

PAX-S03 Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy

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Version Number: 1.0

Person Responsible for Implementation: Administration Manager, Compliance Manager, CEO

Effective Date: 1 July 2025

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Relevant Standards:

- Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025: Standards 2.7, 2.8
- National Code 2018: Standards 3, 6, 7, 9, 10
- ESOS Act 2000

Purpose

This policy outlines PAX Institute of Education's approach to collecting, managing, and responding to feedback, complaints and appeals from students, stakeholders, and the community. It ensures that all feedback and complaints are handled fairly, transparently, and contribute to continuous improvement of our services and operations, supporting compliance with Outcome Standards 2.7 and 2.8 of the Standards for RTOs 2025.

Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective students at PAX Institute, including domestic and international students and all other stakeholders.

It covers feedback, complaints and appeals related to PAX Institute, its staff, education agents, third parties, and any other stakeholders that engage with students during their enrolment with PAX Institute. This policy applies to all modes of delivery and all training products on PAX Institute's scope of registration.

Definitions

Feedback: Information provided by students, employers, staff, or other stakeholders about PAX Institute's services, operations, or performance that may be used for improvement purposes.

Complaint: A formal expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of PAX Institute's services, operations, staff conduct, third party arrangements, or any decision that affects a student or stakeholder.

Appeal: A formal request to review an adverse decision or unfavourable outcome that has arisen from administrative, academic, or disciplinary processes where the decision adversely affects the student.

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Grievance: A concern about academic matters, perceived discrimination, a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility or a support service provided by PAX Institute, which the student brings to the attention of PAX Institute in an informal way.

Complainant: A person lodging a complaint or providing feedback.

Appellant: A person lodging an appeal.

Respondent: A person responding to a complaint or appeal.

Final Decision: A decision made by the member of staff authorised by the CEO and communicated to the complainant/appellant in writing when all internal appeal avenues within PAX Institute's policies and procedures have been exhausted.

External Appeal: An appeal to an external agency against a final decision of PAX Institute, including the Overseas Students Ombudsman, the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV), or other relevant bodies.

Policy Statements

PAX Institute is committed to ensuring that current and prospective students are given access to effective, fair, and transparent feedback collection, complaints resolution, and appeals processes. We actively seek feedback from all stakeholders to enhance our services and address concerns promptly and professionally.

Feedback Collection and Management

PAX Institute systematically collects feedback through multiple accessible channels to inform continuous improvement:

- Anonymous feedback via QR codes available on our website and prominently displayed throughout campus facilities
- AQTF Learner Engagement surveys conducted by Academic Officers during each academic term for all classes
- Employer satisfaction surveys conducted biannually
- Confidential individual or class interviews conducted by Academic Officers or members of management with trainers absent from the room
- Informal feedback during classes, meetings, and student interactions
- Written feedback submissions through email, letters, or online forms

All feedback is documented in dedicated survey records spreadsheets monitored by the QA team, analysed for trends and improvement opportunities, and used to inform our Continuous Improvement Register.

Feedback is discussed in management meetings with the CEO to determine appropriate actions if need be.

Complaints Management System

PAX Institute operates a comprehensive complaints management system ensuring that students have access to free, effective and fair complaints resolution processes. The system:

- Allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organization
- Ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness throughout the process
- Identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints
- Provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved internally
- Maintains confidentiality while ensuring thorough investigation
- Documents all outcomes and communicates results to all parties involved

Students and stakeholders may raise complaints about any matters of concern including:

- Training delivery and assessment quality
- Student amenities and support services
- Discrimination, sexual harassment, or unfair treatment
- Staff conduct and professionalism
- Administrative processes and decisions
- Third party services including education agents
- Fees, refunds, and financial matters
- Any other issues that may arise during their association with PAX Institute

Appeals Management System

PAX Institute provides an effective appeals management system that allows students to appeal decisions where those decisions adversely affect the student. The system:

- Allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organization
- Ensures all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness
- Specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals
- Provides avenues for review by an independent party, if requested by the appellant at no or low cost to the appellant
- Maintains student enrolment during the appeals process until final resolution
- Uses appeal outcomes to inform continuous improvement

Students may lodge appeals against decisions including:

- Assessment results and academic decisions including RPL outcomes
- Disciplinary actions and sanctions
- Refund decisions
- Deferment, suspension, or cancellation decisions
- Intention to Report (ITR) for non-satisfactory course progress
- Education agent termination decisions
- Any administrative decision that adversely affects the student

Procedures

1. Feedback Collection and Processing

Proactive Feedback Collection:

- QR codes linking to anonymous feedback forms are prominently displayed throughout campus and accessible via the PAX website. QA or CEO monitors the spreadsheet of feedback at least monthly. Input in the spreadsheet informs further actions items inclusive of Continuous Improvement action items.
- Academic Officers conduct confidential surveys each academic term with trainers required to leave the room during collection
- Survey responses are recorded in dedicated spreadsheets monitored by the QA team
- AQTF Learner engagement surveys and employer satisfaction surveys are systematically distributed and collected each academic term. Each academic officer will follow the process as below:

Step 1 – Notify the Trainer

Advise the trainer in advance that an Academic Officer will require their class for approximately 30–45 minutes. The trainer must remain outside the classroom while the survey is conducted.

