

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in relation to the process and approach for raising of complaints about academic matters and non-academic matters. This document will clearly set out the policy and procedure, including internal and external stages. It will also encourage the timely resolution of complaints by specifying reasonable periods for each stage of a complaint.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all Q Academy students in all courses and all campuses and/or teaching sites. All courses, programs and delivery methods.

Policy Content

Q Academy will ensure all students have access to fair and equitable processes to for dealing with complaints and provide an avenue for students to appeal against decisions that affect them. Q Academy will have no fees or charges for any process within its control.

Every effort will be made to resolve a student complaint in a manner that promotes natural justice and right of response. This process will include the ability to appeal any decisions previously made and the option to escalate the complaint for review by other parties, especially those independent to the situation or removed from the area of complaint.

Stage 1 - informal Complaint

An informal complaint, such as feedback or seeking advice, can be lodged by speaking directory with any member of staff in the college. This is usually a teacher as students have the most contact with and are most comfortable with the teacher, however any member of staff can help. You will receive a response within 5 working days. Due to the informal nature a student will not be given written notice of outcomes.

This stage is not suitable for a complaint that is serious in nature or the student does not feel comfortable talking to any member of staff. If this is the case a 'Formal Complaint' should be lodged with the Head of Campus.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaint

In the case that the complaint is of a serious nature or allegation of misconduct, a formal complaint must be lodged directly to the head of campus. You will be asked to fill in a complaint form and explain the complaint with sufficient factual detail.

In the case of an inter-student complaint we will need sufficient evidence. Supporting evidence or information supplied by an independent party is also preferable in the case it is one parties word against another. As a process of natural justice both parties will be given the ability to put forward their views. Any correspondence after lodging the complaint should be with the Head of campus in writing via email.

Q Academy takes any complaints or claims of misconduct very seriously. We will investigate and act on any claims within 5 working days. We will endeavour to work towards a resolution within 20 working days. Written notice of the decision or outcome will be given to the complainant, with the following information;

- the reasons for the decision
- if applicable, advice about how to appeal the decision

Stage 3 - Appeal of decision

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint procedure you may lodge an appeal. This should be lodged within 20 days of being notified of the outcome to the original complaint.

Complete the complaint form, selecting 'appeal' and submit to the head of campus. In the appeal you must detail reasons for the appeal to be valid. We would recommend further information to support the original claim or information that supports independent judgement that was not presented in the original complaint.

This will be reviewed by a panel that can at least 3 of the following people;

- Director of the company
- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Compliance manager
- Head of campus from a location removed from location of students complaint
- Senior representative from the teaching team removed from location of students complaint
- Team member from administration removed from location of students complaint

You will be notified of a decision within 30 working days with a written notice of a decision on the formal complaint to be given which will include;

- the reasons for the decision
- advice about how to have the decision reviewed by external mediation

Stage 4 - External mediation

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, then you can submit a written request for an independent external review of the decision. This written request will be sent to the person who informed you of the outcome of the appeal.

This process is mediated by an appropriate external and independent person or body with appropriate expertise. If required the each party to this stage of the procedure can be accompanied or assisted by another person, such as legal representation, at that party's own cost.

Due to the use of external parties and uncontrollable nature of the review process a reasonable time-frame is quoted as within 60 days, however is outside the direct control of Q Academy. Written notice of the decision on review to be given to each party, with the notice to include the reasons for the decision.

Timeframes

Complaint time-frames are listed in each stage as a guide and are subject to the information being presented in a clear and consistent manner. If any of the parties are not contactable or extenuating circumstances exist, the times quoted could be extended. For each stage of the complaint the total process should be resolved and finalised within 60 days unless further written notice is provided to the complainant.

Forms

A formal complaint from a student can be submitted at any time using a “QA Complaint form”. The process for resolution and escalation can be viewed “Q Academy Complaint Flow Chart”. These are available for download from: <http://www.qacademy.com.au/Policies.php>

Record keeping and confidentiality

Records of the complaint will be stored on the student files and maintained within the scope of existing education privacy laws. No details can be released without written permission from all parties involved unless so directed by a Court of Law or the Department of Education.