**Complaints Handling Procedure**

All page numbers in these procedures refer to the [**DEC Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines.**](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdf)

**Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this procedure is to define Sydney Institute’s approach to the implementation of DEC Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines and must be used in association with the policy. This procedure provides guidance to all Sydney Institute Staff and their representatives in responding to any complaint raised.

This procedure does not apply to suggestions for improvement. Staff wishing to make suggestions should follow the [Improvement Request Procedure](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?T01XJXA7WTWVB6NXENYT) and use the online [Improvement Request System](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/InternalAudit/eServices/IRF_01/IR_Default.asp) on SydNET home page.

**Responsibilities**

The Director-General of DEC and Managing Director of TAFE NSW, Senior Executives, Senior Officers, Principals, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for the effective management of suggestions, complaints and allegations.

All staff need to be aware of their responsibility to comply with the DEC Code of Conduct Procedures and act in a manner which promotes a productive and harmonious working environment.

**Related Policies and Procedures**

[DEC Complaints Handling Policy - Guidelines & Policy](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?0JCHXT0ZTFGBJCHAI2G4)

[Student Discipline Policy](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/stu_discip/PD20020075_i.shtml?level=TAFE&categories=TAFE%7CStudent+administration%7CDiscipline+%26+behaviour)

[Student Discipline Mandatory Procedures](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/tafe/csupport/studentadmin/studentdiscip/Disc_Proc_V2.1.pdf)

**Procedure**

All staff are to be informed about the SI Complaints Policy and procedure at the commencement of their employment.

All students are provided information about the TAFE NSW complaints procedure in their Student Guide received at enrolment and on the Institute website.

**Receiving and actioning complaints**

Any Sydney Institute staff member can receive a complaint and they may be received verbally or in writing.

**Staff member**

1. Receives the complaint and assesses what action should be taken. Steps taken in assessing a complaint are:

* Identifying whether or not the complaint is a special case
* Assessing the level of seriousness of the complaint
* Selecting the appropriate course of action

Refer to *Assessing a complaint* as listed in the DEC [Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdf) (page 10). Assistance with assessment of a complaint can be sought from an Assistant Director, Faculty Director or Human Resources.

1. Enters details on to [Complaint Action Form](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?D4PW6RHLV876NEG9TUC4) and attaches any relevant documentation if provided.
2. Advises the customer who will be dealing with the complaint and that they will be contacted within the appropriate time frame as per the guidelines, in accordance with the type of complaint.
3. If the complaint is a special case (refer to list at DEC [Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdf)*Identifying special cases* on pages 11-15)

* Refers complaint to identified officer to resolve.

1. If the complaint is not a special case but is of a serious nature (refer to list at DEC [Complaint Handling Policy Guidelines](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdf)*Assessing a complaint: assessing seriousness* on page 16)

* Refers complaint to HR to initiate **Investigation** procedure (pages 32-37).

1. If the complaint is *not* a special case and *not* of a serious nature, deals with complaint using one of the following procedures:

* Initiates **Informal Resolution** based on the nature of the issue (page 22)
* Initiates **Remedy & Systems Improvement** procedureif the complaint is about a service, procedure or system (pages 23-26) and follows the procedure and timeframe outlined
* Initiates **Negotiation** procedure if the complaint relates to a person but is not of a serious nature (page 27-31) and follows the procedure and timeframe outlined.

1. Completes the final details on the Complaint Action Form, attaching any documentation, and puts onto TRIM file.
2. Enters details onto [Complaints Register](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?UJPKANBESE0YPS4XD0ZI) held in team share at relevant College / Unit.
3. Analyses the register for trends and root causes, actioning any issues at a local level.
4. Makes recommendations for improvements.

**Record Keeping**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Unit / College / Cluster of person receiving complaint** | Maintain a TRIM file which contains:   * Complaint action forms * Any documentation from formal complaint handing processes   and is held in a central teamshare of Unit / College / Cluster. |
| **Director, Strategic Planning and Performance** | Maintain a TRIM file which contains:   * Annual Summary of Complaints sheet from the Colleges, Clusters, Sections or Units * Consolidated statistics for the Institute on the number and type of complaints received |
| **Institute Director’s Unit** | Maintain a TRIM file which contains Complaints Register detailing who the complaint has been forwarded to  and is held in Institute Director’s Unit. |
| **Human Resources** | Maintain appropriate TRIM files of complaints dealt with by HR. |

**Analysis of Complaint Statistics**

College / Unit must forward a copy of the root cause analysis done for each location’s complaints to the Director **Strategic Planning and Performance** by 15 January the following year.

