

Complaints Handling

Policy Number: P005

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Policy Name	Complaints Handling Policy
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Related Policies	
Supporting Documents	Complaint Form; Educator/Trainer Evaluation Form; Course Evaluation Form

This Policy applies to Mid North Coast Community College (MNCCC) and its trading arms.

Background

The Board has sought to provide a fair and well researched policy to deal with complaints and allegations.

The approach of the policy is described as follows.

A professional response to complaints leads to improvements and creates confidence in the outcome.

Complaints, as well as compliments and other constructive feedback, create opportunities for an organisation to improve its services and prevent future problems.

It requires staff to use professional judgment and a balanced consideration of the rights and needs of the parties. It encourages systems improvement to prevent recurrence of problems.

These procedures emphasise the necessity of dealing with complaints in terms of the potential seriousness of the complaint rather than on the basis of the category of the person who made the complaint. This means that aggrieved staff, students or community members will be treated on equal terms.

Making a Complaint

Complaints, suggestions and other feedback from the people who use the College services are welcomed. They help staff to meet expectations, remedy problems and improve systems. The concerns of employees are also important.

A suggestion or complaint can be lodged by any person who is a user or potential user of College services including student, a parent or caregiver, an employer or other community member, any staff member, contractor or volunteer.

The complaint can be about any aspect of the service provided or not provided, the behaviour or decisions of other staff, or about workplace practices, policies or procedures.

All minor complaint and disputes should be resolved promptly and without using formal procedures. Whenever possible, informal resolution should be attempted first in all matters assessed as less serious.

Prior to making a complaint the person should raise their concern with the relevant staff member at an appropriate time and place, and seek resolution.

A complaint can be made orally or in writing. If oral, it may need to be put in writing and assistance will be provided if needed.

Smart and Skilled Customer Protection Policy

MNCCC has a Customer Protection Policy in place as contractually required under Smart and Skilled. This includes the following procedures:

PROCEDURE:

- Every attempt will be made to resolve any student complaints using the Complaints Policy.
- Any complaint or grievance will be actioned as part of our commitment to Continuous Improvement. On notification of a complaint or grievance procedures will be followed as per the Complaint Policy.
- The Training Manager will be the designated Customer Protection Officer. Their role will be to handle all complaints and grievances and to ensure Consumer Protection contractual compliance with the Smart and Skilled Guidelines.
- The contact details of the Customer Protection Officer are listed on the web site
- If a student feels matters are unresolved to their satisfaction and wish to inform a third party, they should contact the NSW Government Consumer Protection Unit for Students. They can do so at: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/consumer-protection-for-students>

Complaints are logged in the Complaints Register by the person receiving the complaint.

Steps in resolution:

- 1) Matter resolved at first point of contact (orally or written) and outcome is recorded in the Complaints Register.
- 2) If the matter is not resolved in the first instance, then further action is noted and forwarded to the

CEO.

- 3) If the matter is a complaint against the CEO, then it is referred to the President of the Management Committee.

Letters to CEO

Where a person writes to the CEO or Board with a complaint or allegation, it will be assessed and the appropriate procedure identified. The addressee of the letter (or their representative) will determine the appropriate officer to whom to refer the letter for response. That person will identify the appropriate step to commence action.

Current Copy of the Policy

It is recommended that the most recent copy of the policy be downloaded from the Depts website to ensure the most up-to-date version is in use.

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/complaints-handling-policy>

Our Responsibility

The Community College will:

- Record the complaint in the Complaint & Continuous Improvement register
- provide an efficient, fair and structured mechanism for handling complaints;
- provide our customers with access to the complaints handling process, including those customers with disabilities and special needs;
- keep customers informed as to the progress of their complaint and the expected timeframe for resolution;
- ensure all complaints are addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner;
- regularly review our complaints so that we can improve our standard of customer service;
- take actions to prevent similar complaints occurring in the future; and
- not demand payment of genuinely disputed amount/s whilst an investigation into a matter is taking place.

Handling the complaint

- If a complainant has a complaint regarding any aspect of an account or dealings with the Community College, we encourage them to telephone the College reception in the first instance.
- Our Training Manager will give them their name so the complainant knows with whom they are speaking. Our objective is to resolve the vast majority of enquiries or complaints during the first contact with us.
- Upon receiving a verbal or written complaint, the College will acknowledge the matter via telephone or in writing within 5 business days.
- If the complaint is in writing, we will respond by telephone in the first instance and confirm any details in writing if requested to do so.
- We will keep the complainant informed of the progress of the complaint, proposed actions and the expected timeframe for resolution.
- Our aim is to resolve complaints in a timely manner and we will generally resolve a matter within 30 calendar days.
- Complex complaints may take longer than 30 calendar days to resolve. In these cases, we will regularly update the complainant on the progress and likely timeframe for resolution.
- The College will make every reasonable effort to investigate the complaint. It will liaise with its contractors, staff members and any other relevant parties to investigate the complaint and ensure a satisfactory outcome for the complainant. A record of all information relating to the investigation will be stored secularly once a resolution has been made.
- We will advise the complainant of the outcome of the complaint. Where requested, we will advise details in writing.
- We may impose a charge for handling a complaint in special circumstances. For example, we may charge a fee where a complaint requires us to retrieve archived records.
- If we think a complaint requires a charge, we will not impose one without discussion with the complainant. If the complaint is upheld in the complainant's favour, and we have charged complaint handling fees, we will refund the full amount of the fees charged within 30 days.
- Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response tendered, they may ask for the complaint to be escalated to the appropriate member of the Management team.
- If this fails, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors, and if resolution at that stage has not been achieved, the complainant may wish to refer to the Department of Fair Trading or another appropriate organisation for determination.
- Complaints made to the Community College are overseen by management team. The team is committed to supporting the above areas and carrying out reviews of policy and process.