1. Purpose

Purpose of this policy is to ensure that all current and prospective students of ALTEC are given access to free, effective and fair complaints resolution and appeals processes.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective students of ALTEC, including students enrolled in online courses.

3. Definitions

**Appeal**: A request to review an adverse decision or an unfavourable outcome that may have arisen from any administrative, academic or disciplinary processes. An Appeal may be an Internal Appeal or an External Appeal

**Internal Appeal**: An appeal against a decision where the appeal is brought under ALTEC policies and code of conducts or where there is a process for appeal within ALTEC policies and procedures

**External Appeal**: An appeal to an external agency against a final decision of the college. Agencies may include the Victorian Ombudsman, the Privacy Commissioner, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissions or Department of Education (In relation to ESOS Act)

**Final Decision**: A decision made by the member of staff authorised by the CEO to make that decision and communicated to the Complainant in writing when all Internal Appeal avenues within college’s policy, procedures and codes have been exhausted

**Complainant**: A person lodging a complaint or an appeal

**Respondent**: A person responding to a complaint or an appeal

4. Legislative Context

The legislative base for this policy is as follows:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015
- The ESOS Act 2000
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001
- The National Code 2007
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)
5. Policy: Complaints

This policy and procedure ensure that in the event that a student has a complaint concerning any matter in relation to the college, there is a process in place to ensure that the complaint can be resolved amicably. Students have access to a complaints procedure if they feel they have been unjustly treated, undermined, vilified or harassed in any circumstances. All the complaints will be treated in full confidence.

5.1 A complaint can be lodged in writing by letter or by email or in person. A student can lodge their complaint with any member of staff but should preferably lodge their initial complaint with the Student Welfare Officer. The student must lodge their complaint with only one member of staff at the college. If the complaint needs to be escalated, the staff member will follow the complaint policy. A written record of the complaint will be kept on the student file.

5.2 The student will have the opportunity to formally present their case at no cost. The student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person to present their case at any relevant meeting, if required.

5.3 The college will investigate and respond to all complaints lodged by a student. The process will commence within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint and supporting information and all reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process in the shortest possible time. If the nature of the complaint requires immediate action, that staff member receiving the complaint will forward the matter directly to the Operations & Campus Director.

If the complaint is in regard to something of a more academic or study related nature, he or she may refer the matter to the Director of Studies without delay. In the event of this happening, the Director of Studies assumes the Operations & Campus Director’s duties of this policy for the incident.

5.4 The college treats all complaints in confidence and will seek the permission of the student before discussing the complaint with any party mentioned or named in the complaint. The student will be given a written statement of the outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome.

5.5 Only the college staff authorised by the CEO can respond to a complaint.

5.6 If the process results in a decision that supports the student, the college will immediately implement the decision or preventive actions required and advise the Student of the outcome.

5.7 Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint may appeal the decision according to ALTEC’s Internal Appeal Process or choose to lodge an External Appeal with an appropriate agency if they wish to do so. If the student chooses to access ALTEC’s internal complaints and appeals processes, their enrolment will be maintained while the process is ongoing.

5.8 The college will maintain the student’s enrolment until the external complaints/appeals process is completed and has supported the college’s decision to report. The college will wait for the outcome of the external process with consideration for student welfare as reporting a student for breaches may have serious consequences for the student’s visa; it may result in cancellation.

5.9 Online Students

- In addition to the above policy clauses, in an event where it is not possible for online or distance students to be physically presents at the college to lodge a complaint, the college will appoint a liaison officer to electronically or telephonically communicate with the student and gather all the required information and details.
- The gathered information will be forwarded to the Chair, Complaints and Appeals Committee for appropriate action and/or follow up.
- The college may request the external provider for Access Logs and/or any other forms of available electronic data to ascertain the facts related to the complaint.
6. Procedure: Complaints

1. Complainant gathers information and arranges to meet the Operations & Campus Director for advice and information discussion;
2. Online complainant or a complainant not able to physically attend the college may choose to communicate electronically or telephonically with the Operations & Campus Director
3. If not resolved in Step 1, the complainant fills and submits the complaint in writing using the Complaints and Appeals form to the Operations & Campus Director
4. Operations & Campus Director confirms the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant with three (3) working days of the date of receipt of the complaint and enters the compliant in the Complaints Register
5. Operations & Campus Director starts the process no later than ten (10) working days from the date of receipt of the complaint and calls upon respective parties for discussions/meetings
6. All the evidences concerning the complaint are collected and reviewed
7. Assistance of Student Welfare officer is sought if student welfare is a concern
8. Operations & Campus Director discusses the outcomes with the CEO and reaches a decision
9. The complainant is advised of the decision in writing by the Operations & Campus Director
10. If the decision is not accepted, an internal or external mediator is appointed with mutual consent
11. If the mediation fails, external complaint options are advised and exercised
12. All the documents and noted are forwarded to Student Support Administrative Officer for filing
13. Operations & Campus Director updates the Complaints and Appeals Register with the outcome

