

- PROCEDURE -

Assessment Decision Appeals

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Procedure Statement

This document outlines the procedures and responsibilities associated with the resolution of issues relating to assessment decisions in accordance with the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#) and the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

Scope

This procedure covers Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) students for assessment decisions as determined by TAFE SA assessors and/or third parties representing TAFE SA.

This procedure does not seek to limit or prevent the right of any person to seek the assistance of an independent person or relevant external agency for the resolution of an academic grievance.

Should an academic grievance related to assessment be referred to an outside body, the internal assessment appeal procedures of TAFE SA may be suspended pending the outcome of the external review, unless directed otherwise by the external body.

Appeals relating to assessment results are to be treated seriously, expeditiously, and sensitively with due regard to procedural fairness, confidentiality and without any discrimination or victimisation.

Assessment appeals should be resolved by a process of discussion, co-operation and conciliation, with the aim of reaching an acceptable outcome that minimises any potential detriment to ongoing work or study relationships.

TAFE SA educators, assessors and students are expected to participate in the assessment appeals and academic grievance handling procedures in good faith.

Valid and Invalid reasons for Appealing an Assessment Outcome

Valid reasons or grounds for appealing an assessment outcome include but are not limited to,

- > Inconsistent Instruction
 - the Assessment result was not based on the specified assessment instructions, requirements, or conditions. provided as part of the assessment requirements,
- > Submission deadline error
 - a piece of work submitted on time, was incorrectly assessed as a late submission,
- > Untimely Feedback
 - the student felt/believed that progress in the course was disadvantaged because feedback was not provided in a timely manner for the student to improve,

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- written feedback for improvement was not provided to the student. Refer to the Conducting Assessment Procedure (link) for provision of feedback.
- > Subjectivity in Assessment
 - the assessor demonstrated bias against the student which affected the result,
 - the assessor did not consider 'reasonable adjustments' as stated on student access plan.
- > Result entry error
 - an administrative error occurred in entering a result,
- > Inconsistency between feedback and result
 - the assessor's written feedback was inconsistent with the final result given,
- > Inconsistent application of marking/benchmark
 - the standard or benchmark applied to marking the assessment piece was incorrect or inconsistently applied.
- > Technical Issue
 - Technical issue(s) associated with submission, supported by evidence of issue (photo/ screenshot)

Invalid reasons for requesting a review of a result include: (but are not limited to)

- > Ignoring previous feedback
 - the student has not incorporated or adopted written feedback provided by educator(s) from the first submission/attempt or previous formative assessment.
- > Not applying for an accommodation
 - personal or medical conditions without applying for an extension, special provisions, or reasonable adjustment.
- > Concerns about financial implications
 - financial implications of failing a course.
- > Unhappy with the result
 - dissatisfaction with the result awarded.
- > Study Overload
 - a study overload.
- > Comparing grades
 - a grade inconsistent to those received from the assessor in other courses or for other students.
- > Unsubstantiated Claims
 - appeals must be based on concrete evidence and specific reasons,
 - unsubstantiated claims without supporting evidence are unlikely to be successful.
- > Personal Preference for a Different Assessor
 - Appeals cannot be made simply because a student prefers to be assessed by an alternative assessor.

Timeframe to Appeal an Assessment Outcome

Students can lodge an appeal within fourteen (14) calendar days of the result notification or the date of resulting in SIS (whichever is the latest date).

Refer to Conducting Assessment Procedure (link) for guidance on assessment marking, decisions, and outcomes.

