

The Australian Ballet School

Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline The Australian Ballet School's approach to managing dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of students, clients, staff and other members of the community. It provides a transparent approach for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

This policy and procedure ensures compliance with Standard 6 of the Standards.

Definitions

Appeal means a request for a decision made by The Australian Ballet School to be reviewed

Complaint means a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by The Australian Ballet School

Services means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support

SRTOs means the Standards for RTOs 2015 – refer definition of 'Standards'

Standards means the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 of the VET Quality Framework which can be accessed from www.asqa.gov.au

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Policy

1. Nature of complaints and appeals

- The Australian Ballet School responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - Any third party providing Services on behalf of The Australian Ballet School.
 - Any student or client of The Australian Ballet School.
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of The Australian Ballet School's services and activities such as:
 - the application and enrolment process
 - marketing information
 - the quality of training and assessment provided
 - training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements
 - the way someone has been treated
 - the actions of another student
- An appeal is a request for a decision made by The Australian Ballet School to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
 - refunds
 - response to a complaint
 - assessment outcomes/results
 - other general decisions made by The Australian Ballet School

2. Principles of resolution

- The Australian Ballet School is committed to providing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, The Australian Ballet School ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
 - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - Are able to be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
- The Australian Ballet School will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.
- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, the identity of the complainant will be protected unless permission for disclosure is given;

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- The Australian Ballet School will maintain the student's enrolment, and where applicable accommodation and well-being arrangements, while the internal complaints process is ongoing, unless extenuating circumstances relating to the well-being of the student apply. This does not necessarily mean that a student must remain in class while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing. There is no cost associated in lodging a complaint with the School;

3. Timeframes for resolution

- Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer. In matters where additional time is needed, the complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

4. Records of complaints and appeals

- The Australian Ballet School will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the *Privacy Policy and Procedures*.

5. Making a complaint or appeal

- Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- The School is committed to having mechanisms to deal with complaints impartially, promptly and confidentially.
- Students who feel they have a valid grievance in relation to any aspect of their course, are advised to undertake the following course of action:
 - Discuss the matter with the Student Counsellor, relevant teacher and/or Director;
 - If the matter is not resolved, each complaint and appeal will require that details of the complaint are lodged in writing by the complainant with the School's Director;
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing sent to The Australian Ballet School's head office at 2 Kavanagh Street Southbank Vic 3006 attention to the Director.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable The Australian Ballet School to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal.
 - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
- Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- Your complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 10 working days of receipt, this does not include working days when the School is closed.

6. Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some or all members of the management team of The Australian Ballet School will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
- Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.

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- Where a third party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO is involved, they will be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task.

7. Independent parties

- The Australian Ballet School acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter. Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by The Australian Ballet School.
- The Australian Ballet School may also appoint the independent party to be involved in the resolution of a complaint or appeal where it is deemed necessary.
- The Australian Ballet School will provide complete cooperation with the external mediator investigating the complaint/appeal and the recommendations arising out of this process.
- The Director will ensure that recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

8. External complaint avenues

Complaints can also be made via the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- Email: ntch@education.gov.au

For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to The Australian Ballet School's registering body, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

ASQA can investigate complaints about The Australian Ballet School in relation to:

- the quality of our training and assessment
- the School's marketing and advertising practices

For students:

- ASQA may not be able to investigate a complaint if you do not include evidence that you have already exhausted The Australian Ballet School's formal internal complaints process as above.
- If your complaint does not fall within ASQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you directly contact the agency responsible as listed on the relevant webpage below.

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- Please refer to the following webpage below before making a complaint to ASQA:
<https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-domestic-students/before-you-make-complaint>

For other stakeholders:

- Information about the process and information you should provide is available here:
<https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-other-stakeholders>

9. Publication

This policy and procedure will be published in the *Student Handbook* and on The Australian Ballet School's website.