



STELLA COLLEGE

Complaint Policy and Procedure

RTO Code 41290



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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all complaints raised by students, personnel, and other stakeholders are handled in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. The policy aims to promote a culture of integrity and continuous improvement. This policy applies to all complaints received from students, personnel, industry partners, and other stakeholders regarding the services, operations, or conduct of the Stella college.

Stella College is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and high-quality environment for all stakeholders. All complaints will be managed professionally, confidentially, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice, ensuring that complainants and respondents are treated fairly and respectfully.

Legislative Reference

Outcome 2 – VET Student Support, Division 5 – Feedback, Complaints and appeals, Standard 2.7 and 2.8, National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 (Cth).

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled with Stella College, enrolled in any nationally recognised VET qualification, skill set, or short course delivered by Stella College.
- All Stella College personnel, including trainers, assessors, administrative staff, contractors, and management.
- Industry partners, employers, third-party service providers, and any other stakeholders interacting with Stella College.
- Prospective students seeking to enrol with Stella College.

This policy covers complaints relating to, but not limited to:

- Academic matters: assessment decisions, course delivery, trainer conduct, and learning resources.
- Non-academic matters: administrative processes, fees and refunds, student support services, facilities, and workplace health and safety.
- Conduct: misconduct by Stella College personnel, discrimination, harassment, or bullying.
- Third-party arrangements: complaints about services or conduct of any third party engaged by Stella College to deliver services on its behalf.

Note: As a standard practice, Stella College does not engage in any third-party service arrangements..

This policy does not cover:

- Matters that have been finalised through the appeals process — these are managed under the Stella College Appeals Policy.
- Matters subject to active legal proceedings, unless agreed otherwise by both parties.
- Industrial relations disputes between Stella College and its employees, which are managed through applicable workplace legislation and enterprise agreements.

Role and Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Has overall accountability for the complaints policy and its compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. Approves the policy and any material amendments. Reviews aggregate complaints data at least annually as part of the continuous improvement cycle. Receives serious complaint escalations as defined in this policy.

Administration Officer

Has day-to-day operational responsibility for managing the complaints process. Assigns complaints to appropriate personnel for investigation. Ensures all complaints are acknowledged, progressed, and resolved within the required

timeframes. Maintains the Complaints Register and Continuous Improvement Register. Provides regular reporting on complaint trends to the CEO or Training Coordinator.

Training Coordinator

Manages complaints relating to training delivery, assessment, and trainer/assessor conduct. Conducts or coordinates investigations into academic complaints. Identifies training needs arising from complaint outcomes. Ensures trainers and assessors are informed of complaints about their conduct in accordance with natural justice principles. Implements corrective actions identified through complaints. Maintains the Complaints Register and Continuous Improvement Register

All Personnel

Understand and comply with this policy and the associated complaint-handling procedure. Direct students and stakeholders to the complaints process promptly when a concern is raised. Cooperate fully with any complaint investigation. Do not engage in any retaliatory behaviour toward a complainant. Complete any complaints-handling training required by Stella College.

Students / Complainants

May lodge a complaint in accordance with this policy at any time, at no cost. Are encouraged to provide accurate and relevant information to support the complaint. Are expected to engage in good faith with the complaints process. May be accompanied by a support person at any meeting related to their complaint.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this policy. Where a term is defined in the RTO Standards 2025, that definition applies. The definitions below are provided to support consistent understanding and application by all Stella College personnel.

Term	Definition
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction made by a student, prospective student, employer, or other stakeholder about the quality, conduct, or outcome of a service or experience provided by Stella College or its personnel. A complaint is distinct from an appeal - it does not necessarily challenge a specific formal decision, but raises a concern about conduct, service quality, or treatment.
Complainant	A person who has lodged a complaint under this policy. The complainant may be a current or former student, a prospective student, an employer, an industry partner, or any other person with a legitimate concern about Stella College's services, conduct, or operations. A complainant may be represented by a support person or advocate.
Natural Justice	A fundamental legal principle requiring that decisions affecting a person are made fairly and without bias. In the context of complaints, natural justice means: (a) the person complained about is informed of the complaint and given a fair opportunity to respond; (b) the person investigating the complaint has no personal interest in the outcome; and (c) the outcome is based on the evidence gathered, not on assumptions or irrelevant considerations.
Procedural Fairness	The right of all parties involved in a complaint - both the complainant and the person or organisation the complaint is about - to participate in a process that is transparent, consistent, and impartial. Procedural fairness includes: the right to be informed of the

Term	Definition
	process; the right to present information and evidence; the right to know the outcome and the reasons for it; and the right to escalate or appeal if dissatisfied.
Substantiated	A complaint is substantiated when the investigation finds sufficient evidence to support the complainant's concern - that is, when the conduct, decision, or service failure complained about is found to have occurred as described, or to have fallen below the standard reasonably expected. A substantiated complaint results in corrective action and, where appropriate, a remedy for the complainant.
External Body	An independent organisation or authority that is not part of Stella College and has no personal or financial interest in the outcome of a complaint. The external body provides an independent review pathway for complainants who are not satisfied with the outcome of Stella College's internal complaints process. For domestic students, this includes the Resolution Institute and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). The external body's findings are taken seriously by Stella College and, where relevant, acted upon.
Appeal	A formal request to review a specific decision made by Stella College. Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints process, they may lodge an appeal under the Stella College Appeals Policy. An appeal is a separate and distinct process from a complaint.

Rationale

Stella College ensures that students, personnel, and stakeholders are made aware of the feedback and complaints processes through multiple accessible channels. Information on these processes is clearly outlined in the Stella College Student Handbook, Stella College website, and enrolment documents. During orientation sessions and onboarding for both students and personnel, the complaints process is explicitly discussed to promote awareness.

Stella College's complaints management Procedure is designed to reflect the principles of fairness, timeliness, and effectiveness. Complaints are handled by unbiased personnel to ensure impartiality, and complainants are given the opportunity to present their case without fear of repercussion. A triage system is in place to prioritise complaints based on urgency and complexity, ensuring timely responses. Acknowledgements of receipt and updates on progress are provided regularly to maintain transparency. All complaints are resolved with procedural fairness, respecting the rights of all parties involved. Clear guidelines, training for personnel, and accountability measures, such as tracking complaints in the Complaints Register, ensure consistency and professionalism.

The outcomes of complaints are systematically analysed to identify trends, root causes, and opportunities for improvement. Substantiated complaints result in corrective actions that are documented in the Continuous Improvement Register, and relevant policies, procedures, or practices are updated accordingly. Feedback from complaints is also used to inform strategic planning, risk management, and resource allocation, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement. Stella College complaints process is free, and easily available, to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

- Stella College, its trainers, assessors or other personnel, or
- A student at Stella College, or
- Stakeholders

Objective

Stella College is committed to the principles for objectivity in the complaints-handling process.

Openness	Well publicised, accessible, and understood by those involved in a complaint. The process is clear and well publicised so that both personnel and complainants can follow.
Impartiality	Avoiding any bias in dealing with the complainant, the person complained against, or the organisation. The process is designed to protect the person complained against from any biased treatment. Emphasis is placed on solving the problem and not on assigning blame. If a complaint is made about personnel, the investigation is carried out independently.
Confidentiality	The process is designed to protect the complainant's and customer's identity, as far as is reasonably possible. This aspect is very important to avoid deterring possible complaints from people who might be afraid that giving details could lead to inconvenience or discrimination.
Accessibility	The organisation allows the complainant access to the complaints-handling process at any reasonable point or time. Information about the complaints process is readily available in clear language and in formats accessible to all complainants. When a complaint affects different supply chain participants, a plan to coordinate a joint response is made. The process allows any information arising from the complaints to be known by any suppliers of the organisation that are concerned by the complaint so that they are able to make improvements.
Completeness	Finding out the relevant facts, talking to people from both sides involved in the complaint to establish common ground, and verifying explanations, whenever possible.
Equitability	Giving equal treatment to all people.
Sensitivity	Each case is considered on its merits, paying due care to individual differences, and needs and expectations.

Objectivity for Personnel

Complaint-handling procedures ensure that those complained against are treated objectively. This includes:

- Informing them immediately and completely on any complaint about their performance.
- Giving them the opportunity to explain the circumstances and allowing them appropriate support.
- Keeping them informed of the progress in the investigation of the complaint and the result.

It is vital that those against whom a complaint has been made are given full details of the complaint before they are interviewed. However, confidentiality should be observed. Stella College personnel are reassured that they are supported by the process. Personnel are encouraged to learn from the complaint-handling experience and to develop a better understanding of the complainant perspectives.