Assessment Decision Appeal Procedure

1. Students are encouraged to be familiar with this procedure and to utilise TAFE SA Student Services for support, when considering or lodging an appeal.
2. Students have the right to be accompanied or represented by a support person such as a family member, friend, or counsellor when discussing assessment appeals with TAFE SA staff.
3. When a determination has been made by a student to appeal an assessment decision, the student must either:
 - > verbally discuss the appeal directly with the assessor/s; or
 - > contact the assessor/s via email to inform them in writing of the appeal and what they believe is the valid reason(s) for the appeal.
4. When an assessor is informed verbally, the assessor should take a written record of the grounds of the appeal. The record should appropriately reflect any verbal conversation made regarding appeal and be provided to the student, along with the opportunity to adjust as needed.
5. All appeals must be reviewed by the assessor, and where appropriate the facilitating educator and the Principal Lecturer. Where there is no Principal Lecturer the Educational Manager is to be consulted.
6. The Principal Lecturer and/or Educational Manager deem whether the appeal is based on valid reason. Where the appeal is deemed valid the Principal Lecturer/Educational Manager will determine the need for to engage an alternative assessor to verify results applied and, where required, have the student re-assessed.
7. Principal Lecturers/ Education Managers are to provide a written response to the student, as to the outcome of the appeal within seven (7) calendar days. Where the determination is that reassessment ~~is~~ should occur, the response must include where and when reassessment will occur, details relating to location, time, contact personnel, and assessor details.

External Procedure

Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome determined, they can raise their concerns in alternative external forums.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, this may be:

[Ombudsman SA](#) deals with complaints about South Australian state and local government.

[Equal Opportunity SA](#) promotes equality of opportunity to prevent certain kinds of discrimination and helps South Australians participate in our community, or the

[South Australian Skills Commission](#) can assist students, apprentices or trainees through dedicated complaint handling, advocacy and dispute resolution services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All parties must act reasonably and in good faith, disclosing information only to those legitimately involved in resolving the appeal. Unnecessary disclosure may also incur liability, and/or disciplinary action for breach of confidentiality.

Records and outcomes of assessment appeals will be kept confidential in the student's file.

System Improvement

TAFE SA acknowledges that the grievance process sometimes provides excellent learning opportunities for system improvements.

Academic grievances and assessment decision appeals will be used in the continuous improvement of assessment tools and materials. Business units will undertake industry engagement and validation of assessment judgement activities to continuously improve benchmarks and model answers applied in assessment at TAFE SA.

Assessment appeals will be routinely reported against via the TAFE SA complaint management system. Any reasonable recommendation for improvement arising at any stage of this process will be submitted to the Executive Director of Academic Development TAFE SA, for consideration in policy and procedural documentation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Business Unit Directors	Ensure that education and administration staff are aware of and adhere to processes and responsibilities associated with academic grievances at TAFE SA.
Educational Managers	Ensure that assessment is conducted by appropriately qualified assessors who adhere to the requirements outlined in the Assessment Policy, Conducting Assessment Procedure and Assessment Decision Appeals Procedure.
Principal Lecturers	Lead capability development activity with educators/lecturers/assessors that ensure assessment is conducted with integrity, transparency and fairness, and the Assessment Appeals Procedure is adhered to.
Lecturers/Educators/Assessors	Administer and respond to assessment appeals in accordance with the Assessment Policy, and associated procedures.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Assessment Decision	The decision made by an assessor, reflecting a student's result on an assessment.
Assessment Appeal	The review of an assessor's decision.
Assessment	Assessment means the process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package, a VET accredited course or HE.
Procedural Fairness	Procedural Fairness (also called "natural justice") means the basic principles considered central to fair decision making and which can be summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The opportunity for all parties to be heard. > The respondent having full knowledge of the nature and substance of the appeal. > The right to an independent, unbiased decision.

Associated Documents and References

Document Type/ Number	Document/Reference Title
Code of Ethics	Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector
PPMF TAFE SA 1010	TAFE SA Respectful Behaviours Policy
Standards for RTOs	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
ESOS Act	Education and Training to Overseas Students Act 2000
TEQSA Act	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
Higher Education Standards Framework	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cwlth)
PPMF TAFESA 1158	International Students Procedure: Attendance & Course Progress
PPMF TAFESA 38	Access and Equity Policy

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Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Disability Standards for Education	Disability Standards for Education 2005
PPMF TAFESA 1099	Resulting Policy
PPMF TAFESA 1100	Resulting Procedure
PPMF TAFE SA 1227	TAFE SA Student Retention and Academic Progression Policy
PPMF TAFE SA 1228	TAFE SA Student Retention and Academic Progression Procedure

Document Control

TAFE SA procedures must undertake a full review process, including relevant stakeholder consultation and approval, at least every two years from the date of approval. Reviews may be actioned earlier according to related policy or procedure updates and/or reviews, strategic priorities, reforms, legislative or regulatory changes, or feedback received.

Approved by			
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