Appeals Policy and Procedure

Quality Area 2: Student Engagement and Support
Standard Reference: Standard 2.8 – Standards for RTOs 2025

1. Purpose

To outline a fair, accessible and transparent process through which students and stakeholders may appeal decisions made by George brown College (GBC). This policy ensures that all appeals are addressed in a timely, respectful and unbiased manner, in alignment with the principles of natural justice and continuous improvement.

2. Rationale

The ability to appeal decisions made by an RTO is a critical component of a fair and transparent education and training environment. It upholds the rights of students to seek redress where they believe an error, oversight or unfair process has occurred. In the context of the Standards for RTOs 2025, a structured appeals process strengthens provider accountability and supports student confidence in the integrity of assessment, enrolment and progression decisions. It also enables GBC to review and improve its decision-making practices based on student feedback and evidence from appeal outcomes. This policy forms part of the broader self-assurance framework, contributing to the continuous improvement of systems, processes and student support mechanisms.

3. Policy Statement

GBC is committed to upholding the principles of procedural fairness, impartiality and student rights by ensuring that a robust, accessible and timely appeals process is in place.

The appeals process is available to all students who wish to seek a review of decisions relating to their

- enrolment,
- assessment,
- course progress,
- academic standing,
- credit transfer
- recognition of prior learning.
- Other decisions impacting the student experience

Students may lodge an appeal on the following grounds:

- A procedural error or unfair process
- New evidence that was not considered in the original decision
- Perceived bias, discrimination or conflict of interest
- Misapplication or incorrect interpretation of RTO policy
- Unreasonable or disproportionate decision or outcome

Appeals must be substantiated with clear reasons and, where available, supporting documentation.

Appeals are handled respectfully and without prejudice, with appropriate support made available to appellants. All decisions are subject to review through a defined process that ensures fairness and transparency, and where warranted, leads to corrective action and systemic improvement.

GBC ensures that all appeals are reviewed by qualified, impartial personnel, and provides clear information to students on their rights and pathways for further appeal, including access to external complaint bodies where necessary.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all enrolled and prospective students of GBC. It includes appeals against decisions made by GBC or its representatives, including third-party providers acting on behalf of the RTO. Where a decision by a third-party delivery or support partner adversely affects a student, GBC retains responsibility for managing and resolving the appeal. This ensures students are not disadvantaged by the structure of training delivery or service arrangements.

5. Definitions

Appeal: A request to review and reconsider a decision made by GBC.
Appellant: The person lodging the appeal.
Internal Appeal: GBC's internal process to review a decision.
External Appeal: An independent body review after internal avenues are exhausted.
Natural Justice: The right to a fair and unbiased process.
Support Person: A person chosen by the student to provide assistance throughout the appeal process.

6. Legislative and Regulatory Responsibilities

This policy aligns with the following legislative and regulatory frameworks:
Standards for RTOs 2025 – Standard 2.8: *Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student.*
National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (NVR Act): Provides the legislative foundation for ASQA's regulatory oversight of RTOs, including rights related to decision review and procedural fairness.
Australian Consumer Law (Schedule 2 of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010): Guarantees the rights of students as consumers of education services, including access to fair dispute resolution processes.
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth): Requires that all appeal documentation is handled securely and in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth): Requires that the appeals process be accessible and inclusive to students with disability.

Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Legislation (State/Territory-based): Supports the right to a fair and unbiased review process for all students, regardless of background or personal attributes.

GBC will continue to monitor changes in relevant legislation and ensure this policy remains compliant.

7. Responsibilities

Director / Governing Body: Ensures independence, fairness and adequacy of the appeals process.
Compliance Officer: Manages appeal investigations, communications and recordkeeping.
Trainers/Assessors: Cooperate in appeal reviews and supply requested information.
Students: Provide timely and complete information when lodging appeals.
Staff Respondents: Are entitled to procedural fairness and support during appeal review.

8. Procedure

Students have the right to appeal decisions made by GBC that affect their enrolment, academic progression, assessment outcomes, access to services, or any other aspect of their participation in training. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 28 calendar days of receiving the decision. GBC provides an Appeals Form to facilitate this process, and support is available to assist students in completing and submitting their appeal. Students may also request accessible alternatives such as interpreters or alternate formats.

Upon receiving an appeal, the Compliance Officer will acknowledge its receipt within two working days and assess whether the appeal is valid and complete. If any additional information is required, the student will be contacted to provide clarification or evidence. The appeal will then be allocated to an independent staff member who was not involved in the original decision.

The investigation will be conducted impartially and all relevant parties, including staff members named in the appeal, will be given the opportunity to respond. The Compliance Officer will keep the appellant informed of the process by providing updates at least every two weeks. A final outcome will be determined within ten working days of receipt of the complete appeal, unless an extension is required, in which case the student will be advised in writing.

The outcome of the appeal will be communicated in writing and will include the rationale for the decision. Potential remedies may include reassessment, adjustments to enrolment, a refund or financial remedy, an apology, or policy and staff development actions. All corrective actions will be recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register.

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal process, they may escalate the matter to an external agency such as ASQA, the National Training Complaints Hotline, or the relevant Ombudsman.

Throughout the appeal process, the student's enrolment will be maintained to ensure they are not disadvantaged while the matter is under review. All appeal records will be stored securely and retained for a minimum of five years.

Appeals are reviewed as part of the internal audit and continuous improvement process. Analysis includes:

- Tracking appeal volume, outcome types, and resolution timeframes
- Identifying root causes or systemic issues
- Obtaining stakeholder feedback (where possible)
- Reporting trends annually to the governing body

Follow-up contact may be made with the appellant to confirm satisfaction and document any remaining concerns.

Appeal records are stored securely, retained for a minimum of **five years**, and only accessed by authorised staff.

Procedure summary table

Step	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Student submits appeal in writing using the Appeals Form	Student	Within 28 calendar days of the original decision
2	Acknowledge receipt of appeal	Compliance Officer	Within 2 working days
3	Assess completeness and validity of appeal	Compliance Officer	Within 2 working days of receipt
4	Request additional information (if required)	Compliance Officer	As needed
5	Assign independent investigator not involved in original decision	Compliance Officer	Immediately following validation
6	Conduct fair, impartial investigation including all parties	Assigned Staff	Within 10 working days or as extended with notice
7	Provide written progress updates	Compliance Officer	Every 2 weeks while unresolved
8	Communicate final outcome and reasons	Compliance Officer	Immediately after decision
9	Record decision and any remedies in CI Register	Compliance Officer	Within 2 working days of outcome
10	Refer unresolved cases to external bodies if requested	Student / Compliance Officer	Following internal appeal decision

9. Policy Implementation

This policy is implemented through training of relevant staff, publication on GBC website, and inclusion in the Student Handbook. All staff involved in decision-making processes are required to familiarise themselves with the appeals procedure and uphold its principles of fairness and transparency. Students are introduced to the appeals process during orientation, and reminders are embedded in course communications, assessment feedback, and progression notifications.

The Compliance Officer is responsible for overseeing implementation, ensuring all appeals are recorded, monitored, and reviewed according to this policy. Continuous improvement actions resulting from appeals will be incorporated into operational and governance reporting, including internal audits and annual reviews.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Appeals are reviewed as part of the internal audit and continuous improvement process. Analysis includes:

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Document Control

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Version Control

Version #	Changes	Approval By	Approval Date
1.0	**Initial version**	**PEO**	**26/06/2025**

11. Associated Documents

- Appeals Form
- Appeals Register
- Complaint and Appeal Outcome Notification Template
- Continuous Improvement Register