



Australian Retail College – A First Impressions Resources Company Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Policy:

The Australian Retail College is committed to providing a high quality education and training service for all students and their employers. In the context of continuous quality improvement, students may raise grievances, complaints and appeals that need to be respectfully managed. This policy provides for the effective and efficient management of grievances, complaints and appeals.

It outlines the procedure to follow to enable a grievance, complaint or an appeal to be managed in an appropriate and timely manner. This policy and its procedure applies to all students including those seeking to enrol in a course with ARC/FIR.

The Australian Retail College values both the positive and negative feedback it receives from students. It considers this feedback as an integral part of continuous quality improvement, and as an opportunity to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its organisation. Issues raised feed back into ARC's approach to training and assessment and overall business operations.

Quality Procedure:

For the purpose of this procedure, the following applies:

An **APPEAL** is where a student is dissatisfied with a competency result decision made by ARC. The student has three months from the original decision in which to lodge an appeal and to have the result reviewed.

A **GRIEVANCE** is a concern that the student may have in regard to the approach to delivery of the course, the enrolment process and any non-result related concerns such as:

- perceived discrimination,
- errors in resources,
- a breakdown in processing a support service provided by ARC

Any of these types of concerns may be brought to the attention of ARC in an informal way such as, but not limited to, verbal comments, conversation and/or email.

A **COMPLAINT** means a formal statement or expression that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. A complaint takes place if a grievance cannot be resolved and a complaint is formally written down for official processing.



AVAILABILITY: This policy is freely available to all students and staff. As most students are based in Industry, public access is made available through FIR's website. Staff can access the same information on Training Central.

TIMELINESS: All grievances, complaints and appeals should be resolved as quickly as possible. The timeframes indicated in these procedures should be followed, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the timeframe is to be exceeded by staff, the student must always be informed of the length of, and the reason for, the delay.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All grievances, complaints and appeals must be treated with appropriate confidentiality at all phases of the procedure. Access to information must be strictly limited to those staff members who have a 'need to know' in order to resolve the grievance, complaint and/or appeal.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS: Procedural fairness, also referred to as natural justice, is concerned with the procedures adopted by ARC in resolving a complaint, grievance or appeal, rather than the decision or outcome reached. It requires that a fair and transparent procedure be used when making a decision. All parties involved in a grievance, a complaint or an appeal must be given the right to be heard, to be treated without bias, and to have evidence-based decisions made.

Australian retail College has a four (4) phase procedure to manage student complaints, grievances and appeals. All students or potential students can access each of the four phases at any time, however, it is strongly recommended that each phase of the procedure is completed before escalating to the next phase.

Phase 1: Informal Discussion

The student is encouraged to raise the grievance directly with the person(s) involved. An informal discussion should take place directly between the relevant person(s) as soon as possible. For example: a grievance about an assessment task should be discussed in the first instance with the trainer. A record of the matter should be recorded on the student's VETtrak file.

If the student has attempted to resolve the issue directly with the relevant person(s) and is not satisfied with the outcome or does not wish to directly approach the person(s) concerned, the student should discuss the grievance with ARC's CEO as soon as possible. The CEO will consider the issue and may suggest a course of action to resolve the issue, or attempt to mediate between the student and the person(s) concerned. The student will be advised in writing of the outcome within ten (10) working days from the time the grievance was raised with the CEO. A record of the discussion and its outcome will be placed on the Continuous Improvement Register.

Refer: Continuous Improvement Register



Phase 2: Formal Complaint

The formal complaint phase involves the student lodging a written complaint. The complaint will be investigated by the CEO.

The student completes a 'grievance, complaint and appeal application' form or submits a letter to the CEO. The CEO logs the complaint on the Continuous Improvement Register.

The student receives written acknowledgment of the complaint within ten (10) working days of their having lodged the complaint. The CEO investigates the complaint and seeks to resolve it within ten (10) working days of it being received from the student. The student receives written notification of the outcome of the investigation within five (5) working days of finalising the complaint investigation.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they can escalate the complaint to phase 3 under this policy.

*Refer: 'Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Application' Form
Continuous Improvement Register*

Phase 3: Internal Review

The student submits a written request for an internal review by letter or using the 'grievance, complaint and appeal application' Form.

The CEO will make a determination based on the information provided, and will provide a written response to the student within ten (10) working days.

This action and the decision made are to be recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register.

*Refer: 'Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Application' Form
Continuous Improvement Register*



Phase 4: External Review.

The external review phase should only be used when the Internal Review processes have been exhausted.

If a student is not satisfied with the result or conduct of the formal complaint investigation and/or internal review, they may then apply for an external review. The external review will be formally investigated by an agent external to ARC, such as the external regulator.

In some states there is a Training Ombudsman and students are to be issued with the relevant contact details for the appropriate party.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to provide the student with an appropriate referral, and relevant contact details.



Student process (in Student handbook)

The Australian Retail College (ARC) is committed to providing a high quality education and training service for all students and their employers. In the context of continuous quality improvement, you are encouraged to raise any issues of concern with ARC and we undertake to manage these respectfully.

These issues will fall into one of the following categories:

- A **Grievance** is a concern that you, as the student, may have in regard to the approach to delivery of the course, the enrolment process and any other non-result related concerns such as:
 - perceived discrimination,
 - errors in resources,
 - a breakdown in processing a support service
- A **Complaint** means a formal statement or expression that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. A complaint takes place if a Grievance cannot be resolved and a complaint is formally written down for official processing.
- An **Appeal** is when a student is dissatisfied with a competency result decision made by ARC. You have three months from the original decision in which to lodge an appeal to have your result reviewed.

Australian Retail College has a four (4) phase procedure to managing student complaints, grievances and appeals. All students and potential students can access each of the four phases at any time, however, it is strongly recommended that each phase of the procedure is completed before escalating to the next phase.

If you need to raise a grievance, complaint or appeal, the following can guide you:



Phase 1

- Raise the grievance directly with person(s) involved. For example, a grievance about an assessment task should be discussed in the first instance with your trainer. This is an informal discussion and an attempt will be made to have it resolved straight away.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome or you do not wish to directly approach the person(s) concerned, please contact our CEO on 1800 644 332 to discuss the issue with them.

Phase 2

- You are required to lodge a written complaint. You can request a copy of our 'Grievance, Complaint and Appeal Application' Form to submit, or send a letter by: email to: enquiries@fir.edu.au
- Post to: ARC Head Office, Brisbane Technology Park, 1 Clunies Ross Crt. Eight Mile Plains QLD 4113
- You will receive acknowledgment of your complaint within 10 working days. We may contact you for further information.
- You will be advised of the outcome within 15 working days.

Phase 3

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome in phase 2 please advise the CEO in writing.
- The matter will be escalated to our CEO for review, and you will receive a response in 10 working days.

Phase 4

- If you are not satisfied with the outcome from phase 3, please let us know in writing and we will advise you of the relevant government bodies responsible for assisting you to take the matter further.

