COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES [NON-ACADEMIC]

Purpose
This procedure describes the process by which students and prospective students may have problems of a non-academic nature addressed effectively, efficiently, professionally and confidentially.

Scope
This policy and procedure applies to all persons enrolled with or seeking enrolment with Alpine Institute for the delivery of education, training and assessment services, (approved courses and units of study).

Students of Alpine Institute are entitled to use the complaints procedures set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus at which the complaint has arisen, the student’s place of residence or the mode in which they study. This procedure is free of charge.

Related References and Standards
This procedure the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards (2.6) or any other responsibilities under statute or any other law.

Availability
All students and prospective students will be provided access to Alpine Institute’s Complaints Policies and Procedures via the Institute’s intranet and via the student handbook.

Definitions
A complaint or appeal is deemed to be dissatisfaction with the procedures, outcomes or the quality of service provided by employees of Alpine Institute in relation to non-academic matters. Non-Academic matters arise from events occurring at a provider or from decisions made by a provider and will cover issues such as:

- complaints in relation to privacy/personal information that the provider holds in relation to the student
- discrimination
- unfairness and injustice
- vilification
- sexual harassment
- other forms of harassment, eg. bullying
- student amenities
- general complaints including dissatisfaction with services
- complaints about financial matters
- fines and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities and the use or misuse of personal information.

A complaint or appeal is deemed to be a formal complaint or appeal when it is lodged in writing with Alpine Institute
Policy

All disputes or complaints will be handled professionally and confidentially in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

All parties will have a clear understanding of the 3 stages involved in the complaint procedure.

Each appellant/complainant will be provided with the opportunity to present his or her case at each stage of the complaint process.

All complaints will be managed fairly and equitably and as efficiently as possible.

The complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any of the stages set out in this policy, or as a result of a complaint being raised.

Alpine Institute will encourage the parties to approach a complaint with an open view and attempt to resolve issues through discussion and conciliation. The policy provides an avenue for most complaints to be addressed. However, where a complaint cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation following the stages set out internally, Alpine Institute acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to moderate between the parties, as set out below.

Alpine Institute will endeavour to resolve any complaint referred to it by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) within ten working days of its receipt of the complaint.

This policy is communicated to academic and support staff through the Procedures Manual and the Institute’s website. The Human Resources Manager is responsible for the training of academic staff in the application of the policy.

At all stages of the process, the complainant and/or respondent have the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) if they so desire.

Discussions relating to complaints, complaints and appeals are to be recorded in writing during each stage of the process. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures will be given, if requested, by the complainant and/or respondent.

Student Privacy

Alpine Institute acknowledges and respects the privacy of students. It is required under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth) to comply with the national Information Privacy Principles in respect of the collection, use and disclosure of personal information from individuals.

Records of all complaints, applications for review of decisions and outcomes of the complaint process will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be strictly confidential and filed in a separate file (not kept on the student or staff file) and stored in the office of the Human Resources Manager for a period of five years.

Complaints Procedures

Students or people seeking to enrol in any accredited course of Alpine Institute have access to a three stage non-academic complaint process which is set out below.

Each stage is free of charge.

Stage 1

a) Initially, complaints and complaints should be discussed with the person/s involved.
b) If this is impracticable or unsatisfactory, students should communicate with the Human Resources Manager

The complaint will be documented and a resolution will be sought within 14 days of receipt of the complaint.

**Stage 2 Formal Complaint**

The second stage of the complaint process is as follows:

If dissatisfied with the response to the complaint or the time taken to resolve the matter under Stage 1, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Principal Executive Officer. The Principal Executive Officer will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within 10 days of receipt of the complaint.

**Stage 3 Appeals**

If not satisfied with the decision in Stage 2, the complainant may lodge an appeal which will be considered by the Alpine Institute Steering Committee. All complaints and appeals are monitored by the Alpine Institute Steering Committee.

**External Appeals**

If not satisfied with the decision in stage 3, the complainant may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process, by the body appointed by Alpine Institute for that purpose.

The details of this external body are:

- Dispute Assessment Officer
- Disputes Settlement Centre of Victoria
- Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street
- Melbourne VIC 3000
- Tel: 9603 8370

If the independent mediator makes recommendations in relation to a complaint they have reviewed, the Human Resources Manager or delegate will ensure that the recommendations are implemented within 21 days.

**Note**

The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under statute or any other law.

**Continuous Improvement**

Complaints raised through participation / association with the Alpine Institute will be presented in summary to the Alpine Institute Steering Committee, with the Human Resources Manager providing a summary of complaints at each committee meeting.

Alpine Institute Steering Committee will ensure that issues raised through complaints are considered within the continuous improvement activities of Alpine Institute, influencing the continuous development and improvement strategies and direction of the Institute.