

# COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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## RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensuring Compliance	Chief Executive Officer
Directly Responsible	Quality Management Committee headed by the Compliance Manager
Adhering to Policy	All Envirotech Education Personnel

## SCOPE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide information and outline the determination for proceeding with an academic and/or non-academic complaint with Envirotech Education. Envirotech Education is committed to providing an effective, efficient, timely, fair, and confidential academic complaint and non-academic complaint handling procedures for all students.

## GOVERNING STANDARDS

- ASQA Standards for Registered Training and Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- VET Student Loans Rules 2016
- VET Student Loans Act 2016

Definitions:

Academic Complaints	Complaints relating to those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a VET course of study.
Non-academic Complaints	Complaints relating to those matters which do not relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a course and include complaints in relation to personal information that Envirotech holds in relation to the student.  Non-academic complaints come from decisions made by Envirotech. Non-academic complaints cover issues such as harassment, vilification, discrimination, financial matters, fines and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities.
Complainant	Students who have lodged an academic complaint with Envirotech Education.
Respondent	The person or committee whose decision on an academic or non-academic matter is the subject of the student complaint

Quality Management Committee	QMC includes the Senior Management and Compliance Manager
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## PROCEDURE

### Informal Complaint Procedure

Students should first address their issues directly with their assigned Trainer or Online Academic Support staff to resolve any issues of concern. If a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached, the student can then approach the Student Registrar.

During this stage the Trainer, Online Academic Support staff and the Student Registrar are responsible to find an immediate resolution if possible.

If no resolution can be found or a consultation regarding compliance standards are required, the students have the option to lodge a formal complaint.

### Formal Complaint Procedure

#### Step 1 – Formal Complaint

##### A - Academic related

1A: Formal academic grievances should be submitted using the Complaints and Appeals Form on Envirotech’s website and include any supporting documentation (if applicable).

2A: The complainant will receive notification in writing of acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint within one to three business days from the Student Registrar.

3A: Upon receiving written notification with supporting evidence, the Compliance Manager immediately logs the complaint in the grievance/complaint register and forwards it to the Academic Manager.

4A: Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Academic Manager will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or Trainer/Assessor/staff members if further information is required. The Academic Manager shall render a decision on the matter within **20 working days** of the complaint being lodged and advise the student and Trainer/Assessor/staff members (as applicable) in writing the actions/plans and details of the

reasons for the outcome. A copy of written outcome is forwarded to the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER and the Compliance Department.

## B - Non-Academic related

1B: Formal non-academic grievances should be submitted using the Complaints and Appeals Form on Envirotech's website and include any supporting documentation (if applicable).

2B: The complainant will receive notification in writing of acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint within one to three business days from the Student Registrar.

3B: Upon receiving written notification with supporting evidence, the Compliance Manager immediately logs the complaint in the grievance/complaint register and forwards it to the relevant Departmental Manager.

4B: Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Departmental Manager will consider the information provided and may contact the student and/or Trainer/Assessor/staff members if further information is required. The Departmental Manager shall render a decision on the matter within **20 working days** of the complaint being lodged and advise the student and Trainer/Assessor/staff members (as applicable) in writing the actions/plans and details of the reasons for the outcome. A copy of written outcome is forwarded to the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER and the Compliance Department.

If the outcome is in favour of the student, Envirotech immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the student will choose either to withdraw the complaint or proceed further. If the student proceeds, he/she must, **within 5 working days** of the written outcome, request the complaint be referred to the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER and the Quality Management Committee.

The Quality Management Committee refers the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer by the next working day. If the student does not proceed and withdraws the complaint, the Quality Management Committee proceeds with Envirotech's decision.

## Step 2 – Internal Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One they may lodge an appeal in writing with the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER using the Complaints and Appeals Form on Envirotech's website.

The complainant's appeal will be determined by the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER of ETEA.

