

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

RELEVANT STANDARD(S):

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015	Standard 6 Chapter 3 – Support and progression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clause 6.1-6.5
Training Accreditation Council (TAC) Policies & Guidelines	Complaints About Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Policy

1. Purpose

To ensure all complaints and appeals are managed promptly, fairly, and transparently in line with the Standards for RTOs 2015 (Standard 6), with a focus on procedural fairness, protection from disadvantage, and continuous improvement.

2. Scope

This policy covers any complaint or appeal relating to:

- the conduct, decisions or services of SNS, its staff/contractors, or third-party providers;
- the conduct of learners that affects others; and
- **appeals of decisions** made by SNS or its third parties, including assessment decisions.

Clarification: Some matters may fall outside a regulator’s external complaint processes; however, **all such matters remain within SNS’s internal policy scope** and will be managed under this policy.

3. Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about SNS services, staff/third parties, or learner conduct, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
- **Appeal:** A request for review of a decision made by SNS or its third parties (e.g., assessment outcome, enrolment decision).
- **Procedural fairness:** Right to be heard, impartial decision-maker, decisions based on evidence, reasons provided.

- **Working day:** Monday–Friday (excluding WA public holidays).

4. Principles

1. **Accessibility & no disadvantage:** Learners can complain or appeal without fear of victimisation. Support persons are welcome.
2. **Timeliness & transparency:** Acknowledge in writing within 2 business days; aim to finalise within 30 calendar days where practicable.
3. **Impartiality:** Investigators and appeal reviewers are **independent of the original decision or conduct**.
4. **Confidentiality:** Information is shared only with those who need it to handle the matter.
5. **Evidence-based decisions & reasons:** Written outcomes explain findings, reasons and remedies.
6. **Continuous improvement:** Causes are analysed and corrective actions tracked.

5. Public availability and lodgement

This policy and the Complaints & Appeals Lodgement Form are published on the SNS College of Western Australia website at www.snscollege.com.au/policies/complaints-appeals.

Complaints and appeals may be lodged using the online Complaints & Appeals Lodgement Form, or by contacting Student Administration at info@snscollege.com.au or on (08) 6153 4505.

Assistance to lodge a complaint or appeal is available on request, including reasonable adjustments to support accessibility.

6. Roles & responsibilities

- All staff involved in receiving, investigating or reviewing complaints or appeals must complete annual training in complaints handling, procedural fairness and impartial decision-making.
- **Complaints Officer (primary contact):** Intake, acknowledgement, triage, allocation, tracking, updates.

- **Investigator/Decision-maker:** Gathers facts, makes findings, issues written outcome. Must not be involved in the matter.
- **Appeal Reviewer:** Reviews a decision; **must be independent** of the original decision-maker. If required, SNS appoints an **external reviewer**.
- **Compliance Manager:** Oversees register, ensures updates and >60-day notifications, trend analysis, CI actions.
- **CEO/PEO:** Final determinations in complex or systemic matters; approves remedies where required.

7. How to lodge (complaints or appeals)

Use the **Lodgement Form** (online or PDF) or email Student Administration. Provide a description, dates, people involved, any evidence, and your preferred outcome. You may request reasonable adjustments to support access.

8. Process overview (embedded summary)

1. **Lodge** → We acknowledge **within 2 business days** and advise next steps.
2. **Triage & independence check** → Conflict screen; assign an independent investigator/decision-maker.
3. **Investigation** → Collect evidence; offer all parties an opportunity to be heard; allow a support person. Provide **progress updates at least every 10 business days**.
4. **Outcome** → Written decision with reasons, outcomes/remedies, and appeal rights, **normally within 30 calendar days** where practicable.
5. **Appeal (internal review)** → If dissatisfied, request an appeal within **20 working days** of the outcome. An **independent reviewer** re-examines the decision and issues a written determination.
6. **External review** → If still unresolved, you may seek an **independent external review** (see section 10).
7. **Closure & improvement** → Register updated; causes analysed; corrective actions assigned and tracked.

