

Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans

Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F of VET Student Loan Rules

1. Purpose

Lawson College Australia meets its legal and ethical requirements in relation to student grievance procedures.

Information is collected in order for Lawson College Australia to meet and discharge obligations under pertinent legislation in regard to VET Student Loan Act 2016 and VET Student Loan Rules 2016.

An approved course provider must have a grievance procedure to deal with complaints from its students about academic matters, including relating to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards for an approved course, and non-academic matters, including relating to enrolment in a course and personal information held by the provider.

The grievance procedure must:

- Clearly set out the procedure, including required internal and external stages
- Encourage the timely resolution of complaints, including by specifying reasonable periods for dealing with each stage of a complaint
- Contain internal and external stages
- Clearly state that there is no charge for the internal stage or external stage
- Provide for implementation of decisions made in following the grievance procedure
- Provide for due consideration of recommendations arising from the external stage
- Require the provider to allow parties who have used the procedure to access the records of that use, but otherwise keep the records confidential

An approved VET Student Loans provider must comply with the requirements of the VET Student Loans Ombudsman and fully cooperate with the VET Student Loans Ombudsman to ensure compliance with the Act.

2. Scope

This *Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans* sets out the procedures Lawson College Australia uses in its management of student complaints and appeals.

Related Lawson College Australia Policy and Procedure:

- Complaints and Appeals
- Privacy and Information Handling Procedures_VSL
- Student Review Procedures_VSL
- Access, Equity and Anti-discrimination
- Record Management and access to records

This *Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans* applies to all Lawson College Australia staff and student.

3. Definitions

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021

Appeal: An *appeal* is the process in which cases are reviewed, where parties request a formal change to an official decision.

ASQA: ASQA is the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the National VET regulator and registering body for private RTOs in Victoria ([Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#)).

Australian Privacy Principles: The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) are rules of conduct set out by The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) which establishes standards for the collection and handling of 'personal information' (as defined by the Act) by Commonwealth agencies ([Australian Privacy Principles guidelines — OAIC](#)).

Complaint: A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider.

Ombudsman: The Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman (the Office) is an independent and impartial integrity agency with oversight of Commonwealth Government agencies and some private sector organisations ([VET Student Loans Code of Practice \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](#)).

Personal information: Personal information includes a broad range of information, or an opinion, that could identify an individual ([What is personal information? — OAIC](#)).

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth): An Act to make provision to protect the privacy of individuals, and for related purposes ([Privacy Act 1988 \(legislation.gov.au\)](#)).

Student: A person who is enrolled in a higher education course or an *approved course* for VET Student Loans (may also be referred to as 'VET course') ([Student | HEIMSHHELP \(dese.gov.au\)](#)).

The Act: The VET Student Loans Act 2016 (Act) and the VET Student Loans Rules 2016 (Rules) set out the legislative requirements that underpin the VET Student Loans (VSL) program ([VET Student Loans Compliance - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)).

VET Student Loan: A VET Student Loan (VSL) helps eligible students to cover tuition fees for vocational education and training (VET) courses. VSLs are only available for approved courses at the diploma level and above ([VET Student Loans | StudyAssist](#)).

VET Student Loans Ombudsman: The VET Student Loans Ombudsman in the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman investigates complaints from students regarding their VET FEE-HELP or [VET Student Loans](#) provider in Australia. Their services are free, independent and impartial ([VET Student Loans Code of Practice \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](#))

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021

4. Complaint - Internal stage

During internal stage of Complaint and Appeal, Lawson College Australia supports that each party in this stage of the procedure can be accompanied or assisted by another person, as per Lawson College Australia Complaint and Appeal conditions, to be noted that it is at that party's cost.

Lawson College Australia has a documented Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure which details the following:

Pre-stage 1: Informal process – internal

- Communication between the parties.
- If resolved - no further action.

Stage 1: Formal process – internal

- Student completes Form – *Application - Complaints and Appeal – Stage 1* within five days of non-resolution in Pre-stage 1 process.
- If resolved - no further action.

