during a face-to-face interview with the complainant. The compliance officer, or delegate, will again seek clarity about the outcome that a 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 to a complaint may ask another person to accompany them. The compliance officer, or delegate, will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and provide written notification within 10 working days to the complainant of the steps taken to address the grievance, including reasons for the decision. The notification will further advise the complainant of their right to access the Pacific College of Technology 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 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 10 working days.

	Where possible, such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. Complainants or respondents may ask another person to accompany them to these interviews. Following consultation, the Principal, or delegate, will within 10 working days, provide written advice to the complainant advising further steps taken to address the grievance, including reasons for the decision. This written notice will further advise the complainant of their right to access an 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 a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal to the Principal, they may lodge an external appeal to an independent arbitrator/mediator appointed to conduct such appeals, within 20 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of their appeal. *Contact details for the independent arbitrator/mediator* Dr Chandrika Subramaniyan Solicitor/Notary/Migration Agent/Nationally Accredited Mediator Telephone: (02) 9631 1155 Facsimile: (02) 9631 1183 Mobile: 0433 099 000 Post: PO Box 232 Wentoworthville 2145 15 Station Street Wentworthville 2145 e-mail: chandrika@successlawyers.com.au web-site: www.successlawyers.com.au 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 Pacific College of Technology of the external review application made by the complainant. Both the complainant and the College will be requested to provide documents in respect of the application within 14 days including student files and records. The independent arbitrator will then consider these documents and make a determination which will be sent to both parties. Turnaround time for an appeal is four to six (4 – 6) weeks of lodgement. Pacific College of Technology agrees to be bound by the independent arbitrator's recommendations, and the Principal will ensure that such recommendations are implemented within 30 days of receipt of a report from the independent arbitrator.
Step 4 (if not resolved in Step 3)	**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*. Note:

	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. Nor do these procedures circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

6. Withdrawing complaints or grievances

Students are allowed to withdraw a complaint at any time during the resolution process.

Complaints must be withdrawn in writing and delivered to the member of the College staff who is overseeing the process.

On receipt of written communication of withdrawal, the complaint will typically be discontinued, unless there are compelling grounds for it to proceed.

7. Enrolment status

Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the Pacific College of Technology will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance process continues.

8. Record keeping

A written record of all grievances handled under this procedure and their outcomes will be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years and 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 Pacific College of Technology *Privacy Policy*.

9. Procedural fairness

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

10. Confidentiality

Grievances and decisions are reviewed at management meetings.

Results of all complaints/appeals are communicated in writing to students and a copy of this communication is kept on file, in the complaints register and in a 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.

11. Responsibilities and delegations

All staff need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with this procedure. The Principal and Director of Studies are responsible for educating staff about these procedures.

12. Policy approval

This policy and procedures has been authorised by the Principal and Principal Executive Officer.

13. Review of policy

This policy and procedures will be reviewed from time to time.