The complaint-handling process ensures confidentiality in the case of complaints against personnel. The details of such complaints are known only by those directly concerned.

Complaint Handling Approach

Stella College is open to receiving feedback and complaints and ensures information about how to provide

feedback and make complaints is publicly available and easily accessible, including via the Student Handbook, enrolment documents and website.

Stella College takes the best practice approach that:

- Fostering a receptive, blame-free culture that is open to feedback and improvement.
- Ensures there is no detriment to people who complain.
- Makes it easy and accessible for people to provide feedback and make complaints

Students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints. Allowing students to easily engage with the personnel of Stella College about any concerns they have can stop minor issues becoming larger. There are a range of avenues through which complaints can be made. This includes in person made directly to Stella College representatives, via phone or in writing.

Stella College actively seeks to remove any barriers to making complaints and any fear of repercussions to the complainant. Complaints are handled impartially, with respect for all parties involved, reflecting procedural fairness and natural justice. Stella College personnel are well trained and supported to manage complaints, acknowledging promptly and providing timely responses. Complaints are resolved without unnecessary delay.

Stella College recognises that some complaints may require more urgent attention than others, and that some complaints may take longer to resolve than others. Stella College's process includes triaging complaints where needed.

Stella College communicates transparently with stakeholders about the expected timeframes for acknowledging, resolving and communicating the outcomes of complaints. In any situation where timeframes are not being met (because the complaint is taking longer to resolve than anticipated) Stella College maintains regular contact with the complainant, including explaining any delays. All complaints are handled by an unbiased person.

Stella College ensures the privacy of complainants, and the confidentiality of information included in a complaint. Reflecting the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness, both the complainant(s) and the subject(s) of each complaint are given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information before a decision is made.

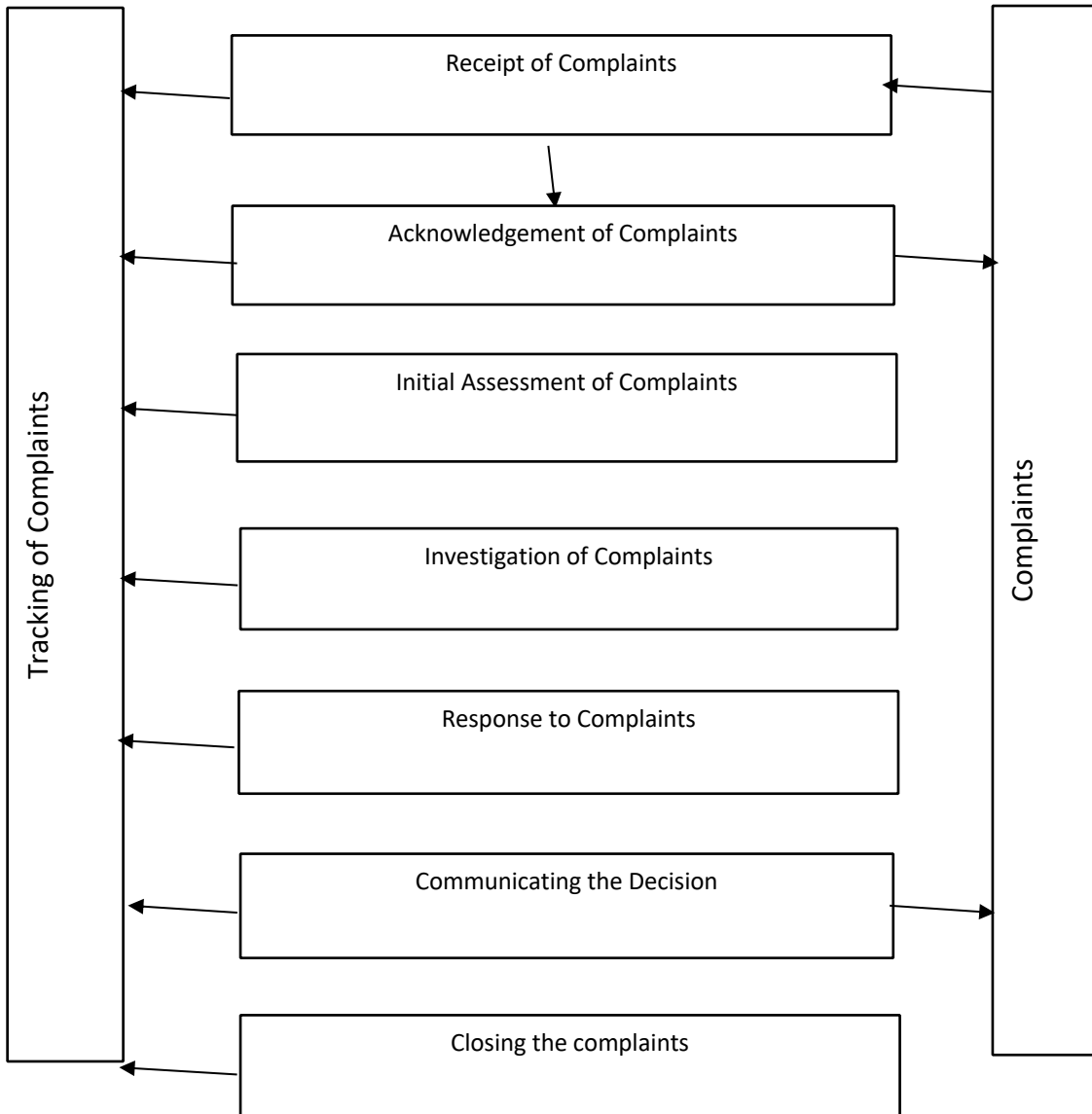
Stella College Training Coordinator has overall responsibility for managing complaints and communicating their value to the organisation.

