

Mater Education Academic Complaints and Appeals Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Mater Education Limited (MEL) is committed to providing an effective, efficient, fair and equitable student academic complaints and appeals process. Complaints, also known as grievances, are an expression of dissatisfaction by a person.

This procedure sets out the stages of the process for lodgement and management of a complaint or appeal of any academic matter made by a student of Mater Education Limited.

The complaints and appeals process require all parties to act in genuine good faith when considering reasonable options in seeking to resolve matters that have arisen. Any formal complaint or appeal is recorded and dealt with fairly, effectively, efficiently, confidentially and in a timely manner.

1.2 Scope and context

This procedure applies to former and current students. Academic matters are any matters that occur in relation to the delivery of the course a student is enrolled in. Academic matters may include but are not limited to:

- assessment matters;
- final marks;
- reasonable adjustment decisions;
- timetabling;
- academic misconduct (for example, plagiarism or cheating);
- course progression;
- study extensions, withdrawals and deferrals
- educator bias in marking assessments;
- cancellation of enrolment due to academic concerns;
- credit transfer or recognition of prior learning applications;
- quality of course delivery, content or structure of academic;
- supervision of workplace learning.

For clarity, matters related to admission into a program of study are considered non-academic.

The complaint or appeals process is available to all students with this procedure available on MEL's website and other communications.

There is no charge for the internal or external stages of this procedure.

This procedure does not remove a student's rights under Australia's Consumer Laws.

1.3 Governing policy

MPPL-07772 Mater Education Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy



2. Procedure requirements

The following procedures are to be followed.

2.1 Stage one - Informal stage

MEL encourages students, where appropriate and possible, to seek to resolve their concern informally with the person concerned including seeking to address minor issues through discussion or by seeking clarification.

The student should try to clarify what the problem is, provide any evidence to support their claims (where applicable) and what might be an agreeable resolution.

MEL team members will:

- seek to resolve the concern as soon as reasonably practicable;
- make every effort to try to find a mutually acceptable resolution;
- explain the reasons for the decision giving rise to the concern;
- advise the student that they may lodge a formal written grievance or appeal (Stage 2).

Where an informal resolution has involved the relevant staff member communicating their decision in writing to the student, this will be considered a decision of MEL which may be reviewed in Stage 2 of this procedure.

2.2 Stage two – Formal internal stage (Complaint)

Complaints and appeals will be considered fairly, without prejudice and solely on their merits and the evidence provided.

- a. A formal complaint or appeal is to be sent to educationfeedback@mater.org.au or by submitting the feedback form on MEL's website as soon as practicable from the date of the matter occurring.

A formal complaint should be in writing and be a comprehensive description of the events resulting in the complaint, why the handling of the event is of concern. Any evidence that supports the complaint should also be included.

- a. Mater Education will acknowledge the receipt of complaints or appeals within 2 working days.
- b. The matter will be delegated to the appropriate course Educator Lead. The delegated Educator who has been tasked with reviewing the matter will provide an estimated timeframe for investigation within 10 working days of the submission of the complaint and will take all reasonable measures to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- c. Investigation of the complaint or appeal will be conducted in a transparent, equitable, objective and unbiased manner by the relevant independent senior officer.
- d. Each party to this stage of the procedure can be accompanied or assisted by another person, at that party's cost. A practicing legal practitioner is not permitted.
- e. Mater Education's response will be timely, specific and will include the rationale for the decision taken. This information will be retained for 2 years, or for the duration set by any relevant regulator.
- f. Fair and reasonable remedies will be offered as appropriate including the right to access stage three of this process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of stage two.



2.3 Stage three – Further Action (Appeal)

Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of stage two, they may lodge an appeal in writing with the Senior Manager Certificate Programs (SMCP) or Senior Manager Diploma of Nursing & Head of Discipline (SMHOD).

