

Feedback and Complaints Management Policy

This policy was developed in conjunction with ACT Education Directorate *Complaints Policy* and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) policies and procedures for handling specific appeals and complaints.

Feedback

The BSSS encourages and welcomes both positive and negative feedback as part of its continuous improvement strategy.

Feedback is provided to the BSSS through a variety of channels. These include:

- BSSS Enquiries, accessed through the BSSS website
- written correspondence
- emails or phone calls to officers in the BSSS Secretariat, known as the Office of the BSSS
- meetings with client groups
- focus groups
- reference groups
- BSSS committees
- BSSS meetings
- BSSS forums
- questionnaires completed by colleges

Feedback is actioned in ways and timeframes suited to its nature and purpose. These include:

- revision of policy and procedures
- development of new policy and procedures
- a response clarifying policy and procedures
- a response indicating action taken

A response to written feedback (letter or email) should be provided within 20 working days.

When receiving oral feedback, the recipient should indicate what will be done with the feedback.

Complaints

The BSSS is committed to responding to complaints in a timely and positive manner. This enables staff, students, parents, and community members to contribute to the BSSS' continuous improvement strategy.

The BSSS complaints handling processes are designed to provide efficient, fair, accessible, and transparent mechanisms for resolving complaints in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

A complaint can be verbal or in writing and may be formal or informal. A formal complaint is a complaint which is:

- submitted by letter or email, or
- lodged via the *BSSS Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form* (Attachment B), or
- a verbal complaint.

which cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving the complaint.

An informal complaint is a verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction which is resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving it.

Complaints will be handled responsively, openly and in a timely manner, with the aim of resolving complaints at the frontline level of service delivery.

The OBSSS procedures for handling general complaints are at Attachment A

In addition to general complaint handling procedures, the BSSS has policies and procedures for handling specific appeals and complaints. A list is at Attachment C.

A list of external agencies which handle complaints is at Attachment D.

BSSS Procedures for handling general complaints

Every effort should be made to resolve the complaint at the level at which it is made.

Upon receiving a complaint, consider if it is a matter for the BSSS or the responsibility of another area/organisation. If it is not a BSSS matter, refer the complainant on to the responsible area.

If the complaint is about a BSSS matter covered by a specific policy or procedure (see Attachment B), refer the complainant to the relevant policy/procedure and/or contact person, as appropriate.

A verbal complaint that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant by the officer receiving it is to be documented on the *BSSS Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form* (Attachment B) by the officer receiving the complaint.

The BSSS Complaints Officer is the Executive Director, BSSS. All formal complaints are to be referred to the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer is responsible for maintaining a complaints database.

Written complaints should be acknowledged within five working days and the proposed timeframe required to resolve the complaint should be indicated to the complainant as early as possible in the process. Further, complainants should be kept informed of progress towards resolving the complaint.

The response to the issues raised by the complainant should be in a non-judgemental and courteous manner. Complainants should be reassured that their complaint will not lead to discrimination.

Complainants with special needs will be offered reasonable assistance to make their complaint.

The person or area about whom the complaint is made will have the right to be advised of the complaint and the identity of the complainant.

No action will be taken on anonymous complaints except in exceptional circumstances.

Feedback and Complaint Lodgement Form

If you have a suggestion, concern, or complaint, please let us know. Please complete this form and send it to:

Executive Director
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies
GPO Box 158
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or email to: bss.enquiries@act.gov.au

Which service or college is involved?

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We encourage you to raise issues with the relevant officer providing the service or the principal of the college concerned in the first instance.

What would you like to tell us?

Suggestion Concern Complaint

Have you discussed the issue with the relevant officer or college principal?

Yes No

Please provide details of the matter: (if insufficient space, please provide details on separate sheet)

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What would you like to happen?

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Would you like a response to your feedback?

Yes No

Please provide your contact details:

Name:

Address:

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Email:

Contact number(s):

Signature:

Date:

We will keep your personal information confidential as far as is possible. However there may be some circumstances when your personal information will need to be provided to others as part of the process of addressing your suggestion, concern or complaint. Personal information may also be released under the provisions of the *Information Privacy Act 2014* and may be subject to release under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*. We will keep this form as part of our records.

BSSS Policies and Procedures for Handling Specific Appeals and Complaints

<i>Complaint</i>	<i>BSSS Policy/Procedure</i>	<i>Source</i>
School-based assessment	BSSS policy (Refer in first instance to the school policy and procedures)	Policy and Procedures Manual Appeals Section 7 Assessment Section 4
Special Provisions for the AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6.6
Review of LD status for AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.6.8.2
Non-serious attempt at AST	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 6.4
Scaled scores/ATAR	No appeal against scaled scores/ATAR	
Issuing certificate	Legislation BSSS policy	BSSS Act 1997, Sections 26A, 27 Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 8.11
Register Specialist Education Provider	Legislation	BSSS Act 1997, Schedule 1
Accredit/register course	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 3
Requirement for courses to be presented for moderation	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5
Moderation Day review decision	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5.3.2.9
Conduct at Moderation Day	BSSS policy	Policy and Procedures Manual, Section 5.3.2.10

External Agencies

In some instances, further assistance may be available from an external agency. The complainant may refer their complaint to one of the following external agencies at any time. Complainants are encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss their concern with the Executive Director, Office of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Agency	Further information is available from:
ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal: for reviews of certain of decisions made under legislation including the: <i>Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 2016</i>	Phone: 02 6207 1740 www.acat.act.gov.au
ACT Human Rights Commission: complaints of unlawful discrimination, contravention of the health privacy principles or about services for children and young people and services to persons with disabilities and their carers	Phone: 02 6205 2222 www.hrc.act.gov.au
ACT Ombudsman: complaints about the Board's administrative actions and decisions	Phone: 02 5119 5518 www.ombudsman.act.gov.au
Australian Human Rights Commission: complaints of unlawful discrimination	Phone: 1300 369 711 www.humanrights.gov.au
Information Commissioner: complaints about an unlawful breach of a person's personal information	Phone: 1300 363 992 www.oaic.gov.au