Stage 2: Formal process – internal

- If not resolved in Stage 1 process the student can lodge a written statement of appeal of the outcome of Stage 1 with Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/ or delegate within 5 working days of the date of the written communication regarding the outcome of Stage 1.
- If resolved – no further action.

5. Complaint - External stage

Lawson College Australia has a documented Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure which details the following:

Stage 3: An external appeals process

- Internal processes must precede any external appeal and students must inform Lawson College Australia of their intention to proceed to an external appeal.
- The RTO will maintain a students enrolment until the external appeal process is finalised.
- The RTO will comply with the findings of the external appeals process.
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the complainant, Lawson College Australia will comply with required action and recommendation from the relevant external appeals organisation to satisfy the students grievance as soon as practicable.
- The decision of an external independent mediator is final and any further action the student wishes to take is outside Lawson College Australia's policies and procedures.
- All records and correspondence in relation to an external appeal will be maintained for a minimum of 5 years.

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021



6. VET Student Loans Ombudsman

6.1 The VET Student Loans Ombudsman will act as the external dispute resolution body to conduct investigations, and make recommendations in relation to VET loan assistance (that is, VET Student Loans) and compliance by VET providers with the Act, the Higher Education Services Act (HESA) and any legislative instruments under either of those Acts. (<https://vet.ombudsman.gov.au>)

6.2 As far as practicable Lawson College Australia will be guided by the Ombudsman Code of Practice which suggests the following (among others) as best practice:

- Have a senior manager with overall responsibility for managing complaints and communicating their value to the organisation
- Allow students to make a complaint in a variety of ways (telephone, email webform, mail)
- Acknowledge complaints within 2 business days
- Give complainants a contact number and where possible the name of the contact person they can speak to in relation to their complaint.
- Monitor staff performance to ensure complaints are handled properly and appropriate remedies are provided

Professionally manage unreasonable complainant behaviour. ([VET Student Loans Code of Practice \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](https://vet.ombudsman.gov.au))

7. Matters which do not fall within the scope of VET Student Loans

7.1 Students may raise any matters of concern in relation to any aspect of their experiences at Lawson College Australia, for example in relation to the Student Journey as per ASQA's *Users' guide to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* (the Standards) ([Users' guide to Standards for RTOs 2015 | Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#)):

- Marketing and recruitment
- Enrolment
- Support and Progression
- Training and Assessment
- Completions

7.2 The Complaint and Appeals Policy and Procedure details Lawson College Australia's complaint and appeal processes applicable to all students.

7.3 Students are entitled to resolve any dispute by exercising their rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021



8. Retaining Information

8.1 Lawson College Australia will retain documents and information related to the operation of the Act and the Rules for seven years or as otherwise specified in the Rules.

9. Acknowledgements

- VET Student Loans Act (2016) <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2021C00150>
- VET Student Rules (2016) <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020C00982>
- [VET Student Loans - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](https://www.dese.gov.au/vet-student-loans)
- Australian Government, *VET Student Loans, Manual for Providers*, V4.2 August 2020
- [VET Student Loans | StudyAssist](#)
- [Cancel your VET debt in special circumstances | Department of Education, Skills and Employment](#)
- [Census-days.pdf \(ombudsman.gov.au\)](#)
- [VET Student Loans Compliance - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)
- [Information for VET Student Loans Students - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)
- [VET Student Loans Information Booklet - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)
- [eCAF fact sheet - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)
- [Users' guide to Standards for RTOs 2015 | Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#)
- [Legislation | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021