Stella College ensures:

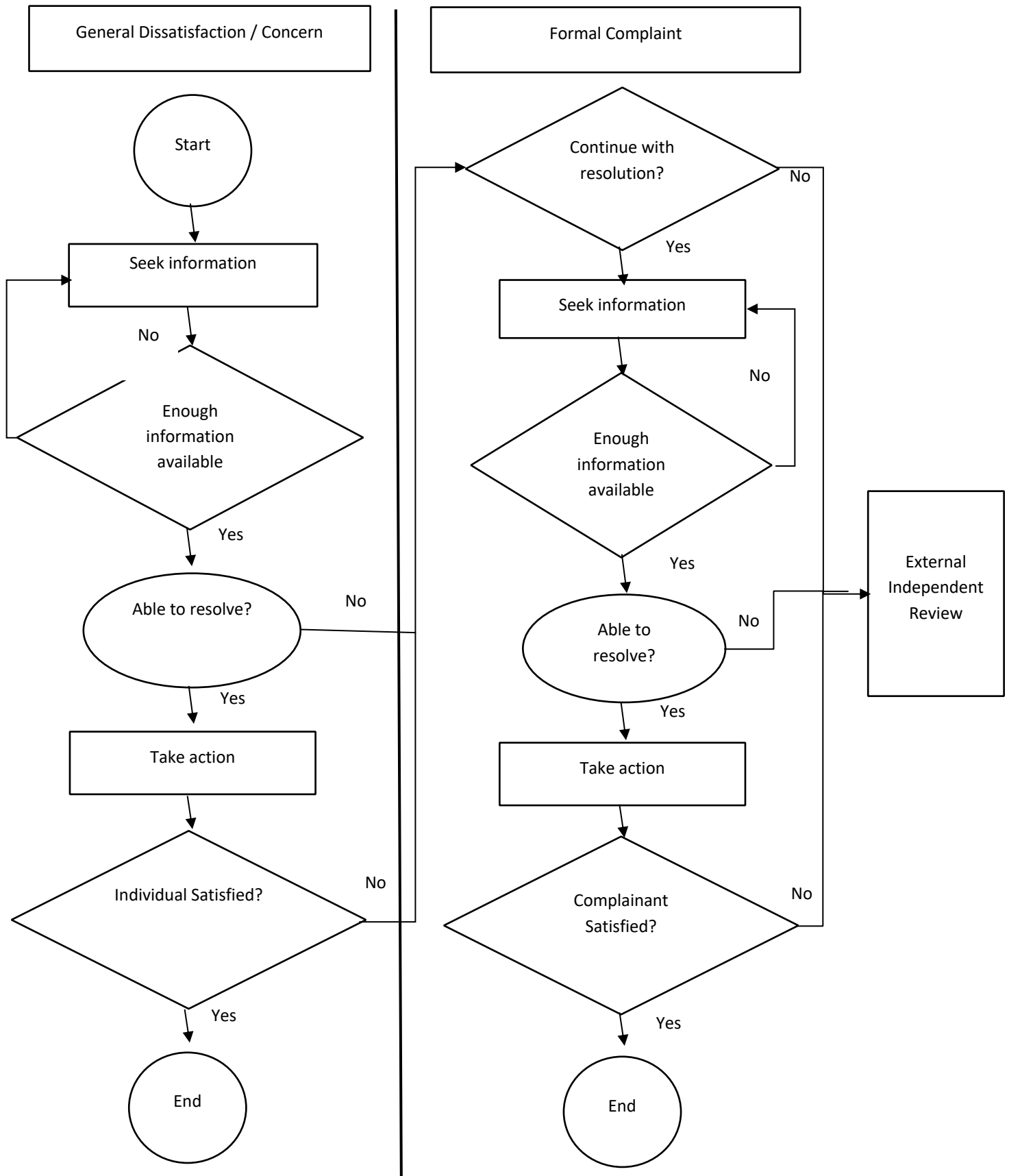
- Personnel at all levels understand and comply with complaints management policies and procedures,
- Personnel have received appropriate guidance, training and support to handle complaints,
- Students are directed to the complaints process and supported to lodge complaints when they experience a problem or have an issue, and
- Personnel performance is monitored to ensure complaints are handled properly and appropriate remedies are provided.

