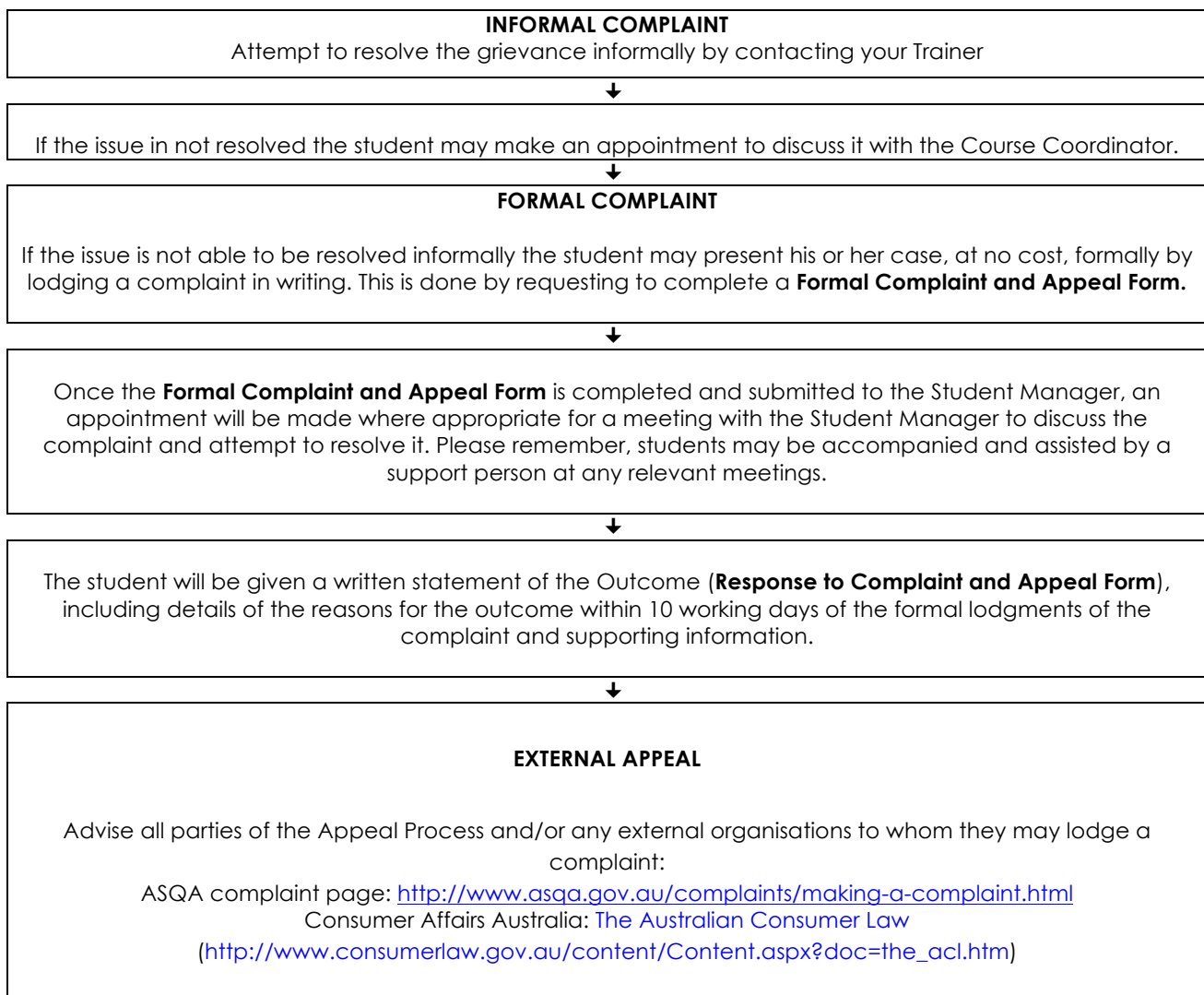


Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

ITHEA has a Complaints and Appeals Procedure to provide students with a fair and equitable process for resolving any disputes or complaints they may have. If the student is dissatisfied with the resolution proposed by the college, the student is advised of the Appeal Process and/or any external organisations to which they may lodge a complaint.

Student Complaint Flowchart

As part of ITHEA's commitment to a positive learning environment, a procedure for complaints and grievances is in place to ensure equitable treatment with a system for appeal. This system is independent, readily accessible and inexpensive for the parties involved.



Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define the system available to students for dealing with complaints and appeals, independent resolution and appellants rights.

Each student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings and has the opportunity to formally present their case at minimal or no cost.

The procedure requires a written record of the complaint or appeal to be kept in the student's Administrative file. The student is also given a written statement of the outcome, including all details of the reasons for the outcome.

2.0 Responsibility

The Student Manager is responsible for implementation of this procedure and ensuring that staff and students are made aware of its application.

