

## SNS-06-POL-001 Complaints and Appeals Policy

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| <a href="#">Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025</a> | <p><b>Primary Alignment – Outcome 2: VET Student Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 2.7</b> – Feedback and complaints management</li> <li>• <b>Standard 2.8</b> – Appeals processes</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary Alignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard 4.1</b> – Integrity and accountability</li> <li>• <b>Standard 4.4</b> – Continuous improvement</li> </ul> <p><b>Regulatory Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training Accreditation Council (WA) – Complaints about RTOs guidance</li> </ul> |
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### Purpose

SNS College of Western Australia is committed to managing complaints and appeals **fairly, promptly, transparently and without disadvantage**.

This policy ensures that:

1. learners and other stakeholders have accessible avenues to raise concerns or appeal decisions;
2. all matters are handled with procedural fairness and impartiality;
3. outcomes are evidence-based and clearly explained; and
4. complaints and appeals inform continuous improvement of training, assessment and student services.

### Scope

This policy applies to complaints and appeals relating to:

- the conduct, decisions or services of SNS College, its staff, contractors or third-party providers;
- learner conduct that impacts other learners or staff; and
- appeals against decisions made by SNS College or its third parties, including assessment outcomes, enrolment decisions and administrative determinations.

### Clarification

Some matters may fall outside the scope of external regulator complaint mechanisms. All such matters remain within the scope of SNS College's internal complaints and appeals system and will be managed under this policy.

### Definitions

- **Complaint:** An expression of dissatisfaction about services, decisions, conduct or actions of SNS College, its staff, contractors, learners or third parties, where a response or resolution is expected.
- **Appeal:** A request for review of a decision made by SNS College or its authorised third parties.
- **Procedural fairness:** The right to be heard, an impartial decision-maker, decisions based on evidence, and reasons provided for outcomes.
- **Working day:** Monday to Friday, excluding Western Australian public holidays.

## Policy Principles – Complaints and Appeals

| No. | Principle                       | Policy Intent (What SNS College Commits To)                                                              | Operational Controls (How – via Procedures & Systems)                                  | Governance Oversight & Evidence                                        |
|-----|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Accessibility & No Disadvantage | Learners and stakeholders can lodge complaints or appeals without fear of victimisation or disadvantage. | Multiple lodgement options; support persons allowed; reasonable adjustments available. | Complaints & Appeals Register; learner communications; audit sampling. |
| 2   | Procedural Fairness             | All parties are treated fairly, heard respectfully, and decisions are made impartially.                  | Independence checks; separation of decision-makers; documented reasons for outcomes.   | Decision records; reviewer declarations; governance review.            |
| 3   | Timeliness & Transparency       | Matters are acknowledged, progressed and resolved within reasonable and communicated timeframes.         | Defined acknowledgement and resolution timeframes; progress updates.                   | Register timestamps; KPI monitoring; management reports.               |
| 4   | Confidentiality                 | Information is handled sensitively and disclosed only where required to resolve the matter.              | Secure recordkeeping; restricted access controls.                                      | Records Management audits; access logs.                                |
| 5   | Evidence-Based Decisions        | Outcomes are based on verified evidence and relevant policy and training product requirements.           | Investigation framework; evidence gathering checklist; written outcome letters.        | File reviews; validation of assessment appeals.                        |
| 6   | Independence                    | Appeals are reviewed by persons not involved in the original decision.                                   | Independent reviewer allocation; external reviewers where required.                    | Reviewer assignment records; conflict-of-interest declarations.        |
| 7   | Continuous Improvement          | Complaints and appeals are used to identify root causes and drive system improvement.                    | Root-cause analysis; CI Register integration; effectiveness checks.                    | Continuous Improvement Register; management review minutes.            |

### Public availability and lodgement

This policy and the **Complaints and Appeals Lodgement Form** are publicly available on the SNS College website ([www.snscollege.com.au/policies/complaints-appeals](http://www.snscollege.com.au/policies/complaints-appeals).) and via the Student Handbook and LMS.

Complaints and appeals may be lodged:

- online or via PDF lodgement form;
- by email; or
- in person with assistance from Student Services.

Reasonable adjustments and assistance (including language or accessibility support) are available upon request.

