



WORLD CLASS EDUCATION
FOR WORLD CLASS STUDENTS

The Penn College

Student Handbook

The Penn College Pty Limited

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1. Introduction

Welcome to The Penn College. This handbook is designed to inform students and prospective students of The Penn College of procedures and administrative processes as they affect your participation in training, along with your rights and obligations at The Penn College. If you wish to discuss any of the following information, please do not hesitate to ask any of our training staff. You must read this handbook if you intend to enrol in a course of studies with The Penn College.

Information about the specific courses we offer is available at our website: www.penncollege.edu.au

2. About The Penn College

Our vision

The Penn College is a world class educational provider of choice for organisations and students that value and seek formal qualifications in their fields of endeavour.

Our mission

The Penn College strives for uncompromising excellence in providing a formal learning environment for those interested in extending their knowledge in their chosen field and to enable students to progress to higher employment opportunities based on the achievement of formal qualifications.

The Penn College encourages, through industry consultation, education as a key motivating factor within organisations, in order to ensure each organisation's human resources have contemporary specialist knowledge.

Our goals/objectives

The Penn College achieves its Vision and Mission through:

- Establishing world class innovative and technologically leading edge educational programs of uncompromising excellence that meet the needs of individuals in their workplace.
- Creating and maintaining relationships with industry in order to ensure educational programs are responsive to industry evolution and remain "state of the art".
- Engaging trainers who have expert practical knowledge and are able to utilise innovative training methods.
- Establishing exemplary student support systems to enable students to achieve to their maximum potential and achieve commercial success.

The Penn College provides an environment which is safe and equitable; promotes a confident and productive training and assessment environment; and maintains ethical conduct and integrity as one of its core priorities.

3. Our commitment to you

Provide quality services

We are committed to providing high quality training and assessment services and we systematically monitor and evaluate those services to ensure that all aspects of operations comply with the [Standards for RTOs 2015](#) at all times. Our commitment to the continuous improvement of our operations means that we use a range of information from a number of sources to tell us what we could do better or differently. This information includes your feedback, the feedback of trainers and assessors, the outcomes of assessment validation activities and complaints and appeals.

As a student, we encourage you to provide any feedback about your training and assessment experience and general interactions with us direct to the Director. Alternatively, if you are dissatisfied with a service provided or an action we have taken, you have the right to lodge a complaint. Refer to section 12: *Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure* in this handbook for further information about lodging a complaint.

Keeping you informed

Where there are any changes to the services The Penn College has agreed to provide, we will advise you as soon as practicable in writing. We will tell you if there is a change in the ownership of the RTO or if we enter into an agreement with another organisation to provide services on our behalf (or if there is a change to any of these agreements).

As a RTO, The Penn College must comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with:

- Establishing world class innovative and technologically leading edge educational programs of uncompromising excellence that meet the needs of individuals in their workplace.
- Creating and maintaining relationships with industry in order to ensure educational programs are responsive to industry evolution and remain “state of the art”.
- Engaging trainers who have expert practical knowledge and are able to use utilise innovative training methods.
- Establishing exemplary student support systems to enable students to achieve to their maximum potential and achieve commercial success.

The Penn College will keep you (as well as its staff) informed about any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that may affect the delivery of training and assessment.

Respecting your privacy

In recognition of your right to keep your personal information private, we are committed to protecting and maintaining privacy, accuracy and security of your training records. For further information about this, refer to section 13: *Management of Records* of this handbook.

Access, equity & support

The Penn College is committed to the principles of access and equity in education and training and generally permits open access to all courses and training programs. The exception is where open access is restricted because of legislation, licensing regulations, government funding policies or because of training package requirements. An assessment of pre-requisite competencies may be carried out to determine a student's suitability.

In many courses student numbers may be limited. Training courses are available to students who meet the specified minimum course entry requirements without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sexual preference, disability, age or any other unlawful grounds of discrimination.

We aim to support all of our students and provide access to the educational and support services you need to successfully complete the qualification or course of study in which you are enrolled. For further information about the support we provide to our students, refer to section 8: *Student Support* in this handbook.

