



RTO No 6507

Complaints and Appeals

Policy

- 1.1 If a client has a complaint that they wish to raise with Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) they are encouraged to do so through the Complaints and Appeals procedure. Clients are also encouraged to appeal any CCC decision if they feel they have grounds via the Appeals process as per this policy. This includes assessment and RPL decisions.
- 1.2 Clients may lodge informal and formal complaints. Clients may also access the CCC internal and the external appeals process.
- 1.3 CCC employs a procedure for informal/ formal complaints and internal and external appeals processing/ handling.
- 1.4 All complaints and appeals lodged will be used for continuous improvement purposes.
- 1.5 The CCC Manager is responsible for implementing this policy and reviewing its effectiveness and compliance with regulatory guidelines.
- 1.6 This policy will be implemented in compliance with the requirements of AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration
- 1.7 The following procedure outlines how clients will have their complaints and appeals processed.

Procedure

Informal process - General complaints

- 2.1 Clients are encouraged to approach any member of CCC staff and make an informal complaint about any issue relating to CCC products and services, including training.
- 2.2 Where possible staff members may utilise advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue / complaint. Staff members should try and resolve the issue informally.
- 2.3 Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues.
- 2.4 Staff members should refer clients to the CCC Manager if they feel they cannot or it is not appropriate for them to try and resolve the complaint/ issue.
- 2.5 Staff may ask the client to come back at an arranged time if further investigation is required.
- 2.6 The outcome of the investigation should be communicated to the client within an agreed timescale.
- 2.7 If the complaint is against the CCC Manager, another member of staff should in the first instance be approached to deal with the complaint.
- 2.8 Clients who are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal process should be encouraged to lodge a formal complaint via the process in section 3.
- 2.9 All staff members should record informal complaints and outcomes in the Complaints & Appeals Register for continuous improvement purposes.

Formal process - General Complaints

- 3.1 The client will incur no cost to themselves during the complaints and appeals process unless they seek external representation.
- 3.2 Clients should lodge formal complaints using the Complaints & Appeals form available on the CCC website (with assistance from CCC staff if required).
- 3.3 Complaints & Appeals forms are to be submitted to: CCC Manager, Cheltenham Community Centre, 8 Chesterville Road Cheltenham.
- 3.4 In the instance of complaint being against the CCC Manager, the Complaints & Appeals form should be lodged with the President, Board of Governance via email to board@chelt.com.au
- 3.5 CCC will process the complaint/ appeal within 10 working days of lodgment.
- 3.6 CCC seeks to resolve complaints to clients' satisfaction through ensuring the client has the opportunity to present their case and careful consideration of the evidence. A fair open minded approach along with negotiation and mediation is employed to achieve results.
- 3.7 The CCC Manager will investigate the complaint and liaise with appropriate staff if necessary to ensure all the facts are considered prior to making any decision.
- 3.8 The CCC Manager may delegate the handling of the complaint to an appropriate staff member if appropriate.
- 3.9 The CCC Manager may arrange a meeting with the client during the investigation process if appropriate.
- 3.10 Clients have the right to seek advice from, and be represented by, external parties at any time during the complaints and appeals process. The cost of this will be borne by the client.
- 3.11 The CCC Manager will notify the client in writing of CCC's decision within 3 working days of the decision being made.
- 3.12 Clients are also notified of their right to appeal any decision within 20 working days if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the process.
- 3.13 All formal complaints and outcomes are to be recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- 3.14 If a client's complaint is substantiated through this process the CCC Manager will take immediate corrective action.
- 3.15 All relevant documentation relating to the complaint must be stored in the clients file.
- 3.16 If a client is dissatisfied with CCC's decision regarding the complaint they have the right to appeal the decision via CCC's Appeals Policy. The procedure is outlined below.

Internal appeals process – General appeals

- 4.1 If clients are not satisfied with CCC decisions they may ask CCC to reconsider the decision by lodging an appeal.
- 4.2 Appeals may be made in relation to the following areas:
 - a) The outcome of a formal complaint, or
 - b) The outcome of action being brought against the client for breaching the code of conduct.
- 4.3 Clients must have reasonable grounds for an appeal and include all supporting evidence with the Complaints & Appeals form.
- 4.4 The appeals process will commence within 10 working days of lodgment. The CCC Manager (or delegate) can assist clients with completing the Complaints and Appeal form.
- 4.5 The CCC Manager is not able to assist clients in establishing if they have reasonable grounds for an appeal.
- 4.6 Clients must lodge an appeal within 20 working days of being notified by CCC of any decision they wish to appeal.
- 4.7 Clients may be accompanied by a representative at any meetings during the appeals process, at their own expense.
- 4.8 On receiving a Complaints and Appeals form CCC will arrange a time and venue for a meeting to take place and inform the client in writing.
- 4.9 The meeting shall be attended by the client and representative (if requested), CCC Manager, and one other appropriate member of staff.
- 4.10 During the meeting clients have the opportunity to present their evidence and the CCC will make a decision based on all evidence supplied to date.
- 4.11 At the completion of the internal appeals meeting a written statement of the outcome including reasons and details for the decision will be discussed with the complainant and signed by the complainant and the CCC Manager.
- 4.12 The outcome will be in favour either of CCC or the client.
- 4.13 If the outcome is in favour of the client, the CCC Manager will immediately commence corrective action.
- 4.14 Clients will be sent written notification of the outcome within two working days of the meeting taking place. This will include the outcome including reasons for the decision.
- 4.15 This written notification will also inform the clients that they have the right to access CCC's External Appeal process (if appropriate) and how they go about doing this.
- 4.16 The complaints and appeals register will be updated.
- 4.17 All evidence will be placed in the clients file.
- 4.18 If clients are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeals process they may access the external appeals process. Details of how to activate this process are contained in section 6 of this policy and procedure.

