

Feedback Policy (Compliments and Complaints)

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to describe how the Institute manages feedback made by students, staff, and stakeholders. The policy aims to promote a culture of accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring that feedback is effectively collected, addressed, analysed and reported.

2.0 Scope

The policy applies to anyone who wants to provide feedback or make a complaint to the Institute about any matter. Feedback can be provided to the Institute by anyone; whether they are a student, member of the public, employee, contractor or supplier.

Feedback or complaints can be made in a variety of ways, including via telephone, email, online (including BKI managed social media channels) or by post.

Allegations of suspected improper conduct or corruption must be made and responded to confidentially using the process outlined in the Institute's *Improper Conduct Policy*.

This policy does not include the rights of appeal for an assessment judgement, which is covered under the *Assessment Appeals Procedure* and the *Training and Assessment Policy*.

3.0 Legislative Context

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Wildlife and Small Institutions Animal Committee Procedures for complaints 2019, section 5.1
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992(Cth)
- TAFE VET Funding Contract
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
- National Code of Practice 2018
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Standards for RTO's 2015
- Guidelines for Non-school Senior Secondary Education Providers 2017
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic); Child Safe Standard 5 and 7
- Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals For Scientific Purposes 8th Edition 2013 (Updated 2021)

4.0 Policy Statement

Bendigo Kangan Institute (BKI) is committed to fostering a culture that values feedback and encourages the reporting of concerns. Our policy ensures that staff are adequately trained and supported to manage, consider, and respond to feedback and concerns effectively. The Institute is dedicated to responding promptly, providing appropriate resolution, and implementing improvements based on received feedback.

Feedback can come in the form of a compliment or a complaint. Both aim to drive improvements or a

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Doc Custodian: Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance

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remedy in how the Institute provides its services.

A complaint, also known as a grievance, is an expression of dissatisfaction by anyone with:

- the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by the Institute, anyone under the Institute's oversight or an Institute contractor; or
- a delay or failure in providing a service, taking an action, or making a decision by the Institute or an Institute contractor.

4.1 Policy Principles

The Institute's feedback process observes the following principles:

Commitment BKI is committed to resolving complaints with discretion, integrity, in a timely manner and advising the expected timeframe for a response.

Accessibility People can easily find out how to make a complaint and BKI will actively assist them with the process. Where a person makes a complaint, they will be able to share their experience and can use a support person.

Transparency The complaint handling policy and system clearly sets out how to complain, where to complain, and how the complaint will be handled.

Objectivity and Fairness Under the complaint handling policy, both complainants and staff are treated with respect and courtesy and complaints are judged on merit and fact. Anyone who is subject to a decision or action by the Institute or someone acting on behalf of the Institute can tell their side of the story before a decision is made.

Confidentiality BKI's Privacy Policy protects the personal information of people making a complaint and staff are informed only on a 'need to know' basis. The Institute will always consider feedback, even if it is provided by a person who chooses to remain anonymous. Generally, the Institute will only share information about the outcome of feedback to and deal directly with the person impacted by the feedback

Accountability BKI is accountable for its decision-making and complaint-handling performance. BKI will provide reasons for decisions and ensure that our decisions are subject to appropriate review processes.

Continuous improvement BKI will analyse complaint data to find ways to improve how we operate and deliver our services.

4.2 Providing and Receiving Feedback

The Institute encourages feedback to be provided using the Institute's *Feedback / Complaints* form, available on its websites. If you provide feedback and do not use the *Feedback / Complaints* online form, the Institute staff member dealing with your feedback will initiate the consideration of your feedback by completing the online form.

Most feedback is responded within 10 business days. BKI may require additional time to resolve feedback (beyond 10 days) due to feedback complexity and/or the feedback is subject to investigation. During the process, the Institute will inform you of progress at reasonable intervals (at least every ten days). If feedback response is expected beyond 60 days, the Institute will clearly explain the reasons

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why.

You will be informed of any decisions or outcomes following a complaint reported. You will receive a written record with confirmation of:

- The decision or outcome and the reasons for the decision or outcome
- How you can request an internal review of a decision or outcome
- Your rights to access external review of a complaint.

4.3 The Four Tier Approach

The Institute's feedback process follows a 'Four Tier' Approach to considering feedback, addressed below.



Level 1 - Frontline Resolution

Frontline staff are delegated the authority to resolve complaints wherever possible. Frontline resolution is generally used where the concerns represented are simple, non-contentious, and/or do not require the Institute to prove or disprove an allegation that relates to the reputation of a person or the Institute. Most complaints about the administrative application of policies, procedures or service delivery are appropriate for frontline resolution.

Level 2 - Investigation

An internal investigation may be required where feedback presents complex or sensitive issues. Investigations are reserved for more serious types of complaints, such as those that relate to the health, safety and wellbeing of people or the conduct and reputation of individuals. Case by case assessments are conducted to decide if an investigation is needed.

Level 3 - Internal Review

Internal Review refers to the process of independent review over the way an issue has been handled, including the way a complaint has been assessed and responded to. This process is generally available after feedback has been considered and responded to or where there is a delay in addressing feedback.