The CEO/GENERAL MANAGER will conduct all necessary consultations with the complainant and other relevant persons and determine the decision of the appeal. The complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision, within **10 working days of receipt of the appeal.**

Should a decision not be reached within 10 working days, the complainant will be advised in writing of all matters relating to the progression of the appeal.

If the outcome is in favour of the student, Envirotech will immediately implement any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences the continuous improvement process.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, the student can choose either to withdraw the appeal or access an independent external appeal process conducted by the Ombudsman or the VET Student Loans Ombudsman. If the student proceeds, he/she must, **within 7 working days** of the written outcome, file an appeal with the relevant body.

If the student does not proceed and withdraws the complaint, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER proceeds with Envirotech's decision

### Step 3 – External Appeal

The Ombudsman is an external independent mediator that offers free service for learners who want to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by Envirotech.

#### For international students:

Overseas Learners Ombudsman (OSO):

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Call: 1300 362 072\* within Australia. Outside Australia call +61 2 6276 0111.

Enquiries: 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, Australian Eastern Standard Time (Australian Eastern Daylight Time when daylight savings is in effect)

Fax: 02 6276 0123 within Australia. Outside Australia +61 2 6276 0123.

Postal: GPO Box 442 Canberra ACT 2601

#### For Domestic Students

Domestic Learners Ombudsman:

<http://trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au/> or phone 1800 773 048 for more information

#### For VET Student Loans

The VET Student Loans Ombudsman can investigate complaints from students regarding the VET Student Loans program and VET FEE-HELP scheme. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two regarding an issue with VET Student Loans or VET FEE-HELP he/she may request that the matter be referred to the VET Student Loans Ombudsman on 1300 362 072.

*Note: Students with VET Student Loans are provided 28 days to access the appeals process before the cancellation of their enrolment.*

If the outcome of the external appeal process is in favour of the student, Envirotech immediately implements any decision or corrective/preventative actions required and commences continuous improvement process. Quality Management Committee keeps a record of the appeal as evidence and advise the student of the outcome in writing.

If the outcome is not in favour of the student, Quality Management Committee proceeds with the Envirotech's decision and keeps a record in the student management system.

If more than 60 days is required to finalise the issue, Envirotech will keep the complainant informed in writing and provide further regular updates in writing.

## General Guidelines

General principles applying to all stages of this Complaints and Appeals Procedure which will be adhered to by Envirotech Education are:

1. The complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure.
2. The complainant and the respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if required.
3. The complainant and the respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.
4. At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complaints, grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the complainant and/or the respondent.

5. Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored within the secure Sharepoint folder of the CEO/GENERAL MANAGER.
6. The complainant shall have appropriate access to these records.
7. The Quality Management Committee is responsible for maintaining/updating the complaints register.
8. A complainant shall have access to this internal grievance procedure and external grievance procedure without charge.
9. A complainant may contact Envirotech Education and speak with the relevant Program Manager for progress updates at any time.
10. If Envirotech considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise student complaint or appeal, the school will inform student in writing the reasons as why more than 60 calendar days are required and will regularly update student on the progress of the matter.
11. Nothing in this policy and procedure inhibits student's rights to pursue other legal remedies under Federal or State law. Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to other legal remedies.
12. Envirotech will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process are ongoing.
13. Complainant must also enrol his/her course and follow the set academic progress policy and ensure he/she is updated with tuition fees during the complaint and/or appeal process
14. The student will have access and receive the outcome of only one external appeal process before the Envirotech may report the student to the relevant authorities. Hence the College does not have to await the outcome of multiple external appeals processes which the student may wish to access.

### Withdrawal of Grievance/Complaint or Appeal

The student may withdraw a grievance/complaint or appeal at any time during the resolution process. The student must make the withdrawal in writing and submit it to the relevant staff member. Alternatively, the student may send an email to the relevant staff member using his/her email address that is registered with Envirotech.

The Quality Management Committee will send a written acknowledgement of the withdrawal to the student. The matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved.