

PURPOSE

Australian Child Care Career Options (ACCCO) believes that complaints and appeals handling is a fundamental component contributing to the provision of a quality service. This policy provides clear and practical guidelines to ensure that complaints and appeals can be resolved equitably and efficiently, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. This policy covers student complaints and appeals for domestic and international students.

SCOPE

This complaints and appeals policy and procedure will manage allegations involving the conduct of:

- ACCCO and its personnel
- ACCCO stakeholders
- Third parties providing services on behalf of ACCCO
- Students of ACCCO
- ACCCO's education agents

DEFINITIONS

Complaint	Any expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service
Grievance	A complaint that is not able to be resolved through informal processes and is required to be investigated under the formal grievance process.
Appeal	A request for a reconsideration or reversal of a decision
Complainant	The person or entity making a complaint
Appellant	The person or entity making an appeal

POLICY STATEMENT

ACCCO believes that a person, who has a complaint or appeal, has the right to raise the complaint or appeal and expect that every effort will be made to resolve it in accordance with this policy, and without prejudice or fear of reprisal or victimisation.

POLICY

A person has the right to present a complaint or appeal informally or formally. ACCCO will manage all complaints and appeals equitably and as efficiently as possible.

ACCCO will encourage the parties to approach the complaint or appeal with an open mind, and to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.

ACCCO seeks to prevent complaints by ensuring high levels of satisfaction with its training and assessment, its performance as an RTO and with its public image. If a complaint should arise, all staff are expected to be

fair, courteous and helpful in all dealings with the person making the complaint or lodging the appeal, and to assist or refer where they can.

Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, ACCCO acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent person/party to mediate. The parties involved will be given the opportunity to formally present their case.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints/appeals. ACCCO seeks to protect the rights and privacy of all involved, and to facilitate the return to a comfortable and productive learning environment.

COMPLAINTS

ACCCO uses the following steps for processing a complaint.

1. Raise the complaint
2. Attempt informal resolution
3. Escalate the complaint
4. Grievance investigation
5. Grievance outcome

RAISE THE COMPLAINT

Where a person has experienced dissatisfaction with a service or product, they should raise a complaint with ACCCO to resolve the matter. Complaints can be raised:

- in person
- in writing
- over the phone

It is recommended that when a person raises a complaint, they provide the following information to assist in resolving the matter as equitably and efficiently as possible.

1. The nature of the complaint
2. The complainant's name and their contact email address
3. Any other parties that may be involved
4. The expected outcome in resolving the matter

When raising a complaint, it should be noted that on the spot resolution of the complaint is not often possible. To ensure an equitable outcome is reached for the complainant and other parties involved, it is necessary to ensure a matter is considered fully before resolution is made.

Where a person would like to make a formal complaint (grievance), they must raise it in writing only.

IN PERSON

A person can raise a complaint in person by attending one of ACCCO's offices and providing the details of the complaint to a staff member.

The ACCCO staff member who initially receives the complaint will record the details of the complaint and pass the information on to the national training manager.

IN WRITING

A person can raise a complaint in writing using one of these options:

- Via the contact us page on the ACCCO website <http://www.accco.com.au/contact-us/>
- By sending an email to info@accco.com.au
- By posting in the complaint to PO Box 1108, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

OVER THE PHONE

Complaints can be raised over the phone by calling 1300 139 406

The ACCCO staff member who initially receives the complaint will record the details of the complaint and pass the information on to a member of the management team.

Where a member of the management team is available to take the phone call, it shall be transferred to them to attempt informal resolution.

ATTEMPT INFORMAL RESOLUTION

When a complaint is received, the national training manager will contact the parties involved and attempt to resolve the matter informally via verbal discussion.

Informal resolution may involve:

- Parties involved coming to an agreement and resolution about the matter
- Provision of a replacement product or service
- Refund or partial refund of fees

Where a complaint is resolved informally there is no requirement to record the complaint in the complaints and appeals register.

ESCALATE THE COMPLAINT

Where the complaint cannot be resolved informally or is of such a significant nature that it requires investigation the complaint shall be escalated to a grievance.

Alternatively, a person may choose to raise a formal complaint (grievance) with ACCCO and skip the informal resolution process.

When a grievance is received the details of the matter shall be recorded in the complaints and appeals register. Required information includes:

1. The nature of the grievance
2. The complainant's name and their contact email address
3. Any other parties that may be involved
4. The expected outcome in resolving the matter
5. Details of attempts made at informal resolution

Written notification that a grievance has been received shall be given to the complainant via email within five (5) working days.