Complaint, Grievance and Dispute Resolution Procedure

Complaints Handling Flowchart



Escalation Flowchart



The following complaints handling framework have therefore been implemented for any stakeholder raising a complaint or issue. This procedure applies to all complaints, including those about:

- Academic matters from students,
- Non-academic matters from students, and
- Non-academic matters from persons seeking to enrol with the Stella College in a VET course or unit of study.

No fees are applicable or levied to the student or other complainant for any stage of the complaints process.

In the first instance, the complainant is encouraged to discuss the matter informally with the relevant Stella College personnel member, trainer or Administration Staff. Where this is not considered appropriate or comfortable, the complainant may approach the Stella College Student Services directly. Stella College aims to resolve informal matters within five (5) business days of the concern being raised. If the matter cannot be resolved informally within this period, or if the complainant prefers to proceed directly to a formal complaint, the complainant will be advised of the formal complaints process and supported to lodge a formal complaint at no cost. If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the discussion, it would mean that the matter is resolved.

1. Any stakeholder may submit a formal complaint to Stella College. Complaints information captured includes:
 - Submission date of complaint,
 - Name of complainant,
 - Nature of complaint,
 - Date of the event / activity which lead to the complaint,
 - The products and services or related organisation practices complained about,
 - A description of the complaint and relevant supporting data,
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable),
 - Action taken

All stages of the complaints process are documented. Complaints may be lodged via various channels including in-person via Stella College personnel, via telephone and via email.

All complaints are immediately recorded in the Stella College Complaints Register.

2. Stella College commences processing of complaints as soon as practicable and within two (2) business days of a complaint being made and finalises the outcome as soon as practicable, preferably on the first contact if the complaint is straightforward. Complaints are assessed on a risk-based approach to assign them priority, considering items such as severity, safety implication, complexity, impact, and the need and possibility of immediate action. Personnel are alert in particular to the needs of students who are vulnerable or require special assistance.

Simple complaints may be easily addressed by the personnel who has received the complaint.

More complex complaints are allocated to the Stella College Training Coordinator in the first instance.

Serious complaints are immediately reported to the Stella College CEO, who may allocate alternate or additional resourcing to the investigation and processing of the complaint.

3. Stella College acknowledges receipt of complaints in writing immediately, as soon as practicable, and:
 - Arranges a suitable time if needed to discuss the complaint,
 - Advises complainants of expected timeframes, and
 - Gives complainants the contact details of the allocated contact person they can speak to about their complaint.
4. The Stella College CEO investigates complaints or refers matters to appropriate Stella College personnel for investigation. In either case, investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the complaint as soon as practicable and within twenty (20) working days of the complaint being received in writing.

Complainants are given an opportunity to formally present their case at no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

An up-to-date status is made available to the complainant upon request and at regular intervals.

Decisions and outcomes of all complaints are merit-based decisions that consider all available evidence. Stella College ensures complaints are considered with an open mind and without bias arising from any past issues with the complainant. Issues raised in complaints are analysed to determine cause(s) and the root cause evident.