- a. The SMCP is responsible for resolution of stage three of the academic complaint and appeals process for Certificate programs (the Reviewer).
- b. The SMHOD is responsible for resolution of stage three of the academic complaint and appeals process for Diploma programs (the Reviewer).
- c. The SMCP or SMHOD may delegate responsibility to another independent senior officer for the resolution of a complaint or appeal as appropriate e.g. if there is a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest or participation in the original decision.
- d. The Reviewer will determine an appropriate timeframe for review, which will be communicated to the student by the SMCP or SMHOD. The Reviewer will conduct all necessary consultations with the party and other relevant persons and make a determination of the appeal. This determination will be communicated to the SMCP or SMHOD in preparation for communication to the student.
- e. The student will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision as soon as practicable.
- f. The party will be advised of their right to progress to an external stage of the complaint and appeal process at this time if they consider the matter unresolved.

2.4 Stage four – External stage

Where the party is not satisfied with the outcome of stage three and where there is no debt owed to Mater Education, they may request that the matter be referred to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by MEL. The external and independent person or body will have the appropriate expertise to reach a decision.

Each party to the review to be accompanied or assisted by another person at the review, at that party's cost. A practicing legal practitioner is not permitted.

Each party to be given written notice of the decision on review including the reasons for the decision.

MEL will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review.

2.5 Complaints against Registered Training Organisations

Assistance with resolving an issue with MEL once the complaints and appeals process has been finalised can be sought through the National Training Complaints Hotline. This is a referral service and will ensure that your complaint is handled by the most appropriate authority.

ASQA cannot resolve disputes between students and training providers. ASQA does not have the legislative power to act as a student advocate.

Complaints on the quality of training delivered as well as the services and business practices of training providers can be reported to ASQA. To submit a complaint about a training provider, visit ASQA's [asqaconnect](#) website. ASQA provides more information on the type of complaints they can review on their website.

The Queensland Training Ombudsman (QTO) offers a free, confidential and independent service to review and resolve enquiries and complaints from anyone in the VET system including students, RTOs, apprentices, trainees, employers and other stakeholders. The QTO can be contacted on phone 1800 773 048 or via their [online form](#).



The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (OCO) does not make a fresh decision, rather they consider the way a decision was made and make recommendations on how the decision or process could be improved. OCO can be contacted on 1300 362 072 or via their [online form](#).

2.6 Records management

Records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes are maintained securely.

Records will include:

- b. How the complaint or appeal was dealt with;
- c. The outcome of the complaint or appeal;
- d. The timeframes for resolution of the complaint or appeal;
- e. The potential causes of the complaint or appeal; and
- f. The steps taken to resolve the complaint or appeal including corrective and preventative action.

Parties who have used the procedure are able to access the records of that use, but otherwise the records will be confidential.

All documentation from complaints and appeals processes are maintained in accordance with Mater's Records Management Policy.

2.7 Continuous improvement

Accepted areas of improvement identified as part of the complaint and appeals process are to be actioned in line with MEL's Continuous Improvement Procedure.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic matters	Matters include those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a course but do not include complaints in relation to enrolment in a course and personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student.
Appeal	a process in which a decision is studied and accepted or rejected
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
Complaint	a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable.
Grievance	a real or imagined cause for complaint, especially unfair treatment
Good faith	Honest, sincere, without malice or ill intent
Non-academic matters	Matters include those matters which do not relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a course and include complaints in relation to enrolment in a course and personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student.



4. Related documents

Mater documents

- MPPL-07772 Mater Education Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy
- MPPL-00772 Mater Education Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- MPPL-06832 Mater Behavioural Standards
- MPPL-04304 MEL Quality Management System Policy
- MPPL-01286 Education Feedback Work Instruction
- MPPL-04631 Continuous Improvement Procedure

External documents

- VET Student Loan Act 2016
- VET Student Loans Rules 2016
- Standards for RTOs
- Skills Assure Supplier Policy
- VSL Manual for Providers

5. Document information

5.1 Earlier revisions

Revision #	Published date	Comment
1	01 Apr 2025	Initial Version (Document ID: PR-MEL-040080) This procedure is to replace: MPPL-00804 Academic Grievances and Appeals Procedure MPPL-00845 Academic Appeals Procedure

5.2 Key contacts

Author	Manager of Quality and Compliance
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Committee	n/a

Affirmation

This governance document is consistent with [Mater's Mission](#).
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