Requests for internal review can be made by contacting the Office of the Chief Executive Office or expressing this request to a BKI staff member. A person requesting an internal review should:

- make clear why they consider the person who considered their feedback has made the wrong decision, such as:
 - BKI policies and procedures were not followed, and this resulted in a genuine disadvantage to a person subject to a decision;
 - The decision is clearly wrong, or the outcome is disproportionate; or
 - There was a bias or a conflict of interest on part of the original decision maker.
- provide information in support of their request, and

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- tell the Institute about any applicable deadlines or reasons for the complaint to be determined in a particular timeframe.

Level 4 – External review

When the Institute responds to feedback, it provides the person who provided the feedback with information about their rights of appeal and/or review by external authorities including the Victorian Ombudsman and Australian Skills Qualification Authority (ASQA).

4.4 Dispute Resolutions

Other dispute resolution options may be available, such as mediation and conciliation, or engaging a different external body. Either party can request a conciliation process via the Dispute Settlement Centre. On a case-by-case basis the Institute will consider engaging an accredited arbitrator or mediator, to which all parties to the complaint must agree to using. Each party bears their own costs associated with bringing an optional support person to any alternative dispute resolution process.

4.5 Corrective Actions and Continuous Improvement

The Institute considers complaint themes and analytics which is reported monthly. Additionally, BKI seeks to analyse potential causes of complaints and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of a reoccurrence. BKI maintains a continuous improvement register to support the implementation of corrective actions and improvements.

4.6 Records and Confidentiality

When a complaint is made, the Institute makes records of all parties involved, including the outcomes of a complaint and reasons for decisions made at the end of the process. All records relating to complaints are confidential and are subject to the Institute's *Privacy and FOI Procedure*, which includes information about how to request access. The Institute retains records of all complaints for a period of at least seven years.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Allocated Officer	<p>Assess and respond to the Feedback in consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Communicate with the person who provided the feedback throughout the process</p>

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Role	Responsibilities
Head of Governance Risk and Compliance	<p>In conjunction with their team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversees the implementation of the policy. Triage the feedback to Allocated Officer and allocates internal reviews and investigations. Provides guidance and support on complaint resolution and process. Develops business tools to support compliant resolution and continuous improvement. Facilitates thematic reporting and insights. Engages independent external reviewer and activates alternative dispute resolution processes, as relevant.
Head of Brand and Marketing	Ensure policy available through publication in both the Student Handbook and on the Institute's websites:
Senior Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the consideration and resolution of escalated or complex complaints. Drive feedback culture throughout the Institute.

6.0 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Allocated Officer	The BKI staff member assigned to manage and respond to the feedback.
ASQA	<p>Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector. ASQA accepts complaints and feedback about training providers from students and all members of the community.</p> <p>https://www.asqa.gov.au/students/complaints</p>
Complaint	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by the Institute, anyone under the Institute's oversight or an Institute contractor. a delay or failure in providing a service, taking an action, or making a decision by the Institute or an Institute contractor.
Compliment	An expression of praise or satisfaction with the quality of experience or service provided by the Institute.
Feedback	Information about reactions to a product, a person's performance of a task which is used as the basis for driving improvement. Feedback can come in the form of complaints or compliments.

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Word/Term	Definition
Victorian Ombudsman	The role of the Victorian Ombudsman is to keep government and public organisations accountable. They do this by investigating complaints about government, the conduct of officials, or broad areas of public interest. Their aim is to improve public administration and decision making. https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/complaints/

7.0 Supporting Policy Documents and Forms

Document Name
Feedback Procedure (Compliments and Complaints)
Fees Charges and Refunds Policy
Employee Code of Conduct Policy
Online Feedback Form
Speak Up Policy
Student Code of Conduct Policy
Student Welfare and Accessibility Policy

8.0 Version Control and Change History

Ver.	Issue Date	Document Custodian	Description of Change	Approval Authority
1.0	02 Jul 2018	Manager Academic	-	CEO
2.0	28 Aug 2019	Manager Academic Governance and Quality	Remove exclusions re corrections students and include process to de-identify records.	Board of Studies
2.1	06 Feb 2020	Chief Academic Officer	Amendments required in order to ensure adherence with VRQA, CRICOS and ASQA Standards.	Board of Studies
3.0	20 Aug 2021	Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	Aligned to Feedback Framework 2021, simplified.	Chief Governance and Quality Officer

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4.0	15 Mar 2021	Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	Elements of policy transferred to procedure, reference to 'specified criteria added, maintenance of continuous improvement register added.	Chief Governance and Quality Officer
5.0	25 June 2024	Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realigned policy to the current policy template. • Scope expanded to confirm channels of feedback • Policy statement broken up into sections and reorganised. Content also trimmed streamlined and changed to align to current practice. • Added roles and responsibility section • Added definition section • Added supporting policy documents section 	Chief Operating Officer

9.0 Document Owner and Approval Body

Document Custodian	Approval Authority	Approval Date	Next Scheduled Review Date
Head of Governance, Risk and Compliance	Chief Operating Officer	24/06/2024	24/06/2026

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