Step 2 – Distribute Surveys

Provide each student with a copy of the feedback form and ask them to complete it.

Step 3 – Conduct a Group Discussion

Once the forms are collected, have a relaxed conversation with the group to seek additional feedback. This may include comments on both academic and non-academic matters. Emphasise that all feedback is confidential and that students may request a follow-up with senior management if they prefer, including confidential discussions.

Step 4 – Record and Share Notes

Summarise the key points raised in the discussion for each class and email these notes to me.

Step 5 – Arrange Follow-Up if Needed

If required, organise a suitable time for the QA Manager or CEO to meet with students to discuss issues further.

Step 6 – Remind Students of Ongoing Feedback Options

Always remind students that they can provide feedback at any time using the QR code system. This is confidential, and only members of senior management can access the content.

Step 7 – File and Record Survey Data

After completing the session:

- Scan all completed feedback forms and save them in the correct folder for the relevant month.
- Update the spreadsheet with details of the batch, number of surveys collected, and a summary of verbal feedback.

- **Step 8 – QA Review and Continuous Improvement**

Each term, the QA Manager will:

- Review the collected feedback.
- Record relevant input in the Continuous Improvement Register (CIR).
- Arrange meetings with the CEO, classes, students, or staff if necessary.
- Share consolidated feedback with trainers and students, ensuring confidentiality, so staff can identify opportunities for improvement or changes required.

- **Step 9 – Action Items**

Where feedback items are recorded in the CIR Register, appropriate action items will be identified and carried out by the relevant staff members.

- Informal feedback from classroom discussions and student interactions is captured and documented

Feedback Processing:

- All feedback is reviewed by the CEO and QA team (at least monthly) and Administration Manager (when received)
- Feedback requiring immediate attention is escalated to the CEO within 24 hours
- Trends and systemic issues are identified through regular analysis and discussion with the CEO
- Feedback outcomes inform Continuous Improvement Register action items
- Stakeholders are acknowledged for their feedback and informed of improvements where appropriate

2. Complaints Management Process

Informal Complaint Resolution:

- Students are encouraged to raise matters informally with their trainer or Student Support Officer
- Informal complaints will not be kept on student files unless requested by the student
- If informal complaints raise matters of importance, they will be documented while protecting student privacy where possible

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- If complaints cannot be resolved informally, students are advised to lodge a formal complaint

Formal Complaint Process:

Step 1: Complaint Lodgement

- Complaints can be lodged in writing, by email, or in person with any PAX staff member
- Students should preferably lodge complaints with the Student Support Officer initially
- Students must lodge complaints with only one staff member to avoid duplication
- The Complaints and Appeals Form is available on the PAX website and from reception

Step 2: Acknowledgment and Registration

- **Administration Manager confirms receipt of complaints in writing within 3 working days**
- Each complaint is assigned a unique reference and entered in the Complaints and Appeals Register
- Complainants are provided with information about the process, timeframes, and support available

Step 3: Investigation and Resolution

- **Investigation process commences within 10 working days of formal lodgement**
- Administration Manager coordinates investigations with relevant staff
- Only PAX Institute staff authorised by the CEO can respond to complaints
- All evidence is collected and reviewed while maintaining confidentiality
- Student Support Officer assistance is sought if student welfare is a concern
- Administration Manager discusses outcomes with the CEO to reach decisions

Step 4: Outcome Communication

- Complainants are advised of decisions in writing by the Administration Manager
- **All outcomes are notified within 7 working days from the date of resolution**
- If more than 60 calendar days are required, PAX will inform complainants in writing with reasons and provide regular progress updates
- If decisions are not accepted, internal or external mediation options are explained

3. Appeals Management Process

Appeals Committee Structure:

PAX Institute maintains an Appeals Committee comprising at least three senior staff members:

- CEO
- Administration Manager
- Quality and Compliance Manager
- Academic Officers or trainer and assessors where applicable/ required

Internal Appeal Process:

