LEVERAGE ACADEMY

RTO 41017

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

Version 2.0 – March 2026

Version Control

Item	Summary of update	Version	Review date
1	Updated comprehensive Policy and Procedures document created to separate the content outside of the Learners Handbook.	1.0	17/02/2026
2	Further review for improved ease-of-use and correction to minor linguistic errors.	1.1	26/02/2026
3	Difference between feedback and complaints made clearer.	2.0	13/03/2026

Quality area	Student Support; Governance
2025 RTO Standards Alignment	Outcome Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 4.1, 4.4 Compliance Standards 20
Author	Leverage Academy
Status	Approved
Approved by	Bailey Compton
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Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for managing complaints and appeals made against Leverage Academy (the Academy) and its team to ensure the complaints and appeals process meets the 2025 RTO Standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all Academy team members, including trainers and assessors, any contractors or third parties contracted by the Academy, and Academy students.

Policy

Any learner has the right to lodge a complaint or appeal against any decision that they believe is unfair or unjust, or an act of discrimination, harassment, vilification or bullying.

Principles

The Academy's approach to managing complaints is guided by the following principles:

- **Procedural Fairness:** Ensure decisions follow the rules of natural justice, which include:
  - **a)** Ensuring accurate evidence is collected;
  - **b)** Ensuring a fair hearing; and
  - **c)** Ensuring decision-makers are impartial.
- **Efficient and Timely Resolution:** Ensure the complaint is investigated within a timely manner in accordance with the timeframes allocated in this policy.
- **Management of complaints:** Complaints will always be conducted in a fair, unbiased, honest and transparent manner, as quickly as possible and in such a way as to ensure the privacy of all parties.

Procedures

1. Making a Complaint

The first point of contact should be informally with the team member / person concerned, or to the Academy Manager. If the matter cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be provided with the Complaint Form in Appendix A and B of the Learner Handbook made available to all learners on the Academy's website.

A link to the complaint process will be available from the Academy website. The complaint will be saved directly to the Academy's internal *Complaints Register* and securely stored within its quality assurance system (RTOSafe).

For complaints to be resolved efficiently and effectively, they **cannot be anonymous**. Issues can only be resolved in an efficient and timely manner, if details of who is involved are disclosed. A complainant may attend meetings with a support person or representative and may use a translator service if necessary. If the complaint concerns a trainer, then the trainer will cease to teach the course until the complaint is resolved.

2. Investigation

To meet the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, all parties involved will be given the opportunity to present their case or viewpoint on the circumstances leading to the complaint and will be asked to propose a resolution. This may be conducted via face-to-face, by phone, or by video conferencing link face-time, ZOOM). The complainant will not be prejudiced or treated unfairly for raising a complaint.

3. Resolution

Written complaints will be considered by the Academy's CEO, who will either determine the matter, or refer the matter to a suitable person for consultation and arbitration. The outcome, together with the reason for the decision, will be forwarded to the complainant in writing.

Where the complaint relates to the CEO, the person investigating and arbitrating the complaint must be an independent, external person.

The Academy aims to resolve matters and issue a written reply **within 10 business days**. If the complaint is referred to a consultant or adjudicator, every effort will be to ensure that the matter is resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible. Where **more than 60 days** are required to process, and finalise the complaint, Leverage Academy will inform the complainant in writing as to the reason why more than 60 days are required and will provide regular progress updates.

Complaints that have been found to be true and requiring system or procedural changes, are then recorded onto the Academy's *Continuous Improvement Register* for processing and actioning as speedily as possible.

Appeals

1. Making an Appeal

Should the matter not be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant after the complaints procedure has been exhausted, then the individual can make an appeal in writing using the Appeal Form in Appendix B of the *Learner Handbook*. This application to appeal will be recorded on The Academy's *Complaints and Appeals Register*. If the appeal is not received within **seven (7) working days** of the complainant receiving the decision regarding the complaint outcome the matter will be considered closed.

2. Acknowledging the Appeal

The appeal will be acknowledged in writing to all relevant parties.