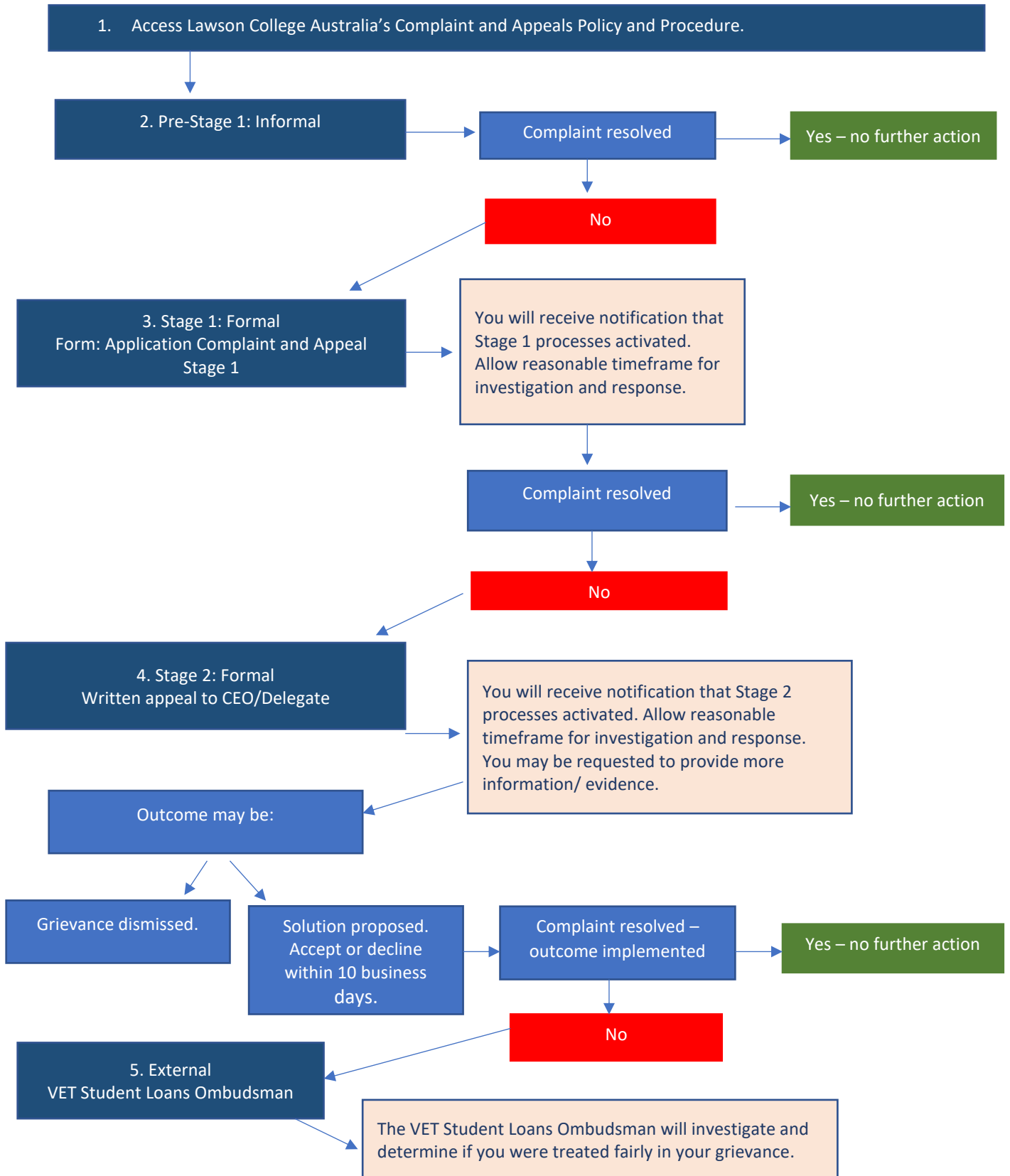


10. Document History and Version Control Table

Version Date	Approval Date	Approved By	Type of Change	Extent
03082021	3 August 2021	Quality and Compliance Committee (QACC)	Initial	NA

Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J		Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F		Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021

This flowchart summarises the steps you can take to resolve your grievance.



Lawson College Australia	RTO: 40679	CRICOS Provider: 03406J	Version
VET Student Loan Rules 2016: Student Grievance Procedures: Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F	Document Name	Student Grievance Procedures – VET Student Loans_VSL	03082021