The national training manager shall lead an investigation into the grievance and attempt formal resolution.

GRIEVANCE INVESTIGATION

The following steps shall be used in conducting the investigation into the grievance.

- Contact the complainant and other parties involved to collect further information and provide an opportunity to present their case. Where the complainant would like to meet and present their case, they may do so at an arranged time and place. The complainant may be accompanied by and assisted by a support person at the meeting.
- If applicable, coordinate discussion between the various parties involved
- If applicable, seek advice from third party experts
- Review the matter considering the details provided, applicable ACCCO policies and the cases presented by the parties involved.
- Decide on the outcome of the grievance, including what actions will be taken in resolution of the matter

GRIEVANCE OUTCOME

Written notification of the outcome of the investigation will be given to the complainant within 5 working days of the investigation being concluded. The notification will include the following:

1. Outcome of the investigation
2. Detailed reasons for the outcome
3. A list of actions required from the parties involved

Required actions may include:

- Parties involved coming to an informal agreement and resolution about the matter
- Provision of a replacement product or service
- Refund or partial refund of fees

- Other action as determined by the investigation

Details of the investigation and decision outcome shall be recorded in the complaints and appeals register.

Where the complainant does not agree with the outcome decision, they have the right to appeal the decision. The complainant should follow the appeals process outlined below.

APPEALS

ACCCO's appeals process allows a person to contest a decision made by ACCCO and request reconsideration or reversal of the decision. A person may wish to make an appeal against decisions ACCCO might make on:

- Assessment outcomes
- Grievance outcomes
- Other matters

The following steps are used for appeals.

1. Submit an appeal
2. Investigate appeal internally
3. Appeal decision made
4. External appeals process

SUBMIT AN APPEAL

A person must submit an appeal in writing either by

- Completing the Contact Us form on the ACCCO website <http://www.accco.com.au/contact-us/>
- Sending an email to info@accco.com.au
- Posting in the appeal to PO Box 1108, Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006

When submitting an appeal, a person should include the following information:

- A description of the decision that ACCCO has made that is being appealed
- The nature of the appeal and the justification for making it
- Any additional evidence that the appellant would like considered in review of the appeal
- The appellant's expected outcome

Received appeals shall be passed on to the national training manager.

Details of the appeal shall be recorded in the complaints and appeals register. Required information includes:

1. The appellant's name and their contact email address
2. The nature and justification of the appeal
3. Any additional evidence that needs to be considered
4. Any other parties that may be involved
5. The expected outcome in resolving the matter

Written notification that an appeal has been received shall be given to the appellant via email within five (5) working days.

The national training manager shall lead an investigation into the appeal.

INVESTIGATE APPEAL INTERNALLY

The following steps shall be used in conducting the investigation into the appeal

- Contact the complainant and other parties involved to collect further information and provide an opportunity to present their case. Where the complainant would like to meet and present their case, they may do so at an arranged time and place. The complainant may be accompanied by and assisted by a support person at the meeting.
- Review of additional evidence provided by appellant
- If applicable, seek advice from third party experts
- Review the matter considering the details provided, applicable ACCCO policies and the cases presented by the parties involved.
- Decide on the outcome of the appeal, including what actions will be taken in resolution of the matter

APPEAL DECISION

Written notification of the outcome of the investigation will be given to the appellant within 5 working days of the investigation being concluded. The notification will include the following:

1. Outcome of the investigation
2. Detailed reasons for the outcome
3. A list of actions required from the parties involved
4. Contact details of external agencies where the appellant can access an external appeals process

Details of the investigation and decision outcome shall be recorded in the complaints and appeals register.

Where the appellant does not agree with the outcome decision, there is provision for appeal through an external appeal process.

EXTERNAL APPEAL PROCESS

Students have the right to an external appeals process. Contact details for external agencies that students can seek advice from are below.

QLD Training Ombudsman - <https://trainingombudsman.qld.gov.au/>

SA Training Advocate - <http://www.trainingadvocate.sa.gov.au/>

ASQA Complaint Handling - <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

National training complaints hotline - <https://www.employment.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline>

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Commonwealth Ombudsman - <https://www.ombudsman.gov.au/>

SUCCESSFUL EXTERNAL APPEAL

If an external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, ACCCO will accept the decision and the recommended actions resulting from the decision. ACCCO will notify the student of the action taken as a result of the decision.