3. Independent Third-Party and Costs

The complainant will be advised that:

a) An independent adjudicator, mediator or consultant will be sought to consider the nature of the complaint and a possible further resolution.
b) The complainant will share up to 50% of adjudicator costs to be paid in full before the appointment and that the actual total cost will be borne by the losing party.

The selection of the adjudicator will be communicated with the complainant, and the selection must be with the mutual agreement of the complainant.

The Academy Manager will contact the independent adjudicator and provide all documentation related to the formal complaint/appeal and complainant contact details.

Responses from the adjudicator must be dated **within 10 business days** from the date that all formal complaint documentation is provided to the adjudicator, or such longer time as advised in writing by the adjudicator.

On receipt of the formal complaint documentation the adjudicator will contact the Academy's management and Academy team, and the complainant to arrange a suitable time for further discussion pertaining to the formal complaint.

Where **more than 60 days** are required to process and finalise the appeal, the Academy will inform the complainant in writing as to the reason why more than 60 days are required and will provide regular progress updates.

4. Resolution

All Independent Adjudicator Appeal proposed solutions will be final and be reported to the Academy and the complainant in writing and will require immediate implementation by both parties.

Making a Complaint Externally

Complainants retain the ultimate right of complaint to the National Regulator for the Vocational Education and Training industry, ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority). Complaints to ASQA should be made, once all complaints avenues with Leverage Academy have been exhausted. Details about their complaints process can be found on their website: http://www.asqa.gov.au

Privacy and Data Management

All complaints and appeals will be managed with the Academy's *Data Management and Privacy Policy and Procedures*.

Relationship to Other Quality and Feedback Processes

The Academy distinguishes complaints and appeals from other feedback sources while noting that all are used collectively for continuous improvement. Complaints and appeals processes interface with broader quality activities such as internal audits, complaints and appeals analysis, and student outcome data analysis. Insights from these other processes that have an industry relevance are fed back into industry engagement planning and TAS/assessment review.

The Academy takes the view that, although a complaint can provide feedback, feedback does not necessarily create a complaint unless the learner determines to lodge a complaint under this policy. Therefore, learners may provide feedback for the purpose of the Academy's continuous improvement but can choose to not take an aggrievance any further.

Policy Governance

Review

Management must review evidence that complaints have been considered and acted upon. All systems and materials in relation to industry engagement must be reviewed and approved by the CEO and / or Academy Manager before publication to ensure compliance with RTO standards and regulatory requirements.

On-going Compliance and Monitoring

The Academy will regularly monitor its complaints and appeals processes to ensure ongoing compliance and will promptly address any non-compliant practices or areas of improvement identified, and document this in the *Continuous Improvement Register* accordingly. Any non-compliant or weak industry engagement practices

identified through monitoring will result in specific corrective actions with assigned responsibility and timeframes.

Definitions

- **AQF** means Australian Qualification Framework which can be accessed at http://www.aqf.edu.au/
- **ASQA** means Australian Skills Quality Authority, which is the national VET regulator and the RTO's registering body
- **Compliance Standards** refers to the Compliance Standards for National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVR) Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Instrument 2025.
- **Course** means any nationally recognised qualification, unit of competency, skill set or short course in which a student is enrolled with the Academy.
- **Engagement** refers to ongoing interaction with industry stakeholders to gather insights, build partnerships, and validate training and assessment practices.
- **Industry Consultation** refers to the process of seeking input, advice, and feedback from industry stakeholders, including employers, industry bodies, regulatory authorities, and community organisations, to inform the design and delivery of training products.
- **Industry Stakeholders** refers to individuals or organisations with an interest in the training outcomes, including employers, industry associations, regulatory bodies, subject matter experts, and community representatives.
- **Outcome Standards** refers to the Outcome Standards for National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (NVR) Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Instrument 2025.
- **Student Management System (SMS)** refers to a software solution designed to manage all aspects of student data and administrative processes within a training organisation. It streamlines operations, enhances efficiency, and helps RTOs meet compliance requirements.