Each year Director **Strategic Planning and Performance** analyses the complaints received across the Institute and prepares a briefing for the Sydney Institute detailing the number and types of complaints received across the Institute and in each location.

An analysis of any emerging trends or issues is tabled at the Sydney Institute Executive (SIE) then forwarded to all Institute Managers.

Institute Managers review the analysis and determine if any actions need to be taken in their area of responsibility to address emerging trends, particularly Institute wide trends for Managers with cross-Institute responsibilities.

**Definitions**

**IDU:**Institute Director's Unit

**Informal Resolution:** any matter which is not identified as a special case and which is assessed as ‘less serious’, such as minor complaints and disputes.

**Formal Resolution:** any matter which cannot be resolved in an informal way.

**Protected disclosure** – an allegation of corruption, maladministration or serious and substantial waste, by a public official, about a public official, made to a person in a position identified in the Protected Disclosures Act 1994, including an ICAC officer, a Member of Parliament or to a nominated disclosure officer of the department.

**Delegations**

None at this time.

**References and Related Information**

[HR Advice for Contentious Matters](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?SNF2BFW2LDVVMP8IM60F)

[Student Rights and Responsibilities](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?30I2GS5XPRLPZZ5OXAUE)

[Dealing with Student Concerns: SI Counsellors' Role and the Complaints Handling Guidelines](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?KX51X9LB2AQC6GM7HIEG)

**Penalties for non-compliance**

Under SNR and ISO 9001 standards the Institute is required to ensure there is relevant and sufficient documentation of management systems for the scope of registration and scale of operations. This documentation must be circulated, understood and implemented consistently throughout the Institute. The system must be systematically monitored and improved.

Failure to comply with the SNR and ISO 9001 standards may impact on the Institute’s ability maintain its registered training organisation status under ASQA and/or ISO 9001 certification.

**Associated Forms and Documents**

[Complaint Action Form](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/view/?D4PW6RHLV876NEG9TUC4)

[Complaints Register](http://sitwww.tafensw.edu.au/pack/document/download/?UJPKANBESE0YPS4XD0ZI)

**NB**

At a College / local level, a yearly analysis of root causes / trends **must** take place and outcomes actioned.

Copies of analysis to go to **Strategic Planning & Performance** annually

College / Cluster / Unit analyse for **trends / root causes** and implement improvements / changes if appropriate

Analyse for trends / root causes annually at an Institute level

Complete **Complaint Action Form** and put on **TRIM** file, including any relevant documentation

Complete **Complaints Register** held in team share at relevant College/Unit

No

**Option 1**

Initiate **Informal Resolution** based on the nature of the issue

(pg. 22)

**Option 2**

If the complaint does not relate to aperson initiate **Remedy & Systems Improvement** procedure

(pg. 23-26)

**Option 3**

If the complaint relates to a person but is not serious, initiate **Negotiation** procedure

(pg. 27-31)

No

Yes

Refer to HR to initiate **Investigation** procedure

(pg. 32-37)

Is the complaint **serious**?

(pg. 11 – 15.

Def. on pg. 16)

Is complaint a

**special case?**

(pg. 11 – 13)

Yes

Refer to **identified officer** for special cases (pg. 11 – 15)

**Receive complaint**

(May be verbal, e-mail, letter, etc.)

**Assess complaint**

(pg. 10 – 18) (Seek advice from HR or AD if needed

Enter details on to **Complaint Action Form** and attach any relevant documentation

Advise customer on who will be dealing with complaint and that they will be contacted within appropriate time frame

All page numbers in this flowchart refer to the [**DEC Complaints Handling Policy Guidelines**](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/general_man/complaints/resp_sugg/April2011_Complaints%20Handling%20Policy%20guidelines.pdf)

**Complaints Handling Flowchart**