5. Complainants are advised on the outcome of complaints in writing, including detailed reason(s) for the outcome, explanations for decisions and remedies where appropriate.

The Stella College ensures appropriate responses to complaints are provided promptly, addressing the needs and expectations of complainants while aligning with Stella College policies and legal obligations.

Responses are designed to resolve the complaint effectively and prevent recurrence where applicable.

Implementation Considerations

The Stella College will take into account the following when deciding on and implementing responses:

- Addressing all aspects of the complaint comprehensively to ensure resolution.
- Conducting follow-ups where appropriate to confirm complainant satisfaction and resolution effectiveness.
- Determining if it is suitable to extend remedies to others who might have been similarly affected but did not file formal complaints.
- Ensuring the level of authority required for approving various types of responses.
- Ensuring the dissemination of information about the response to relevant personnel for proper action and future prevention.

All approvals related to the responses must be recorded in the Complaints Register, including the name and role of the approver. If an approver is unavailable, the request should be escalated to the next level of authority.

This procedure ensures all responses are effectively authorised, documented, communicated effectively to the complainant, and aligned with the overall complaints-handling framework. With this notification, all complainants receive information on how they can progress their complaint if still unhappy.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints process, they may:

(a) Lodge an appeal under the Stella College Appeals Policy; or

(b) Refer the matter directly to an independent external body at no cost: — Resolution Institute: www.resolution.institute | 1800 651 650 or Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA): www.asqa.gov.au

Stella College will provide the complainant with the contact details of the relevant external body upon request.

Stella College securely maintains records of all details of the complaints process and retains evidence of all documentation relevant. Each complaint and its outcome are recorded via the Complaints Register. This register is on Stella College drive.

6. If a complainant, on receiving the written outcome of their complaint, remains dissatisfied, they may (a) request internal escalation to a senior decision-maker who had no involvement in the original matter, or (b) refer the matter for independent external review to the Resolution Institute (www.resolution.institute, 1800 651 650) at no cost, or to ASQA. Where the complaint concerns a decision or conduct of the CEO or owner, internal escalation is bypassed and the matter is referred directly to the external body.

Escalated complaints are to include the following information:

- Submission date of complaints,
- Name of complainant,
- Nature of complaints,

- Reasons why the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the original complaint, and
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable).
7. The Chief Executive Officer refers the matter to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by Stella College.

Student Rights When Accessing External Review

Students have the right to:

- Access an external review at no cost
- Be supported by a representative or advocate
- Receive written outcomes
- Have their privacy and confidentiality protected

RTO Responsibilities

Stella College will:

- Provide students with clear information about external review options
- Cooperate fully with any investigation.
- Maintain all records of complaints, appeals, and external review outcomes
- Ensure no student is disadvantaged for lodging a complaint or appeal

Stella College gives due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the recommendations, including implementing the decision(s) or recommendation(s) and/or taking the preventive or corrective action(s) required by the decision and advises the appellant of that action in writing.

Complaints Processing Delays

If at any stage Stella College considers more than twenty (20) working days are required to process and finalise a complaint, Stella College:

- Informs the complainant in writing, including reasons why more time is required, and
- Regularly updates the complainant on the progress of the matter.

Improvement Actions

Stella College is committed to take appropriate action in any case where a complaint is substantiated. In cases where a complaint is upheld, Stella College endeavours to identify the root cause of the complaint and takes appropriate action to prevent the situation happening again.

Stella College maintains a Continuous Improvement Register for recording the receipt and management of improvement records.

Stella College:

- Regularly analyses complaints to identify trends and any further improvements needed,
- Audits the complaints process on an annual basis to assess its effectiveness and improve the complaints process as needed.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Stella College monitors and evaluates the complaints handling process to ensure complaints are handled objectively.

A process of performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting has been established and implemented.

The Stella College continually improves the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Process performance and outcomes are regularly audited to identify and remove causes of existing and potential problems, as well as to uncover any opportunities for improvement. Please refer to the Quality Policy for further information on the monitoring and evaluation process.

Document Control

Document Name		Complaint Policy and Procedure
Approved By	CEO	
Version No.	Reviewed Date	Changes/ Revisions
Version 1.0	July 2025	Revised after the revision of 2025 RTO Standards came in force
Version 1.5	September 2025	Revised to incorporate rebranding from TPSC to Stella College.
Version 2.0	April 2026	Revised to incorporate more information as part of continuous improvement.