A harassment, victimisation and bullying-free environment

The Penn College is an equal opportunity education and training provider, committed to freedom from discrimination, verbal, sexual and physical abuse and victimization. All students and staff have the right to an environment free from such abuse. Please report any incidents or concerns to your trainer/assessor or the Director.

We reserve the right to dismiss any student for disruptive, inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour without refund.

Recognition of your prior learning and current skills

The Penn College will have regard to your prior learning, including existing skills, knowledge and experience when considering the amount of training to be provided. If you have current, relevant skills and knowledge that can be verified by The Penn College, you may be eligible for recognition of that prior learning towards the course. Refer to section 6: *Enrolment procedures* of this handbook for further information about recognition of your prior learning.

Timely issuance of your certification documentation

We will issue your nationally recognised certification documentation (your Qualification and Record of Results or Statement of Attainment) to you within 30 calendar days of you being assessed as meeting all of the requirements of the course of study you are enrolled in, provided you have paid us all agreed fees. For information about the issue and re-issue of certification documentation, refer to section 11: *AQF Certification issuance & re-issuance procedure* in this handbook.

4. Student obligations & disciplinary procedures

Obligations

Our commitment to you is outlined in section 3 of this handbook. In return, we have some expectations of you to help us make your time and the time of your fellow students and trainers/assessors at The Penn College pleasant and productive. The Penn College expects you to:

- contribute to learning in a harmonious and positive manner irrespective of gender, race, sexual preference, political affiliation, marital status, disability or religious belief;
- comply with the rules and regulations of The Penn College;
- be honest and respectful, which includes not falsifying work or information and not conducting yourself in any way that may cause injury or offence to others;
- be responsible for your own learning and development by participating actively and positively and by ensuring that you maintain progress with learning modules;
- monitor your own progress by ensuring that assessment deadlines are observed;
- utilise facilities and The Penn College publications with respect and to honour our copyrights and prevent our publications from being distributed to unauthorised persons; and
- respect other students and The Penn College staff members and their right to privacy and confidentiality.

Plagiarism, the use of someone else's work without acknowledgement, is not acceptable. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and cheating is an action which benefits no-one. It may result in either failure of the assessment/subject, or if it is a repeated offence, exclusion from the training program.

Plagiarism can include:

- copying someone else's assignment or exam paper;
- using information which another student has collected without acknowledging it;
- copying from a textbook without using an appropriate form of referencing; or
- using the ideas or research which you have found in a textbook without referencing, even if you have written those ideas or research findings into your own words.

Whenever you use the thoughts, ideas, research finding or words of someone else, you must show where those thoughts, ideas, research finding or words come from.

It is therefore essential to learn how to reference your work in an appropriate manner. If you do not reference your work correctly, i.e. if you are found guilty of plagiarism, the penalties are severe. You may be failed in a unit.

To reference your work please put the name of the author and the name and date of the publication inside brackets. For example (The Joy of Writing by G.T. Messup 2002) The

important thing is not that your referencing is correct by academic standards but that we know what is your work and what is the work of someone else.

Intentional Plagiarism is plagiarism which is deliberate with the intention to deceive e.g. copying someone else's assignment and passing it off as your own work; copying large amount of works from other sources without acknowledging those sources.

Unintentional Plagiarism is plagiarism which results from a lack of understanding of the concept of plagiarism, or a lack of skill in referencing/acknowledging sources in your assignments.

Both intentional and unintentional plagiarisms are breaches of the policy.

Group-work means a project/assignment which is conducted by a number of students, resulting in a single piece of assessment or a number of associated pieces of assessment. Unless authorised or directed by a trainer as part of your assessment, 'group-work' is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism.

Collusion involves working with others without permission to produce work which is then presented as your own, without acknowledging the input of others. This includes working together on an assignment and handing in identical, or very similar, assignments.

Disciplinary procedures

The Penn College has a two strike disciplinary policy for most behavioural issues.

On the first occasion a student does not meet one or more of the obligations listed above, the student will be counselled by the Director of The Penn College about their inappropriate behaviour and how it can be improved. A course of action will then be agreed upon and a reasonable time period allowed to implement the required changes. A record of the counselling and the agreed course of action will be retained on the student's file and a copy provided to the student.

