

# Mater Education 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 complaints and appeals process. Complaints, also known as grievances, are an expression of dissatisfaction.

This procedure sets out the stages of the process for lodgement and management of a complaint or appeal of any non-academic matter made to 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 non-academic matters. Matters can be in relation to the conduct of:

- MEL, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- a third-party providing services on the MEL's behalf,
- student.

Non-academic matters may include:

- breach of privacy
- financial matters such as fee disputes
- course admission
- harassment, vilification, indirect or direct discrimination
- misconduct of staff, students or third party providers

The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process.

MEL will identify reasonable timeframes for resolving complaints and appeals and effectively communicate these to the complainant.

The student's enrolment will be maintained while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

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

## 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 Situation

Ideally, issues should be discussed with Mater Education team members at the time they arise. Every effort should be made to try to find a mutually acceptable resolution during this phase. Wherever possible, team members will resolve the issue at point-of-service.

If a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached the complainant can then submit a formal complaint.

### 2.2 Stage two – Formal internal stage (Complaint)

A formal complaint can be made directly by an individual or by a third party on behalf of the individual.

- a. A formal complaint should be sent to [educationfeedback@mater.org.au](mailto:educationfeedback@mater.org.au) or by completing the feedback form on MEL's website. Complaints can also be made directly to relevant MEL staff.
- b. Complaints should be submitted as soon as practicable of an event leading to a complaint. 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. Providing any evidence that supports the complaint should also be included.
- c. Within ten (10) working days of the formal lodgement of a complaint or appeal MEL will acknowledge the receipt, provide an estimated timeframe for investigation and will take all reasonable measures to finalise the process as soon as practicable. Some complaints require more urgent attention than others and there may be some that may take longer to resolve. MEL will communicate with complainants about expected timeframes for resolving and communicating outcomes.
- d. Investigation of complaints will be conducted in a transparent, equitable, objective, and unbiased manner by an independent senior officer ensuring there is no detriment to the complainant. MEL may delegate the management of the matter to a senior leader at MEL for investigation and decision.
- e. Any response to a matter will be specific and include the rationale for the decision taken. Fair and reasonable remedies will be offered as appropriate.

Where a complaint is in relation to actions arising from the non-payment of tuition fees, and those fees remain unpaid in full, or in part by agreement, the outcome from paragraph c (above) is final. Item 2.3 below is not available where a financial debt is owed to MEL.

### 2.3 Stage three – Further Action (Appeal)

Where a party is not satisfied with the outcome of 2.2 they may lodge an appeal in writing to [educationfeedback@mater.org.au](mailto:educationfeedback@mater.org.au).

The Manager of Quality and Compliance or their delegate will conduct an initial review of the decision and nominate an independent senior officer not involved in the original decision or refer the appeal to an internal committee/unit with appropriate expertise to review and conduct any necessary consultations with stakeholders to make a determination on the appeal.



The party will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the rationale for the decision as soon as practicable but without unnecessary delay.

## 2.4 Stage four – External stage

Where the party is not satisfied with the outcome of stage three the matter can be referred to consumer protection agencies, depending on the nature of the complaint made. If a person is unsure of what agency is most appropriate to consult we recommend contacting the National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73 or via the [complaints form](#).

A consumer protection agency:

- can provide information about seeking a refund or a cancellation of your course fees;
- can provide information about your rights and obligations;
- may be able to help you negotiate with your training provider.

The consumer protection agencies that may be consulted depend on the nature of the complaint made. The agencies

- [Queensland Ombudsman](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) for VET student loan matters
- [Tuition Protection Service](#)

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:

- a. How the complaint or appeal was dealt with;



- b. The outcome of the complaint or appeal;
- c. The timeframes for resolution of the complaint or appeal;
- d. The potential causes of the complaint or appeal; and
- e. 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 subsequent appeals are maintained in accordance with Mater's Records Management Policy.

## 2.7 Continuous improvement

Accepted areas of improvement identified as part of the complaints 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-07182 Mater Education Academic Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- MPPL-06832 Mater Behavioural Standards
- MPPL-01286 Education Feedback Work Instruction
- MPPL-04304 MEL Quality Management System Policy

#### External documents

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- Ombudsman Act 2001
- AS ISO 10002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations (ISO 10002:2018, NEQ)
- VET Student Loan Act 2016
- VET Student Loans Rules 2016
- Skills Assure Supplier Policy
- VET Student Loans Manual for Providers



## 5. Document information

### 5.1 Earlier revisions

Revision #	Published date	Comment
1	06 Nov 2014	Initial release as an information sheet
2	28 May 2015	Final (Document ID: PR-MEL-040005)
2.1	19 Jan 2018	Revised title, administrative amendments; transferred to new template
3	13 Mar 2019	Revised, transferred to new template
3.1	18 Dec 2019	Included revised process of ASQA to receive complaints through asqanet
3.2	14 May 2020	Administrative edits
3.3	01 Sep 2020	Queensland Training Ombudsman information added to section 2.4
3.4	17 Dec 2020	Reference to Head of Department replaced with General Manager Education and Training
3.5	27 Jan 2022	Administrative edits: removal of old metadata, styles update, document ID updated; no changes of review cycle, due Mar 2022
3.6	21 Mar 2022	Contents reviewed; Administrative update for section 5 table check and updates
3.07	18 May 2023	Content reviewed with minor update in section 2.3 and section 4 (external documents), administrative update: transferred to new template; revision number updated to align with current coding system
3.08	29 Aug 2023	Title updated to include "Mater Education" to provide clarity
3.09	27 Nov 2023	Content revised in section 2.2
4	01 Apr 2025	Content reviewed and combined procedures: MPPL-01223 Non Academic Grievances and Appeals Procedure MPPL-00847 Non-academic Appeals Procedure

### 5.2 Key contacts

Author	Manager of Quality and Compliance
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Key words	MEL, Education, feedback, complaints, appeals
Committee	n/a

#### Affirmation

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