Step 1: Appeal Lodgement

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- Appeals must be initiated using the Complaints and Appeals Form available on the PAX website
- Students wishing to appeal Intention to Report decisions must lodge appeals within 20 working days
- Other appeals should be lodged within reasonable timeframes as specified in relevant policies
- Academic Officers assist students in completing appeal forms where required

Step 2: Informal Resolution Attempt

- PAX will attempt to resolve appeals informally once lodged
- If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the formal appeals process commences
- Student enrolment is maintained throughout the appeal process

Step 3: Formal Appeal Review

- Resolution phase commences within 10 working days of written appeal lodgement
- **Maximum of 10 working days allowed for resolution** unless all parties agree in writing to extend
- Appeals are conducted by a panel of independent members chaired by the Director of Operations
- Students have the opportunity to present their case in person or in writing at no cost
- Students may be accompanied by a support person at any relevant meetings
- For assessment appeals, students are offered reassessment by a different assessor with costs met by PAX

Step 4: Appeal Decision

- Written outcomes include detailed reasoning and any corrective actions required
- Decisions are recorded in writing, signed and dated by the student and PAX representatives
- Students receive copies of all signed documentation
- If appeals are successful, PAX immediately implements decisions as conveyed
- Appeal outcomes and reasons are placed in student files and the Complaints and Appeals Register

External Appeal Options:

For International Students:

- Overseas Students Ombudsman at www.oso.gov.au or phone 1300 362 072
- Free and independent service for overseas students with complaints or external appeals
- PAX Institute agrees to be bound by Ombudsman recommendations

For All Students:

- Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) at www.disputes.vic.gov.au
- Mediation services for dispute resolution
- Students may bear costs for external appeal processes
- PAX will assist students in accessing external mediation where appropriate

4. Academic Review Process

Students dissatisfied with assessment outcomes should first discuss concerns informally with their Trainer/Assessor. If unresolved:

- Formal academic review requests must be submitted in writing to the Administration Manager **within 10 working days** of receiving the result
- Requests must outline reasons for requesting the review
- Administration Manager appoints an independent and impartial educator to investigate
- Director of Operations makes final decisions on formal academic reviews
- **All parties are advised in writing of outcomes and reasons within 10 working days**
- Successful reviews result in amended academic results
- Students may access the appeals procedure if academic reviews are not upheld

5. Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance

- All complaints, appeals, and feedback are used to inform continuous improvement
- Systemic issues are reported to relevant management meetings for improvement action
- PAX maintains the Complaints and Appeals Register for quality and continuous improvement purposes
- If complaints are received via ASQA, the CEO is informed immediately with resolution within ASQA timeframes
- Changes to policies, procedures, or services are implemented based on feedback and complaint outcomes
- Regular analysis identifies trends requiring organisational attention

Complaint, and Feedback Referral Guide

Who has received	How	When	Refer to
Academic team (Trainer and assessor)	Formal or informal through QR Code, meetings, phone calls, emails, or any other means	As occurs	Academic Team refers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance Manager if relevant to Administration Manager - Administration Manager in all other matters
Academic officers	Formal or informal through QR Code, meetings, phone calls, emails, or any other means	As occurs	Academic officers refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance Manager if relevant to Administration Manager

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Who has received	How	When	Refer to
			- Administration Manager in all other matters
Feedback provided by external stakeholders	Formal or informal through QR Code, meetings, phone calls, emails, or any other means	As occurs	Refer to - Compliance Manager/ CEO

Monitoring Mechanism Summary Table

What is Monitored	How	Frequency	Responsible
Feedback collection effectiveness	QR code analytics, survey response rates	Monthly	QA Team
Complaint acknowledgment timeframes	Complaints Register review	Weekly	Administration Manager
Complaint resolution timeframes	Case tracking against 7-day target	Weekly	Administration Manager
Appeal processing timeframes	Appeals Register monitoring	Weekly	Administration Manager
Stakeholder satisfaction	Survey analysis and trend identification	Each term	QA Team, CEO
Continuous improvement actions	CI Register review and CEO discussions	Monthly	Administration Manager, QA, CEO
Third party complaint escalation	Agent agreement compliance	As occurs	Marketing Team
External appeal outcomes	Independent body recommendations	As required	CEO
Academic review processing	Review case tracking	Per case	QA
Staff training on complaint handling	Training record maintenance	Annually	Administration Manager, QA, CEO
Student feedback collection & surveys	Confidential surveys and class interviews	Each term	Academic Officers, Student