On the second occasion, the student will be counselled and, at the discretion of the Director, will be suspended from accessing one or more training sessions or will have their enrolment cancelled, with no refund of fees paid. A record of the counselling and the course of action will be retained on the student's file and a copy provided to the student.

The Penn College may suspend or cancel the enrolment of a student for serious misconduct, including but not limited to:

- disruptive/abusive behaviour or/and harassment of staff, visitors or other students (either verbally or physically)
- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- theft or deliberate damage to the property and equipment of The Penn College, its staff, visitors or other students
- flagrant disobedience of all reasonable and lawful instructions given to the student.

A suspended student is not permitted on RTO grounds or to access the online learning platform for the period of the suspension (except at the invitation of the Director). A student who has had their enrolment cancelled is not permitted back on RTO grounds or to access the online learning platform.

5. Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Unique Student Identifier (USI)

From January 2015, any registered training organisation, including The Penn College, is not generally permitted to issue AQF certification documents (a Qualification or Statement of Attainment) to a student without having (and verifying) the student's Unique Student Identifier (USI). A USI is a reference number made up of numbers and letters. It is free and easy to [create your USI](#) and means there will be a secure online record of your nationally recognised training. From January 2016, you will be able to easily access secure digital transcripts of your achievements. Learn more about the [USI scheme here](#). You'll need to include your USI on your *Enrolment form* (available from www.penncollege.edu.au).

6. Enrolment procedures

Students first enrol in a qualification (or individual units of competency) by completing and submitting the *Enrolment Form* available at www.penncollege.edu.au. Completed forms can be submitted by email or in person to the address on the form.

Check for completeness

The Penn College will confirm that the *Enrolment Form* has been properly completed and ask you for further information if required.

Verify Unique Student Identifier (USI)

The Penn College will verify the provided USI included by a student on their Enrolment Form using the Australian Government's USI website.

Enrolment cannot proceed without the student supplying a valid USI that can be verified by the College.

Language Literacy and Numeracy Assessment

Students are required to have their language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills assessed to ensure their LLN skills are at the required level for the course (or individual units) in which they are enrolling. Refer to section 8: *Student support* of this handbook for further information about LLN assessment and support.

Determination of eligibility for credit transfer or Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

If a student has indicated on the *Enrolment Form* that they have current and relevant skills, knowledge and/or experience and would like to be assessed to determine if they are eligible for recognition of that learning towards the course, a trainer or assessor will contact the student to discuss their situation, the recognition process and the impact on the amount of training they will need to undertake.

Credit transfer

Credit transfer will be granted if a student already holds relevant competencies (that can be authenticated) and can present:

- the original or certified copy of a relevant qualification or statement of attainment issued by another RTO
- the original or certified copy of a VET transcript issued by the USI Registrar (available from 2016 onwards)

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning will be given to students for competencies they may have acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning if an assessment process determines they meet the requirements specified in the relevant training package or accredited course. A trainer and assessor will advise a student of the RPL process, application and evidence requirements, possible outcomes and indicative timeframes.

Decision about enrolment

The Penn College will advise the student if their enrolment is accepted or declined.

Enrolment may be declined where extensive support would be required for the student to be able to participate appropriately in the training or where deficiency will clearly inhibit achievement of learning outcomes. In such cases, students will be counselled about their options.

If accepted, students will be advised of the schedule of delivery for each unit/unit cluster. Students will be issued with an invoice and must pay the unit/unit cluster fee by the date indicated on the invoice to secure their position. Refer section 7 *Fees, cancellations & refunds* below for more information about fees and fee payment. If, at any time, places are limited in each course, places will be filled in the order in which complete enrolment forms were received.

7. Fees, cancellation & refunds

Course fees

Information about course fees is included on our website at www.penncollege.edu.au.

No other fees and charges apply to the training.

An invoice for the first payment of no more than \$1,000 will be issued when enrolment is confirmed. The remainder of the course fee is payable by instalments and the amount and timing of each instalment will be determined based on the amount of each individual student's training and assessment which is yet to be delivered. Note that no individual fee paid in advance will exceed \$1,500.