9. Timeframes & >60-day rule

- We aim to finalise within 30 calendar days where practicable, without limiting the learner's right to external review.
- If resolution will exceed **60 calendar days**, SNS will **write to you with reasons** and provide **regular (at least fortnightly) progress updates** until finalised.
- Urgent matters (e.g., safety) may be prioritised and addressed immediately.

10. Independent external review & costs

- Where an **independent review** is requested after internal processes are completed, SNS can propose suitable providers (e.g., mediation or expert review).
- SNS may propose suitable independent external reviewers with relevant expertise and no conflict of interest.
- **Costs:** SNS will cover the cost of the **first mediation session (up to two hours)**. Any additional mediation or specialist investigation costs will be **borne by the requesting party** unless otherwise agreed. **All potential costs and provider options are disclosed in writing before the review begins.**

11. Outcomes & remedies

Possible outcomes include: explanation, apology, re-assessment by a different assessor, fee correction, service change, training plan adjustment, staff coaching or disciplinary action, replacement of materials/services, or other fair remedies. Remedies are documented and monitored to completion.

12. Records, data & continuous improvement

- **Registers:** All matters are recorded in the **Complaints & Appeals Register** (unique ID; dates; issue type; parties; actions; outcomes; remedies; resolution date; root cause; improvement actions; status).
- **Confidential storage:** Records are maintained securely per Records Management Policy and retention rules.
- **Cause analysis & CI:** Root causes are analysed; corrective actions are logged in the **Continuous Improvement Register** and reviewed at CI meetings. Trends and systemic risks are reported to management.

- Each corrective action is verified for effectiveness, and where appropriate, outcome feedback is provided to the complainant. Verification records are maintained in the Continuous Improvement Register.

13. Non-retaliation

SNS prohibits any detrimental action against a person for making a complaint/appeal or participating in a matter. Concerns about victimisation may themselves be raised under this policy.

14. Interaction with other policies and regulators

- This policy operates alongside: Code of Conduct, Assessment Policy, Student Support, Fees & Refunds, and Records Management.
- Information about the Western Australian training regulator (TAC) and other external pathways is provided on the website/Handbook for learners who wish to seek advice or lodge a matter externally **after** SNS's internal process.
- **Important:** Listing examples that a regulator may not accept **does not limit** SNS's responsibility—SNS will manage all complaints and appeals within scope as defined in Section 2.

15. Accessibility & support

SNS provides reasonable adjustments and language support for lodgement, participation, and understanding outcomes. Interpreters can be arranged on request.

16. Policy administration

- **Related documents:**
 - Complaints & Appeals Procedure (work-instruction)
 - Complaints & Appeals Register
 - Continuous Improvement Policy; Records Management Policy; Assessment Policy
- **Communication:** Policy is briefed to staff at induction and annually; learners are signposted at enrolment and via LMS/Handbook.
- **Document control:** Uncontrolled when printed. Check the website/LMS for the current version.

VERSION CONTROL

Version Control Table					
Date	Summary of Modifications	Modified by	Version	Date of Implementation	Next Review Date
10/02/2025	Document creation	SNS College of Western Australia	v. 1.0	20/02/2025	1/05/2025
02/11/2025	Added staff-training clause (s6), independence criteria (s10), and root-cause verification note (s12).	SNS	V2.0	02/11/2025	02/11/2026

RTO INFORMATION

RTO INFORMATION	
Document Name	SNS – Complaints and Appeals Policy V2.0
RTO/Company Name	SNS College of Western Australia
ABN	81 665 855 872
RTO Code	#00000
Phone	08 6153 4505
Email	info@snscollege.com.au
Manager	Training Manager
Website	www.snscollege.com.au
Address	Level 1, 224-226 Stirling Street, Perth 6000