### Roles & responsibilities

|                                   |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All Staff                         | Must act professionally, support procedural fairness, and escalate complaints or appeals appropriately.    |
| Complaints Officer                | Receives, acknowledges, triages, allocates, tracks and communicates progress.                              |
| Investigator / Decision-Maker     | Conducts investigation and issues written outcomes. Must not be involved in the original matter.           |
| Appeal Reviewer                   | Reviews decisions independently. External reviewers are appointed where required.                          |
| Compliance Manager                | Maintains registers, monitors timeframes, oversees root-cause analysis and continuous improvement actions. |
| CEO / Principal Executive Officer | Oversees complex, systemic or high-risk matters and approves remedies where required.                      |

All staff involved in complaints and appeals handling must complete annual training in procedural fairness and impartial decision-making.

### How to lodge (complaints or appeals)

Complainants or appellants should provide:

- a description of the issue;
- relevant dates, parties and evidence (if available); and
- the preferred outcome.

Requests for reasonable adjustments or support may be made at any stage.

### Process overview

1. Lodgement and written acknowledgement
2. Triage and independence check
3. Investigation and evidence gathering
4. Decision and written outcome
5. Internal appeal (if requested)
6. External review (if requested)
7. Closure and continuous improvement actions

Detailed steps are documented in the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

#### **Timeframes and Extended Matters**

- Complaints and appeals are acknowledged in writing within two (2) business days.
- SNS College aims to finalise matters within 30 calendar days, where practicable.
- Where resolution exceeds 60 calendar days, the complainant or appellant will be notified in writing of the reasons and provided at least fortnightly progress updates until finalised.
- Urgent matters (e.g. safety or wellbeing risks) are prioritised and addressed immediately.

#### **Independent external review & costs**

Where an internal appeal does not resolve the matter:

- SNS College may propose independent external reviewers or mediation providers with relevant expertise and no conflict of interest.
- SNS College may contribute to the cost of an agreed external review process where appropriate.
- Any additional costs are disclosed in writing and agreed prior to referral.

#### **Outcomes and Remedies**

Possible outcomes may include (but are not limited to):

- explanation or apology;
- reassessment by a different assessor;
- correction of records or fees;
- adjustment to training or assessment arrangements;
- service improvements;
- staff coaching or disciplinary action; or
- other fair and reasonable remedies.

All remedies are documented and monitored to completion.

#### **Records, data and continuous improvement**

- All matters are recorded in the **Complaints and Appeals Register**, including outcomes and improvement actions.
- Records are stored securely in accordance with the Records Management Policy.
- Root causes are analysed and logged in the **Continuous Improvement Register**.
- Effectiveness of corrective actions is reviewed and verified.
- Trends and systemic risks are reported to management.

#### **Non-retaliation**

SNS College prohibits any form of victimisation or detrimental action against a person who lodges, supports or participates in a complaint or appeal. Any concerns about retaliation may themselves be raised under this policy.

#### **Interaction with other policies and regulators**

This policy operates alongside:

- Assessment Policy
- Student Support Policy
- Fees and Refunds Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Code of Conduct

Information about external regulatory pathways (including the WA training regulator) is made available to learners; however, SNS College remains responsible for managing all complaints and appeals within scope.

#### **Accessibility & support**

SNS College provides reasonable adjustments, language support and assistance to ensure equitable access to complaints and appeals processes. Interpreters can be arranged upon request.

#### **Policy administration**

##### **Related Documents**

- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Register
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Records Management Policy

##### **Communication**

- Briefed to staff at induction and annually
- Communicated to learners at enrolment and via LMS/Handbook

##### **Document Control**

- Uncontrolled when printed
- Current version maintained on the SNS College website and LMS

## 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 College of Western Australia | V2.0    | 02/11/2025             | 02/11/2026       |
| 03/01/2026            | Minor amendments to align Complaints and Appeals Policy wording and process summary with Student Handbook and Complaints and Appeals Procedure.”                                     | SNS College of Western Australia | V2.1    | 03/01/2026             | 03/01/2027       |
| 08/02/2026            | Full rewrite aligned to Standards for RTOs 2025                                                                                                                                      | SNS College of Western Australia | V3.0    | 08/02/2026             | 08/02/2027       |
| 19/06/2026            | Minor amendments including document numbering alignment, document control updates, administrative clarifications and formatting updates. No change to policy intent or requirements. | SNS College of Western Australia | V3.1    | 19/06/2026             | 19/06/2027       |

## RTO INFORMATION

| RTO INFORMATION  |                                                   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Document Name    | SNS-06-POL-001 Complaints and Appeals Policy V3.1 |
| RTO/Company Name | SNS College of Western Australia                  |
| ABN              | 81 665 855 872                                    |
| RTO Code         | 53034                                             |