

Complaints Handling

Pinnacle Institute of Education is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaint handling process.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is generally negative feedback about services or staff which has not been resolved locally. A complaint may be received by Pinnacle Institute of Education in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person but are generally made by students and/or employees.

Early resolution of complaints

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration, or are in dispute, should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It is often the case that formal complaints can be avoided by proper communication between the persons involved.

Relationship to continuous improvement

The complaints handling process may expose weaknesses in the training and assessment system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that complaints received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement for both parties.

Complaint handling principles

Pinnacle Institute of Education will apply the following principles to its complaints handling:

- A written record of all complaints is to be kept by Pinnacle Institute of Education including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. A complaints register is maintained which records the details of the complaint and maintains a chronological journal of events during the complaint handling process. Records

relating to complaint handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.

- A complainant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost.
- Each complainant may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.
- The complaints policy must be publicly available. This means that the complaints policy and procedure must be published on Pinnacle Institute of Education's website.
- The handling of a complaint is to commence within five (5) business days of the lodgement of the complaint and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The complainant is to be provided a written response to the complaint, including details of the reasons for the outcome. A written response must be provided to the complainant within ten (10) business days of the lodgement of the complaint.
- Complaints must be resolved to a final outcome within thirty (30) business days of the complaint being initially received. Where Pinnacle Institute of Education Chief Executive Officer considers that more than 30 business days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the CEO must inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 30 business days are required. As a benchmark, Pinnacle Institute of Education should attempt to resolve complaints as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve a complaint within thirty (30) business days is considered acceptable and in the best interest of Pinnacle Institute of Education and the complainant. A complainant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the progress of the complaint handling.
- Pinnacle Institute of Education shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant during the complaint handling process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint handling process that find in the favour of the student shall be implemented immediately.

- Complaints are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No Pinnacle Institute of Education representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of Pinnacle Institute of Education Chief Executive Officer. A decision to release information to third parties can only to be made after the complainant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.
- Complaints are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the complaint handling process. This means that the complainant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply. The complainant is entitled to have their complaint heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally, the decision must be made based on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not take into account irrelevant considerations. Further guidance on principles of natural justice and procedural fairness can be accessed at the following link: [Principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness](#)

Review by external agency

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by Pinnacle Institute of Education, they have the opportunity for a person that is independent of Pinnacle Institute of Education to review his or her complaint following the internal completion of complaint handling process. In these circumstances the Pinnacle Institute of Education Chief Executive Officer will advise of an appropriate party independent of Pinnacle Institute of Education to review the complaint (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to Pinnacle Institute of Education in regards to the recommended outcomes. This advice is to be accepted as final and advised to the complainant in writing.

Pinnacle Institute of Education considers that it would be extremely unlikely that complaints and appeals are not able to be resolved quickly within Pinnacle Institute of Education internal arrangements.

Complaints Handling Procedure

Matters that cannot be resolved at the time they occur should be referred to Pinnacle Institute of Education Chief Executive Officer for review. The following procedure is to be followed when a complaint form is received:

- A Complaints Form is received by Pinnacle Institute of Education and is to be immediately recorded into Pinnacle Institute of Education's Complaints and Appeals Register.
- Complaints which are received in other forms such as phone or email are to be detailed on a Complaints and Appeals Form by the person (staff member) receiving the complaint and then recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- The Complaints and Appeals Form is to be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer who is to review the matter and make recommendations as to how to respond to the matter. The Chief Executive Officer may choose to consult with the complainant, with others within Pinnacle Institute of Education or relevant agencies external to Pinnacle Institute of Education in determining their recommendations.
- The Chief Executive Officer may choose to make inquiries about the matter or may ask another person to research the matter against relevant policy.
- The Chief Executive Officer is to commence their review of the complaint within five (5) business days from the date the complaint was submitted.
- The Chief Executive Officer is to finalise their response to the complainant and provide the complainant a response as soon as possible but no later than ten (10) business days from when the complaint was submitted.
- The Chief Executive Officer is to communicate the response to the complainant in writing, thereby creating an evidentiary trail of the decision and communication thereon. This evidence can then be provided in any subsequent independent review of the complaint handling process and outcome. The Chief Executive Officer is to seek feedback from the complainant about their level of satisfaction with the complaint outcome and advise the complainant of their options if they are not completely satisfied with the outcome.

- Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint handling process, the Chief Executive Officer will advise the complainant on the steps to have the decision considered by an appropriate independent third-party.
- The response to the complainant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed and what actions and outcomes have been identified as a result of the complaint.
- A complainant who remains unsatisfied with the process applied by Pinnacle Institute of Education following review by an independent party may refer their grievance to the Australian Skills Quality Authority - ASQA Online Complaint Form [click here](#). Students are to be advised that ASQA will require the student to have exhausted all avenues through Pinnacle Institute of Education's internal complaints handling procedure before taking this option.
- Opportunities for improvement that were identified as a result of the complaint are to be recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register and submitted for the next Management Team meeting. The Chief Executive Officer may, at his or her discretion, follow-up with the complainant after consideration by the Management Team to inform the complainant of the improvement actions identified.
- The Complaints and Appeals Register is to be kept up to date at all times to accurately reflect how the matter was responded to and the duration from the date the complaint was received to the date the complaint was resolved.

Complaints Handling Process

