

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS HANDLING**

### **PURPOSE**

The Central Coast Community College understands its obligation to protect the rights of Students and is committed to managing and responding to allegations involving the conduct of our marketing, administration and training and assessment processes, trainers, assessors or other staff or Students and third parties who deliver or market or recruit on our behalf. All complaints will be treated as an opportunity for improvement and contribute to our Quality Assurance and continuous Improvement Strategies.

### **APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all the College programs and services, and those of the College's related entities and to all students.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Feedback** means information about reactions to a product or service, a person's performance of a task, the programs offered and the organisation generally which is used as a basis for improvement.

**Complaint** means any expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation related to its services or service quality, decisions, policies, procedures, charges or fees, staff members, or the complaint handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

**Complainant** means the person making the complaint.

**Grievance** means a matter to be investigated according to formal grievance processes. This includes complaints which are not able to be resolved through informal processes or mediation, and matters relating to allegations of misconduct where disciplinary action against a worker may be an outcome of the investigation.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The College recognises that conflicts, disputes and complaints will occur within the workplace and the training environment between individuals and groups. Students and staff may, from time to time, wish to lodge a complaint about a work or training matter.

The College will manage such complaints sensitively, confidentially and effectively. The matter will be resolved as soon as possible in a way that treats all parties with dignity and respect. Anonymous complaints are not accepted or acted upon.

The College will:

- Inform each person of their right to complain and work with the person, their families and carer to try and resolve the issue.
- Provide a safe environment for each person to make a complaint.

- Ensure that there are no negative consequences or retribution for any person who makes a complaint.
- Support participation in the complaint handling process of any person wanting to make a complaint and work with the person to identify the desired goal.
- Treat each person making a complaint in a manner that protects their privacy and respects confidentiality.
- Provide fair and timely resolution of complaints – initial acknowledgement of complaint provided within two (2) business days.
- Keep each person informed at all stages of the decision-making process concerning their complaint and the reasons for those decisions.
- Inform each person of their right to complain to an external body.
- Define what complaints can be handled under this Policy.
- Ensure concerns and complaints are handled impartially, justly, confidentially and with the appropriate sensitivity.
- Define the responsibilities and rights of all parties.
- Enable the College to respond to its changing environment and adapt any systems, processes and approaches that may be identified as an issue as part of any complaint or complaint process.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Clients may express their complaints:
  - a. in written form, by letter through the mail, facsimile or email.
  - b. verbally, either in person or over the telephone.
  - c. through comments and feedback on surveys, evaluation forms and appraisal forms.
  - d. via a Freedom of Information request.
2. A person's right to complain must be recognised. Staff, trainers/assessors, instructors and support workers will handle and forward complaints to the appropriate personnel as needed. All staff members are empowered to provide information and advice on the complaints handling process. Complaints that are complex or require additional support must be referred to the relevant business manager.
3. A direct approach to the person or group whose actions have given rise to the complaint is to be encouraged. If a person making a complaint is not comfortable making a direct approach, a complaint may be made through the Business Services Manager. If resolution cannot be achieved, the Business Services Manager must refer the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer.
4. Where complaints allege potentially unlawful behaviour, such as illegal discrimination or harassment, they must be reported directly to the Chief Executive Officer.
5. A person who is unsure of how to make a complaint or who is the subject of a complaint can seek advice from the Business Services Manager or the Chief Executive Officer. An advocate may support parties to the complaint at any stage of the complaint process.
6. All complaints will be acknowledged within two (2) business days and will be reviewed and actioned with a view to resolving issues in a supportive environment and within a calendar month.

7. Complaints must be handled confidentially, fairly and justly in a consistent manner, and with the understanding that the complaint process should not disadvantage the complainant.
8. Complaints against College staff be directed to the relevant Manager and all correspondence and assessments will be confidential.
9. Complainants will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint and of the final resolution. If a complainant is not satisfied with the resolution, the College will provide avenues for further review of the complaint.
10. Complaints will be documented on the Complaints and Appeals Register and reviewed as part of the College's commitment to continuous improvement. Formal complaints documentation will be held securely in the Human Resource Manager's Office.
11. A disagreement concerning assessment results does not constitute a valid reason for a complaint unless it is the direct and demonstrable result of interpersonal conflict, a prejudicial relationship, or the inconsistent application of policy or unlawful behaviour.

#### **Complaints and Appeals: Alternative Contacts**

If in the instance of an Appeal or Complaint not being resolved by the above processes, the Student will also be informed of other avenues of complaint. These include:

- NSW Fair Trading for complaints regarding non-training issues such as disputes over refunds or charges.
- The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator with regard to training and assessment delivery. They handle complaints that relate directly to RTO's providing training and assessment processes that do not meet the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.
- Complaints relating to Smart and Skilled programs should be directed to:  
Training Services NSW  
Phone: 1300 772 104  
Email: [enquiries@smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au)  
Online: enquiry/complaints form
- WorkCover is the point of contact for any Work Health and Safety issue, they can be emailed on: [contact@workcover.nsw.gov.au](mailto:contact@workcover.nsw.gov.au)

#### **VARIATIONS**

The College reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Code of Conduct

Policy and Procedure for Assessment Appeals

Policy and Procedure for Privacy and Confidentiality

Policy and Procedure for Continuous Improvement