3.0 Requirements

1. Students who are concerned about the conduct of ITHEA are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns using this procedure.
2. All prospective students will be provided with information about complaints and appeals before making a contract to enrol and again at course commencement.
3. All complaints and appeals will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution
4. All parties will have a clear understanding of the steps involved in the procedure
5. Students will be provided with details of external authorities they may approach, if required
6. At any stage in the complaint or appeals process students are entitled to have their own support person included in the complaint/appeals/resolution process.
7. All complaints and appeals will be managed fairly and equitably and as efficiently as possible
8. The process will commence within ten (10) working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint or appeal and supporting information. ITHEA will attempt to resolve any complaint or appeal fairly and equitably and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
9. Students may raise any matters of concern relating to training delivery and assessment, the quality of the teaching, student amenities, discrimination, sexual harassment and other issues that may arise.
10. ITHEA will encourage the parties to approach a complaint or appeal with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation. Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, we acknowledge the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties.
11. A student's enrolment must be maintained if the student chooses to access ITHEA's complaints and appeals process and the process is ongoing.
12. If the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, ITHEA must immediately implement any decision and or corrective and preventative action required and then advise the student of the outcome.
13. Nothing in this procedure inhibits student's rights to pursue other legal remedies. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies. Students wishing to take this course of action are advised to:
 - Contact a solicitor **or** Contact the Law Institute of Victoria, 470 Bourke St Melbourne 3000, Ph. 9602 5000 for a referral to a solicitor.

4.0 Definitions

Complaint-Dissatisfaction with a service offered, discrimination or treatment received at ITHEA.

Complainant-Person making the complaint

Appeal-Dissatisfaction with a decision made by ITHEA

Appellant-Person making the appeal

5.0 Method

Each student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings

Informal Complaint Process

1. Any student with a complaint may raise the matter with trainers and coordinators of ITHEA and attempt an informal resolution.
2. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint are encouraged to register a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint Process

3. Should the complaint remain unresolved after informal resolution is attempted then the student should complete a Formal Complaint and Appeal form and contact the Student Manager and arrange a meeting. At this meeting the complaint can be raised and a resolution attempted.
4. At the complaint meeting:
 - The complaint must be recorded in writing and signed and dated by the complainant and the Student Manager
 - The outcome of the complaint meeting and reasons for the decision must be recorded in writing and signed and dated by the complainant and the Student Manager
5. The Student Manager will attempt to resolve the complaint with the student and any other parties who may be involved. The resolution phase must commence within 10 working days of the complaint being lodged. (It should be noted that a maximum time of 20 working days will be allotted in which a resolution can be reached. This will be known as the resolution phase.)
6. Following the complaint meeting and resolution phase, ITHEA must document and convey the decision to the student and act to rectify any substantiated complaint
7. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint meeting then they may institute an internal appeals process by completing the Formal Complaint and Appeal form and indicating that an appeal is being sought.

Appeals

Internal Appeals

8. Internal Appeals may arise from a number of sources including appeals against assessment, appeals against discipline actions and appeals against decisions arising from complaints. The essential nature of an appeal is that it is a request by a student to reconsider a decision made by ITHEA.
9. Students appealing an assessment or RPL outcome will be given the opportunity for reassessment by a different assessor selected by ITHEA. Costs of reassessment will be met by ITHEA. The recorded outcome of the assessment appeal will be most favourable result for the student from either the original assessor or the reassessment.
10. The student's enrolment must be maintained while an internal complaint/appeal is in progress and the outcome has not been determined if the internal complaint or appeal is initiated by the student.
11. The appeal resolution phase must commence within 10 working days of the internal appeal application being lodged.
12. The Appeals panel will comprise two senior staff members not directly involved in the matter and will be convened by the Student Manager within 10 days of the appeal being received.
13. The outcome of the internal appeal and reasons for the outcome will be recorded in writing and signed and dated by the Appeal Panel and placed in the student file.
14. The student is advised in the written outcome advice from their internal appeal that they have 10 working days to access the external appeals process and must advise ITHEA if they intend to do so.
15. Following the internal appeal ITHEA must convey the decision to the student and implement any improvement actions arising from the complaint.

External Appeals

16. If the matter is still unresolved after the above procedures have been implemented and the internal appeals process exhausted, **local** students are advised for an external appeal.
17. The student shall be referred to government agencies such as:
 - Consumer Affairs Australia: [The Australian Consumer Law](http://www.consumerlaw.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=the_acl.htm) (http://www.consumerlaw.gov.au/content/Content.aspx?doc=the_acl.htm)
 - ASQA complaint page: <http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint.html> and this information can be accessed from the Student Manager.Students bear the costs for external appeal.
18. Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student, ITHEA will follow the required action to satisfy the student's complaint as soon as possible.
19. The details of the complaints and appeals, procedures followed and outcome are placed in the student file.