7. Policy: Appeals

ALTEC is committed to providing fair, safe and productive study environment to all its students. Consideration of appeals will be dealt with fairly, consistently, promptly, with sensitivity to all parties and in accordance with ALTEC’s policies and quality principles.

7.1 ALTEC will appoint an Appeals Committee comprising of at least three of the following senior staff members:

- CEO
- Director of Studies
- Operations & Campus Director
- Student Welfare Officer

7.2 All the appeals will be heard by the committee on a designated date. Minutes of the meeting will be taken and filed.

7.3 Student enrolment will be maintained while the appeals process is ongoing

7.4 Students will be advised of their right to access an External Appeal process with appropriate agencies if they are not satisfied with ALTEC’s internal Complaints and Appeals processes of conduct of such processes.

8. Procedure: Appeals

1. The complainant arranges a meeting with the Operations & Campus Director and discusses appeals options
2. Online complainant or a complainant not able to physically attend the college may choose to communicate electronically or telephonically with the Operations & Campus Director
3. The complainant fills and submits the appeal in writing using the Complaints and Grievance form to the Student Welfare Officer (Note: The form can also be lodged with the Operations & Campus Director directly if the Student Welfare Officer is not available)

4. Student Welfare Officer enters the appeal in the Complaints and Appeals Register and forwards it to the Operations & Campus Director for action

5. Operations & Campus Director confirms the receipt of the complaint in writing to the complainant with three (3) working days of the date of receipt of the complaint

6. Operations & Campus Director notifies the Complaints and Appeals Committee and provides copies of the documents

7. Complaints and Appeals Committee convenes no later than ten (10) days from the date of receipt of the appeal

8. Case background and grounds for appeal are reviewed and discussed by the Complaints and Appeals Committee

9. Complaints and Appeals Committee reaches a Final Decision

10. The Final Decision is conveyed to the complainant in writing

11. If the decision is not accepted by the student, external complaint options are advised and exercised

9. External Complaints and Appeals

There is an external complaint/appeal process available to Students if they have exhausted the above procedures and still feel unsatisfied. This service is offered by Australian Council for Private Education and Training. If the internal complaint/appeal process is unable to resolve the dispute, Students will be referred to ACPET by the Operations & Campus Director.

Students may also seek legal redress through the usual court processes if they feel unsatisfied. They may also approach other agencies relevant to their specific situation;

- The Victorian Ombudsman
- The Privacy Commissioner
- The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissions
- Department of Education
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

For international students, once DE (Formally DEEWR) has been notified of a deferment, suspension or cancellation of a student’s enrolment, the student has 28 days in which to:

- Leave Australia
- Show the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIBP (Formally DIAC)) a new Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE)
- or
- Provide DIBP (Formally DIAC) with evidence that he or she has accessed an external appeals process.

10. Responsibility

The Student Welfare Officer is responsible for maintaining the Complaints and Appeals Register.

The Operations & Campus Director is responsible for effective implementation and management of this policy and procedure.

The CEO has overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this policy should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer in person or by email to: ceo@altec.vic.edu.au
Student Complaint Procedure

Meet Campus Director

Discuss (Informal) and Consider Options

Resolved?

Yes → End
No → Gather Information

Lodge a Formal Complaint

Resolved?

Yes → End
No → Appoint a Mediator (Internal or External)

Resolved?

Yes → End
No → Explore External Complaint Options

College: To Record in the Complaint Register

College: Refer to Complaints and Appeals Committee

Student Complaints and Grievance Form
Student Appeal Procedure

Meet Campus Director

Discuss (Informal) and Consider Options

Resolved?
Yes → End
No → Lodge a Formal Appeal

Complaints and Appeals Committee Convenes

Case is reviewed and Final Decision is made

Resolved?
Yes → End
No → Explore External Complaint Options

Student Complaints and Grievance Form

College: To Record in the Complaint Register

College: Refer to Complaints and Appeals Committee