



Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy

In this policy/procedure, words in italic text are defined terms which have the specific meanings set out in Gowrie Victoria Policies and Procedures - Definitions and Abbreviations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the steps that students (past, present and / or potential) would take in raising a complaint or grievance with Gowrie Victoria.

Scope

This policy applies to all Gowrie Victoria employees with responsibilities for the recruitment, enrolment, training, assessing, support and induction of students, past, current & potential. The responsibility on employees is to ensure that all grievances from past present and potential students are handled in transparent, consistent, fair and equitable manner.

Policy Statement

Academic grievances may include: student progress, assessment, curriculum and award matters. Non-academic grievances may include complaints in relation to the student's personal information, harassment, vilification, discrimination, financial matters, fees and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities. Grievances about any aspect of a person's interaction with us are welcome. Gowrie Victoria is transparent about its protections for complainants and respondents and will not take any adverse action against complainants or respondents.

There is no charge for accessing our internal grievance stages.

A fee may be associated with access to an independent third-party external review. The fee is only applicable where stages 1 – 3 of our internal processes have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be resolved to the appellant's satisfaction, at which time they may request an external review. If the grievance/complaint was substantiated by the external reviewer, Gowrie Victoria would cover the cost of the external review.

Outcomes of all grievance investigations will be complete and unambiguous. As such we welcome any person who is involved in the complaint process to be accompanied and/or assisted by a third party, at any relevant meeting. Gowrie Victoria will not victimise or discriminate against any complainant or respondent.

We commit to a timely resolution of all complaints, refer to details at Complaints / Grievances staged process details on page 2 of this document.

We keep records of all grievances for at least five years. Parties to the complaint can gain access to records by writing to Gowrie Victoria. All records are treated as confidential and stored securely on internal systems.

All staff of the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) have the procedure communicated to them at induction. Ad-hoc changes to the policy/procedure will be communicated to all staff electronically.

The Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Resolution procedure is documented in the Student Handbook and is available for all students and staff. The Student Handbook is provided to all students at enrolment, alongside updated versions electronically provided throughout the duration of their course, is covered in orientation classes and the most current versions is available to access at any time via:

www.gowrievictoria.org.au

Complaints/Grievances Staged Process Details

The process follows a straightforward, staged process and is initiated each time a concern is raised.

- 1. Informal Complaint** - the person receiving the complaint will aim to resolve it informally at the initial point of contact. If it cannot be resolved it must be put in writing and the grievance will become a formal complaint. Students will be advised to put their complaint in writing and referred to the Student Handbook for further information.
- 2. Formal Complaint** - The student will be invited to attend an appointment to discuss, and, ideally, resolve their concern with the Compliance and Operations Manager. The Compliance and Operations Manager would identify whether the complaint can be resolved immediately or requires further investigation. Written details of the outcome of the formal complaint, including reasons for the outcomes and any solution(s) for consideration will be sent to the complainant within 5 business days of the concluded meeting. If further investigation is required, this will be notified and an additional 5 business days will be advised. This document will include the next steps in the process if the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage. The complainant will be advised of their requirement to respond and, if not resolved to their satisfaction, the matter will be internally reviewed.
- 3. Internal Review** – The student will be invited to meet with Gowrie Victoria’s Executive Manager – Adult Learning and Marketing. This person will have had no previous involvement in the grievance. Written details of the outcome of the internal review, appeals process, including reasons for the outcomes and any solution(s) for consideration will be sent to the appellant within 5 business days of the concluded meeting. This document will include the next steps in the process if the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage. The appellant will be advised of their requirement to respond and if not resolved to their satisfaction, the matter will be available for external review at the appellants’ request. .
- 4. External Review** – If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review. The Compliance and Operations Manager may arrange for the grievance to be heard by an independent third party who will mediate a meeting between Gowrie Victoria and the complainant. (a fee may apply, refer to Guidelines on page 1). If required, an external review will be heard and mediated by **Relationship Matters**, for details of their process, refer to the Lifeworks website:

<https://relationshipmatters.com.au/>

Implementing Change

Recommendations arising from any complaints, grievances and / or external reviews will be reviewed by Compliance and Operations Manager where relevant. Any resulting systems, administrative and / or operational changes will be actioned and formally discussed with all team members at the next scheduled RTO meeting.

How to Make a complaint

Complaints can be lodged in writing either via:

Email: training@gowrievictoria.org.au or;

Post: Attn: RTO Compliance and Operations Manager

36 Newry Street, Carlton North, VIC 3054

References

Standards	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
Policy Status	Mandatory
Related Policies	Access and Equity Policy, OH&S Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy
Related Procedures	Enquiry and Enrolment Procedure
Related Documents	Student Handbook