

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Version V1611

Policy

Pinnacle is committed to and will ensure that student complaints are addressed fairly, consistently and promptly.

Purpose and scope

Students are entitled to, and should expect, a high standard of learning and assessment, and support services in accordance with the advertised material. This policy provides guidance for students who have concerns or complaints about matters or issues relating to their education and training experiences at Pinnacle.

Pinnacle views student complaints as providing an opportunity to review and improve its policies and practices, and also to gain insight into student levels of satisfaction.

Procedure

Pinnacle's student complaints procedures are based on the following principles:

- ❖ All parties are given the right to present their case and to be heard, provided with adequate notice of the allegations, and advised of the procedures to be used.
- ❖ Pinnacle will ensure that all members involved in the decision making process are unbiased and have no personal interest in the outcome.
- ❖ Confidentiality will be respected for all parties involved, unless the use of the information is required by law, or permission is granted for the disclosure of confidential information from the relevant parties.
- ❖ Staff involved in resolving complaints will act fairly at all times and ensure that conclusions are based on a fair hearing of each point of view.
- ❖ There will be no reprisals or any disadvantage arising as a result of a student making a complaint in good faith.
- ❖ Complaints will be handled in a timely manner with achievable deadlines specified for each stage in the resolution process as outlined below.
- ❖ Any student who makes a complaint and any staff member or student on whom the complaint has a direct impact will be regularly informed of the progress of the matter.
- ❖ There will be no charge for the complaints process.
- ❖ Students continue to be enrolled throughout the process

- ❖ Resolution of a complaint may be reached at any stage. Once a complaint is resolved, all further investigation will cease unless Pinnacle considers that in the interests of improving the services, products or processes further investigation is warranted.
- ❖ Where complainants are not satisfied with the outcome proposed by Pinnacle, they can appeal the outcome. In the event of a complaint not being resolved internally to the complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may take further action by contacting an external body such as the National VET Regulator.
- ❖ The findings and outcomes of a complaint will be used by Pinnacle to address any systemic or underlying causes to prevent problems from occurring or recurring.

These procedures rely on the student identifying themselves. Therefore anonymous complaints will be noted by PINNACLE but not considered under these procedures.

Students have two avenues for resolution as detailed below:

Informal investigation and resolution

- ❖ The complaint should be discussed first in a rational and objective manner with the trainer or student advisor. The matter should be raised as soon as possible to enable speedy resolution and within ten (10) working days of the event. The process for complaints (no redress requested) ends here for the student and this feedback is reviewed as part of Pinnacle's continuous improvement process.
- ❖ Failing the resolution by the trainer or student advisor, all complaints will be referred through to Pinnacle Management.

Formal investigation and resolution

- ❖ If discussions with the trainer or student advisor fail to provide a solution to the problem, the complainant may formally lodge a complaint with Pinnacle Management to conduct an investigation.
- ❖ Pinnacle Management Contact details are listed on training.gov.au RTO ID 91217 then Click on Contacts
However, if that person is the subject of the complaint or is perceived to have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter, then other management personnel will be approached.
- ❖ The role of Pinnacle Management is to advise the complainant, trainer or student advisor, in their interpretation of policy, to act as an arbitrator in the dispute between parties and to recommend a path for resolution.

Pinnacle Management will:

- ❖ speak to both the complainant and trainer or student advisor to establish the facts
- ❖ conduct an investigation
- ❖ advise the trainer of findings (if relevant)
- ❖ meet with both parties to discuss the recommendations

Other channels that may be utilised to bring problems to light and assist in the resolution of complaints include:

- ❖ Group meetings conducted by Pinnacle Management, to allow program participants the opportunity to voice areas of concern. The complainant has the right to be accompanied by an advocate witness to any meetings in the resolution of complaints or grievances
 - ❖ Seeking the assistance of external parties - depending upon the nature of the matter
1. In accordance with legislation and its duty of care, Pinnacle may be required to refer specific complaints to external authorities. Complaints may be referred to external parties such as mediators, arbitrators, etc. based upon the nature of the issue. Students can also contact ASQA <http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-a-complaint---domestic-students/submit-a-complaint-to-asqa.html> or the Department of Fair Trading on 13 32 20 to seek further assistance
 - ❖ In the event of the complainant reporting that they are dissatisfied with the proposed solution Pinnacle Management will advise the complainant that an independent adjudicator will be sought to consider the nature of the complaint and a possible further resolution.
 - ❖ The selection of an independent adjudicator will be managed by Pinnacle Management and be by mutual agreement with the complainant.
 - ❖ All independent adjudicator outcomes will be reported to the next scheduled management meeting documented within the minutes and filed for future reference.
 - ❖ All independent adjudicator outcomes will be communicated to the complainant in a timely manner.
 - ❖ The outcome of the arranged meeting between the complainant and the independent adjudicator will be communicated in writing to the next scheduled meeting of PINNACLE management.
 2. Pinnacle Management will notify all parties concerned in writing of the outcome and decision of the complaint review within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. All details of the complaint will be kept confidential; details of the complaint will not be discussed with any party that does not have a genuine interest in resolving the issue.
 3. All complaints will be recorded on the Complaints Register by Pinnacle Management; which is utilised as part of Pinnacle Management improvement process. All complaints/ will be saved on the student's file by Pinnacle Management.

Unsubstantiated complaints

Where the complaint is found to be unsubstantiated, Pinnacle Management will notify the complainant and the respondent. If the complaint is found to have been made with malicious intent on the part of the complainant, Pinnacle Management may recommend reprimanding or

implement other disciplinary matter as appropriate. Refer to the Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy.

Withdrawal of complaint

A student may withdraw a complaint at any time during the resolution process. When this occurs the matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved.

Supporting documentation

- ❖ Complaints Register
- ❖ Student Information Guide
- ❖ Disciplinary and Misconduct Policy
- ❖ Continuous Improvement Register