Internal appeals process - Assessments

- 5.1 If a client feels they have been unfairly assessed, or if there were circumstances impacting their performance, they may appeal the assessment decision.
- 5.2 Clients should approach their assessor in this case outlining the reasons for their appeal.
- 5.3 If the assessor feels there are reasonable grounds for the appeal he/ she may decide to re-assess the client.
- 5.4 The assessor should document this process along with the outcome in the complaints and appeals register. All supporting documentation should also be placed in the client's file.
- 5.5 If the assessor decides to refuse the client an opportunity for re-assessment, the client may lodge a formal appeal by submitting a complaints and appeals form. The client must provide reasons for the appeal along with any supporting evidence.
- 5.6 Complaints & Appeals forms are to be submitted to: CCC Manager, CCC, 8 Chesterville Road Cheltenham.
- 5.7 If the appeal is in relation to a decision made by the CCC Manager, the Complaints & Appeals form should be lodged with the President, Board of Governance via email to board@chelt.com.au
- 5.8 If the CCC Manager (or other staff member handling the process) decides that the client's appeal will be upheld, the following will apply.
 - a) The assessment in question will be marked by a different tutor (or by a tutor from another RTO if appropriate and feasible) and the outcome communicated to the client.
 - b) The assessor should document this process along with the outcome in the complaints and appeals register. All supporting documentation should also be placed in the client's file.
 - c) The client will be awarded the grade that gives them the most favourable outcome between the two outcomes.
- 5.9 If the client's appeal is refused, they will be sent written notification of the outcome within five working days of the meeting taking place. This will include the outcome including reasons and details for the decision. The letter will also inform the client of their right to access the external appeals process.
- 5.10 Clients can only appeal an assessment decision once.
- 5.11 If clients are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeals process they may access the external appeals process.
- 5.12 Clients must inform the CCC in writing if they are accessing the external appeals process.

External appeals process

- 6.1 External appeals may only be lodged if a client thinks CCC has not followed its Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure. CCC will pay the costs for the appeal.
- 6.2 External appeals may be lodged by writing to the **Manager, Sandybeach Centre, 2 Sims St, Sandringham VIC 3191.**
- 6.3 Sandybeach Centre will advise the client that in general, the purpose of the external appeals process is to determine whether CCC has followed its internal complaints and appeals policy and procedure.
- 6.4 Sandybeach Centre will not review the evidence or make a decision in place of the one made by CCC.
- 6.5 Sandybeach Centre will provide the complainant and CCC with a written statement of the outcome, including reasons and details for the decision, at the completion of the external appeals process.
- 6.6 If the outcome of the internal or external appeals process results in a decision favouring the client, CCC will immediately implement any corrective action, decision or measures required as indicated in the written response provided by the external appeals body. The client will be advised as to the course of action taken by CCC as per Sandybeach Centre advice.
- 6.7 Within 24 hours of CCC receiving notification from Sandybeach Centre of the decision, the client will be advised of this decision.
- 6.8 The client may access and receive the outcome of only one external appeals process.
- 6.9 All documentation must be placed in the clients file.

Further information

- 7.1 CCC's Complaints and Appeals policy in no way affects the client's right to access consumer affairs legislation and legal representation.
- 7.2 The client also has the right to contact the VET regulator if they are dissatisfied with the complaints and appeals process and lodge a complaint against CCC. Refer contact details below.

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (www.vrqa.vic.gov.au)
Level 6, 35 Spring Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Phone: 03 9537 2806
Email: vrqa@edumail.vic.gov.au

Documents to be employed in conjunction with this policy and procedure:

Complaints and appeals form; Complaints and appeals register
Client files; Client information handbook and Service agreements

Revision History

Date	Revision	Revised by
1/5/12	Created	Chris Donaghy
25/5/13	Edited for accuracy and appropriate terminology	Annella Chambers
27/6/19	Edited and merged with RTO-specific policy	Catriona O'Neill
6/12/19	Updated in consultation with Arna O (incl input from Judith H)	Catriona O'Neill
19/02/19	Reviewed	Catriona O'Neill