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What is Monitored	How	Frequency	Responsible
			Academic/Support Officers
Appeals Committee meetings	Review and resolve appeals	As required	Appeal Committee members
appeals against Administration Manager decisions	Review and resolve appeals	As required	QA/ CEO
managing external review body communications	managing external review body communications	As required	QA/ CEO

Timeframes Summary Table

Process / Item	Timeframe Specified	Responsible Position(s)
Complaint acknowledgment	Within 3 working days of lodgement	Training & Administration Manager
Investigation commencement (complaints)	Within 10 working days of formal lodgement	Training & Administration Manager
Outcome communication (complaints)	Within 7 working days of resolution	Training & Administration Manager
Long complaint investigations	If >60 calendar days required, student notified with reasons and updates	Training & Administration Manager
Appeal lodgement (ITR / course progress)	Within 20 working days of notice	Student (assisted by Academic Officer)
Appeal resolution commencement	Within 10 working days of written lodgement	Appeals Committee (Director of Operations chair)
Appeal resolution duration	Maximum 10 working days, unless extension agreed in writing by all parties	Appeals Committee
Academic review request (assessment outcomes)	Within 10 working days of receiving result	Student lodges with Training & Administration Manager
Academic review outcome notification	Within 10 working days of request	Director of Operations
Student notification of RPL/CT outcome	Within 10 working days of Training Manager approval	Training Manager
QA review of feedback	Each term	QA Team

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Process / Item	Timeframe Specified	Responsible Position(s)
Survey collection (student/employer satisfaction)	Each term	Academic Officers / QA Team
Feedback requiring escalation to CEO	Within 1 business day	Training & Administration Manager
CI Register review & discussion with CEO	Monthly	Administration Manager, CEO
Complaint acknowledgment timeframes monitoring	Weekly	Administration Manager
Complaint resolution timeframes monitoring	Weekly	Administration Manager
Appeal processing timeframes monitoring	Weekly	Quality & Compliance Manager
External review recommendations implementation	Within 30 days	CEO
Staff training on complaints handling	Annually	Administration Manager

Responsibilities

CEO: Overall responsibility for policy implementation, authorisation of staff to respond to complaints, final decision authority for significant matters, and ensuring implementation of external review recommendations within 30 days.

Administration Manager: Primary responsibility for complaints and appeals management, maintaining the Complaints and Appeals Register, liaising with QA for academic matters, and ensuring compliance with timeframes, coordinating administrative support, maintaining secure records, managing external review body communications, and providing staff training support.

Quality and Compliance Manager: complaints and appeals management, coordinating investigations, managing appeals against Administration Manager decisions, participating in Appeals Committee, and ensuring policy compliance monitoring. : Final decision authority for formal academic reviews, chairing Appeals Committee meetings, and assuming Administration Manager duties for complaints against that position.

Academic Officers: Collecting confidential feedback surveys, assisting students with complaint and appeal processes, participating in review committees, receiving initial informal complaints, providing student support during processes, referring formal complaints to appropriate staff, and ensuring student welfare considerations and supporting student welfare during processes.

All Staff: Identifying and appropriately referring complaints, cooperating with investigation processes, implementing improvement actions, and maintaining confidentiality requirements.

Relevant Documents and Records

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- Complaints and Appeals Form
 - Student Handbook
 - Complaints and Appeals Register
 - QR Code Feedback Links and Campus Displays
 - Learner and Employer Survey Tools
 - Survey Spreadsheets
 - Continuous Improvement Policy
 - Continuous Improvement Register
 - Appeals Committee Meeting Minutes
 - External Review Body Contact Information
 - Academic Review Documentation
 - Third Party Agreement Templates
-

Self-Assurance Questions

1. How do you ensure that you operate an outcomes-focused complaints and feedback management process that makes it easy for VET students and stakeholders to provide feedback or make complaints, works to resolve those complaints, and then actively uses those complaints and feedback to continuously improve your organization's service offerings?

PAX Institute provides multiple accessible feedback channels including QR codes displayed throughout campus and on our website, regular Academic Officer-conducted surveys with confidential collection methods, and various complaint lodgement options.

All feedback is systematically recorded in monitored spreadsheets, analysed for trends by the QA team, and discussed with the CEO to determine Continuous Improvement Register actions. We track implementation of improvements and maintain the Complaints and Appeals Register to ensure organisational learning occurs from all stakeholder input.

