

## VET STUDENT LOAN POLICY

### COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY



#### Policy Purpose

This policy outlines the policy and process for a VET Student Loan student wishing to make a complaint to the Queensland College of Music (QCM), to request a review of an assessment decision or to lodge a grievance relating to any academic matter (including matters relating to student, progress, assessment and curriculum) or non-academic matter (including matters relating to enrolment procedure, privacy and disclosure). Students not satisfied with a decision made through this process have the right to appeal a decision.

A student choosing to access the complaints, grievances and appeals processes will retain their enrolment with QCM Pty Ltd while the process is on-going, and no charge will be made for the process.

A **complaint or grievance** can be made to the RTO regarding the conduct of:

- QCM, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- students of the RTO
- any third parties providing services on behalf of the College.

An **appeal** can be made to the College to request a review of a decision, including assessment decisions. Appeals should be made to the trainer/assessor in the first instance but can also be made to Director or Training Manager of QCM. Appeals to review a decision will be conducted by an external and independent person or body with appropriate expertise.

#### Policy Statement

1. Any staff member can receive a complaint, assessment appeal or grievance and where possible resolve immediately.
2. All complaints, grievances and assessment appeals are heard and resolved within 10 calendar days of receipt.
3. If QCM considers that more than 10 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, grievance or assessment appeal, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons for the extended time frame in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.
4. QCM will maintain a secure Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register, documenting all complaints, grievances and assessment appeals received, as well as actions taken, and decisions made.
5. QCM will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes reviewing both the details in the Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register, and the complaints, grievances and appeals policy and procedures, and taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.
6. Appropriate records of all complaints, appeals and grievances will be maintained by QCM for a period of seven years.

### Internal Stage of Procedures

1. On receipt of a verbal complaint/grievance or assessment appeal:
  - a. Resolve the issue if possible, documenting the issue, its cause, actions taken, and decisions made in the secure Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register.
  - b. If the issue cannot be promptly and simply resolved, advise that an appropriate staff member will deal with the issue, but a written record of the complaint is required.
  
2. To put a complaint/ grievance in writing, advise the complainant that:
  - a. they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint/grievance,
  - b. they can either put the complaint/grievance in writing themselves using the form provided by QCM, or
  - c. they can be assisted to write the complaint/grievance. In this case
    - i. note whether the complainant wants the support of a third party
    - ii. ensure the complainant signs and dates the form
    - iii. identify the person assisting in the writing, their role at QCM and signature.
  
3. On receipt of a written complaint/grievance/assessment appeal:
  - a. if the complaint/grievance is not in relation to the Director- forward it to the Director enter it into the secure Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register.
  - b. if the complaint is in relation to the Director- forward it to the CEO enter it into a separate secure Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Register, which is kept separate from the main Register.
  - c. send a prompt written acknowledgement to the complainant.
  - d. provide a written notice of a decision, including the reason for the decision and the process for appealing the decision.

All formal complaints will be heard and decided within 10 working days of the receipt of the written complaint/grievance and the decision communicated to all parties in writing within 5 working days of the decision. All recommendations will be implemented. All records of findings are available to the complainant only.

### Formal appeal procedure

A person dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint/grievance procedure may initiate a 'formal appeal' where an independent person or body independent of and external to QCM Pty Ltd, with appropriate expertise will be appointed to hear the appeal. The person or body will:

- have no personal or professional interest in the outcome of the complaint or appeal,
- have no influence on QCM's policy development or organisational structure,
- be financially and administratively independent of QCM Pty Ltd,

The appellant will be provided with a written notice of the appeal decision including the reasons for the decision and advice about how to have the decision reviewed.

### **External Stage of Procedures**

The external stage of the grievance procedure is available to an appellant seeking a review of the appeal decision.

Each party to a review, may be accompanied or assisted by another person at a cost to the party.

An independent person or body independent of and external to QCM Pty Ltd, with appropriate expertise will be appointed to hear the external appeal. The person or body will:

- have no personal or professional interest in the outcome of the appeal,
- have no influence on QCM's policy development or organisational structure,
- be financially and administratively independent of QCM Pty Ltd,

Written notice of the decision on review will be given to each party, with notice to include the reasons for the decision.

The VET Student Loans Ombudsman will act as the external dispute resolution body to conduct investigations and make recommendations in relation to VET loan assistance and compliance by VET providers with the Act, and any legislative requirements. The Ombudsman will report on its investigations and recommend providers and others take action, or stop certain behaviour, to address identified problems and provide redress to affected students. All recommendations will be implemented by QCM.

### Flow chart of complaint and appeal process

<p><b>Stage 1 – Informal complaint</b></p> <p>An informal complaint can be lodged by speaking directly with a member of staff at QCM. If the student considers the matter is serious the matter can be discussed with the CEO of the College.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2 – Formal complaint</b></p> <p>In the case of the complaint relating to a serious matter a complaint form is to be completed and details of the issue outlined. The matter will be investigated and acted on in 10 days. If no resolution can be met the complaint moves to Stage 3.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3 – Appeal of decision</b></p> <p>If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure, an appeal maybe lodged and the appeal form completed and submitted, detailing the reasons for the appeal. An independent person or body independent of and external to QCM Pty Ltd, with appropriate expertise will be appointed to hear the appeal.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4 – External mediation</b></p> <p>The external stage of the grievance procedure is available to an appellant seeking a review of the appeal decision. The VET Student Loans Ombudsman will act as the external dispute resolution body to conduct investigations and make recommendations in relation to VET loan assistance and compliance by QCM.</p> <p>Written notice of the decision on review will be given to each party, with notice to include the reasons for the decision and recommendations for QCM to implement.</p>