

# Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar Ltd

A.C.N. 081 055 110  
RTO 3948 CRICOS 01812M VET Fee-HELP Provider: 7052



## Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure

### Policy

The Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar (MRSS) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints handling system which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge.

The MRSS aims to:

- Develop a culture that views complaints as an opportunity to improve the RTO and how it operates;
- Set in place a complaints handling and resolution procedure that is student focussed and helps the RTO to prevent complaints from recurring;
- Ensure that any complaints are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
- Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a complaint is not discriminated against nor victimised;
- Ensure that there is a consistent response to complaints.

It is MRSS's policy to respond promptly and effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction by utilising the procedure set out in this document.

### Definition of a complaint

A complaint can be defined as a student's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the services and activities of the MRSS including both academic and non-academic matters relating to:

- a) *academic matters* from the VET provider's students who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the *Act*.
- b) *non-academic matters* from the VET provider's students who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the *Act*;
- b) *non-academic matters* from persons seeking to enrol with the VET provider in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the *Act* and who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the *Act*;

It may cover, but is not limited to, such matters as:

- The enrolment, induction/orientation or FEE-HELP application process;
- The quality of training or assessment provided;
- The way someone has been treated;
- Access to personal records including information obtained by MRSS for the purposes of VET FEE-HELP Assistance and repayment of HELP loans;
- Breaches of personal information by MRSS.
- Applications for special consideration for withdrawal or non-completion

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For the purposes of this policy “students” are defined as:

*Both students and potential students, enrolled, or seeking to enrol, in a VET course of study with Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar Ltd.*

Students are entitled to access these complaints handling procedures regardless of the location of campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student’s place of residence or their mode of study.

## **Before an issue becomes a formal complaint**

Students are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned. The coordinators are available to assist students to resolve their issues at this level.

## **Relationship to the Essential Standards and HESA**

This policy and procedure is designed to meet the requirements of Essential Standard 2.6 which requires that complaints and appeals are addressed efficiently and effectively. This policy and procedure is also designed to capture data to assist the RTO to continuously improve its operations as required by Essential Standards 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1. This policy is also designed to meet Schedule 1A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

## **Procedure**

This procedure is designed to be utilised by students or prospective students who wish to lodge a formal complaint. Where an enrolled student lodges a formal complaint, their enrolment will be maintained throughout the process. There is no cost for lodging a complaint or an appeal. The complainant and/or respondent may be accompanied and assisted by a third party if desired at any stage of this procedure. If requested by the complainant and/or respondent, a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be provided.

### **Stage One:**

Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Course Coordinator or other nominated impartial Senior Officer. The receipt of any complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 5 days and the complaints process will commence within 10 days of the receipt of the complaint.

The Course Coordinator or their nominee (“the MRSS representative”) will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview with the complainant, they may ask another person to accompany them. The MRSS representative will then endeavour to resolve the complaint, providing a written report to the complainant within 20 working days on the steps that will be taken to address the complaint, clearly stating the reasons for the decision.

A *Complaint Handling Record Sheet* will be initiated during Stage One and details of the complaint, any actions arising and the outcome of the complaint will be recorded.

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## **Stage Two:**

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may appeal the decision reached in Stage One in writing to the CEO within 15 days of receiving the written report of the outcome of Stage One. The CEO will appoint a person who was not involved in the original decision to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties. Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews so that the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case. The complainant may ask another person to accompany them to interviews.

Once the CEO receives a report of the consultation procedure, they will provide a written report to the complainant on the further steps taken to address the complaint, clearly stating the reasons for the decision.

## **Stage Three:**

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may make a written request to the MRSS that they wish the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process facilitated by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

The MRSS will then advise ACPET in writing of the request within 5 working days. ACPET will arrange for a Round Table Discussion (RTD) to be held between the RTO and the complainant within 10 working days of the written notification from the RTO. ACPET do not charge a fee for this service.

If the matter remains unresolved after the RTD then ACPET will appoint an independent mediator within 14 working days of the RTD. ACPET plays no role in the actual mediation. It is then up to the mediator, the complainant and the RTO to resolve the complaint.

The complainant and/or respondent may ask another person to accompany them to meetings with ACPET or the mediator.

The mediator will report to the *Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar* the outcome of the mediation, including any recommendations arising, within 14 days of the completion of the review. Once the RTO receives the report of the outcomes from the RTD or independent mediation, they will provide a written report to the complainant within 10 working days on the recommended actions to resolve the grievance.

The MRSS agrees to be bound by the independent mediator's recommendations and will ensure that any recommendations are referred to the *Continuous Improvement Committee* for action.

## **Further Action:**

If the complaint still remains unresolved, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority or contact the *National Training Complaints Hotline* on 13 38 73.

If you are not satisfied with the decision made on your application regarding special circumstances, you should apply to us for a review of the decision.

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The time limit for applying for a review of a decision is 28 days from the day on which you first received notice of the decision.

If you are still not satisfied with the reconsideration decision, you can apply to the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)* for a review. Information about the contact details for the AAT, application procedures and application fees can be found at [www.aat.gov.au](http://www.aat.gov.au)

Nothing in this *Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure* replaces or modifies responsibilities or rights under any other policy or Federal or State statute or law. Thus it does not limit the rights of students to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws or circumscribe a student's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Any areas for improvement which arise where a complaint is found to be substantiated are documented in a Continuous Improvement Report and handled according to the Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure.

## **Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

Records of all complaints handled under this procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five years to allow all parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the RTO.

All records relating to complaints will be treated as confidential and will be covered by the MRSS's Personal Information Policy.

## **Publication**

This *Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure* will be published on the MRSS website and included in the student orientation process.

For the information of Staff this policy and procedure will be included in the Staff Handbook and in the staff professional development and induction processes.

## **Approval**

This *Complaints Handling and Resolution Policy and Procedure* was agreed to and ratified by the MRSS Board of Directors on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

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