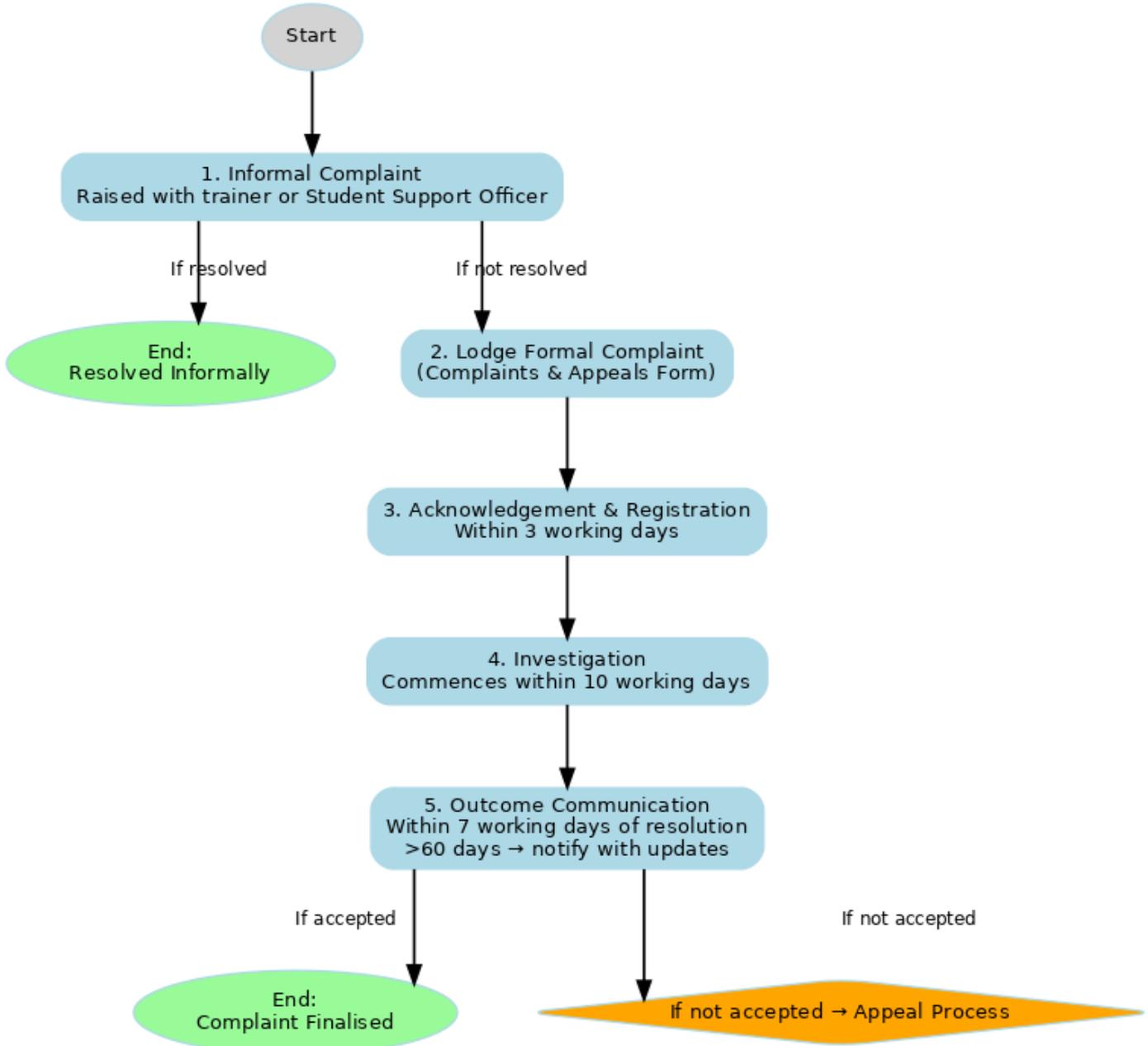
2. How do you ensure your complaints and appeals management systems are procedurally fair, timely and objective?

Our systems ensure procedural fairness through structured processes that afford all parties the right to be heard, independent Appeals Committee reviews, clear timeframes (3 days acknowledgment, 10 days commencement, 7 days outcome notification), and access to support persons. Objectivity is maintained through involvement of staff not connected to original decisions, evidence-based decision making, and detailed written outcomes with reasoning. External review options through the Overseas Students Ombudsman and DSCV ensure independent oversight when required.

3. How are the outcomes of complaints and appeals used to continuously improve your services?

All complaint and appeal outcomes are systematically analysed for trends and systemic issues by the Administration Manager and QA team. Findings are discussed in management meetings with the CEO to determine appropriate improvement actions recorded in our Continuous Improvement Register. Changes to policies, procedures, training, or services are implemented based on identified issues, with PAX committing to immediate implementation of successful appeal decisions and external review recommendations. We maintain enrolment during processes and use outcomes to prevent future occurrences through quality review processes.

Complaints Process



Appeal Process

