P003 Complaints and Appeals Policy (VET)

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Collarts receives, manages and resolves complaints and appeals from VET students and others fairly, promptly and confidentially, and uses them to improve.

2. Scope

It applies to complaints about the conduct of Collarts, its trainers, assessors or other staff, a third party providing services on Collarts' behalf, or a student of Collarts, and to requests to review decisions, including assessment decisions.

Prospective, current and former students and other parties may use it, whatever their location or study mode.

This policy applies to all three delivery models: direct delivery by Collarts staff, third-party delivery on Collarts' behalf, and auspice (VETDSS) arrangements with secondary schools. Where a requirement differs by model or funding source, the policy says so.

3. Definition of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Appeal	A request to review a decision made by Collarts or a third party on its behalf, including an assessment decision.
Complaint	An expression of dissatisfaction about a Collarts service, staff member, third party or student.
Natural justice	Ensuring procedural fairness: decisions are free from bias, all parties have the right to be heard, the respondent knows what they are accused of, and all parties are told the decision and the reasons.

4. Principles

- Complaints and appeals are treated seriously, fairly, consistently and confidentially, without victimisation.
- Students can always come directly to Collarts, even when a third party or school delivers their training.
- The process is free, publicly available and has clear timeframes (Outcome Standards 2.7 and 2.8).
- Outcomes are documented and used to improve services (Outcome Standard 4.4).

5. How to make a complaint or appeal

- Informally: talk to the trainer or staff member involved. Students of a third party or school may also use that organisation's process first, but can go to Collarts at any stage.
- Formally: complete the VET Complaint Form or VET Appeal Form (available on the Collarts website and Canvas) and send it to vet.support@collarts.edu.au, or ask staff for help to lodge it verbally.
- Appeals against an assessment decision should be lodged within 20 working days of being told the result.

- A complainant or appellant may bring a support person to any meeting. It is not expected this will be a legal representative.

6. Stages and timeframes

Stage	What happens	Timeframe
Acknowledgement	The Head of VET acknowledges the formal complaint or appeal in writing.	Within 5 working days
Stage 1 – Head of VET	The Head of VET investigates, hears all parties and decides. For assessment appeals, a different assessor reviews the evidence.	Decision in writing with reasons within 20 working days
Stage 2 – Internal review	If not satisfied, the person may ask for a review by the Dean or a senior manager not involved in the original decision.	Lodge within 20 working days; decision within 10 working days
Stage 3 – Independent review	If still not satisfied, Collarts arranges independent mediation or review at no cost to the student.	Arranged within 10 working days
If longer is needed	If Collarts considers more than 60 calendar days are needed, it tells the person in writing why and gives regular updates.	—

The student's enrolment continues while a complaint or appeal is being resolved, unless there is a safety risk.

7. External options

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA): feedback about a possible breach of the Standards for RTOs can be lodged through asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au (ASQA info line 1300 701 801).
- Victorian Ombudsman (ombudsman.vic.gov.au) and Consumer Affairs Victoria (consumer.vic.gov.au), for complaints not resolved by Collarts or fee and refund disputes.
- Skills First Students: the Victorian Government's TAFE and Training Line (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions) on 13 18 23 (8:30 am–4:30 pm, Monday–Friday) or tafe.courseline@djsir.vic.gov.au. More information is at vic.gov.au/make-complaint-student. Collarts cooperates with the Department in resolving complaints (VET Funding Contract cl 4.9(i)).
- Privacy complaints: the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner or the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner.
- Nothing in this policy limits a person's rights under Australian Consumer Law or other legal remedies.

8. Delivery models

Delivery model	How complaints and appeals are handled
Direct delivery	Managed by Collarts under this policy.
Third-party delivery	The third party must tell students about this policy, pass any complaint about its services to Collarts within 2 working days, and cooperate with investigations. Collarts decides formal complaints and appeals.
Auspice (VETDSS)	Students and parents may use the school's process first; unresolved matters are referred to the Head of VET. Students under 18 may be supported by a parent or guardian.

9. Records and improvement

- All formal complaints and appeals are recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register with the outcome and any improvement action.
- Records are kept securely and confidentially in line with the P026 Records Management Policy (VET). Parties may have supervised access to their own records.
- The Head of VET reviews the register each semester for trends and reports them through the Continuous Improvement Register.
- This policy is published on the Collarts website (VET Funding Contract, Schedule 1, cl 1.3(e)).

10. Appeals and complaints

This policy is itself the complaints and appeals process. Queries can be directed to the Head of VET on 1300 818 777 or vet.support@collarts.edu.au.

11. References and Related Legislation

- Standards for RTOs 2025 – Outcome Standards 2.7, 2.8 and 4.4
- 2026 VET Funding Contract – Skills First Program, cl 4.9(i); Schedule 1, cl 1.3(e); Skills First Quality Charter Principle 6
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth); Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

12. Related Policies and Associated Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- SOP003 Complaints and Appeals Procedure (VET)
- P010 Third Party Arrangements Policy (VET)
- P018 Academic Integrity Policy (VET)
- P012 Privacy and Data Breach Policy (VET)
- P014 Continuous Improvement and Risk Management Policy (VET)
- VET Complaint Form; VET Appeal Form; Complaints and Appeals Register

13. Policy Information

This policy is made available to:

- currently enrolled students via MyCollarts (login required)
- current staff via the Staff Intranet (login required)
- other individuals, including prospective students, via the Collarts website

Policy Name:	P003 Complaints and Appeals Policy (VET) – replaces P003-2025 RTO Complaints & Appeals and the Complaints Grievance Policy
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Responsible Officer:	Head of VET
Endorsed (date):	16th October 2026
Approved (date):	16th October 2026
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Next review:	Q4 2027

Document history

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Approved by
2021	02/03/2021	RTO_VETDSS Complaint & Appeals 2021 – rebranded.	Head of VET
2025	2025	Updated to refer to the Standards for RTOs 2025.	Head of VET
26.1	October 2026	Rewritten on the Collarts template for all VET students and delivery models; adds Outcome Standards 2.7–2.8 requirements, acknowledgement and decision timeframes, independent review at no cost, Skills First Department contact and cooperation, third-party obligations, and the complaints register;	Head of VET