All fees must be paid in full within five days of receiving an invoice from The Penn College. The Penn College may discontinue training if fees are not paid as required.

Other fees

Re-issue Qualification	\$30
Re-issue Statement of Attainment	\$30
Re-issue Record of Results	\$30

All fees can be paid by:

- Credit Card;
- Electronic Funds Transfer (account details available on request); or
- Cheque (made payable to The Penn College).

Payment in cash is discouraged.

Any change to fees will be published to The Penn College's website: www.penncollege.edu.au.

Student cancellation & refunds

- Students who give notice to cancel their enrolment at least 10 days prior to the commencement of initial training will be entitled to a full refund of fees paid.
- Students who give notice to cancel their enrolment less than 10 days prior to the commencement initial will be entitled to a 75% refund of fees paid. The amount retained (25%) by The Penn College is to cover the costs of staff and resources which will have already been committed.
- Students who cancel their enrolment after a training program has commenced will not generate a refund of fees. However, discretion may be exercised by the Director in all situations, if the student can demonstrate that extenuating or significant personal circumstance led to their withdrawal. In these cases, a full credit may be offered towards the course fee in another scheduled program in lieu of a refund.
- The Director may also authorise a refund of tuition fees if the circumstances require it.
- Please note that where fees have been paid by Lowes Manhattan Pty Ltd, any refund due will be paid to Lowes.

Notification of withdrawal or cancellation must be received by emailing info@penncollege.edu.au and, if the timing of the notification allows for a refund of any fees paid, the email must include the student's bank details (BSB, account number and account name) for electronic transfer of the refund due.

Within three weeks (21 calendar days) of receiving the notification, if the student is entitled to (and has requested) a refund, the request will be processed and the refund due transferred into the student's nominated bank account.

Cancellation by The Penn College

If a payment has been made and The Penn College:

- terminates the training and assessment arrangement early*; or
- fails to provide the agreed services*

a student will be entitled to a full refund of the fee paid if the training to which the payment relates has not yet commenced or a proportionate refund if it has commenced.

The refund will be made within three weeks (21 calendar days) and will be transferred into the student's nominated bank account.

* A student is not entitled to a refund if the student is suspended from attending or has had their enrolment cancelled in accordance with the circumstances explained in section 4: *Student obligations and disciplinary procedures* in this handbook.

8. Student Support

At The Penn College, we aim to support all of our students and provide access to the educational and support services you need to successfully complete the qualification. At any time, if you feel you are having difficulty or need assistance, please talk to your trainer/assessor. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to this person you may contact the office in person, by phone, email or in writing where all information will be treated with respect, confidentiality and privacy. The Penn College will make every effort to provide as much support as possible within its policies and resources for students to achieve the required level of competency. However, where extensive support is required for the student to be able to participate appropriately in the training or where deficiency will clearly inhibit achievement of learning outcomes, enrolment in a course may be declined.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) assessment and support

Upon enrolment with The Penn College, you will have your language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills assessed to ensure your LLN skills are at the level required for the course in which you are enrolling. After the LLN assessment, a Skills Gap report and recommendations will be generated if there is a gap between your current level and the level required of the qualification.

The assessment includes a small number of questions that will tell us about your level of reading, comprehension and math skills and it will be completed online. We will review your completed assessment and contact you to discuss your responses and provide you with options if it is assessed that you would benefit from language, literacy and/or numeracy

support and refer you to a support service as soon as practicable so you are not disadvantaged in your learning. This would generally be the Reading Writing Hotline (telephone number 1300 655 506 or <http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/>)

Unlimited access to trainers

Students have unlimited access to trainers during ordinary business hours (Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm) and after hours by appointment. Students may make contact by phone, email or through the online learning platform.

Support with personal issues

The Penn College does not employ a welfare officer however; we will do our best to identify appropriate local agencies that can assist you with any personal issues that may arise.

9. Assessment policy and procedures

Assessment policy

The Penn College is committed to the delivery of quality assessment. Four (4) principles underpin this commitment:

1. Assessment decisions are based on the assessment of skills and knowledge compared with units of competence drawn from industry training package.

Units of competency are drawn from nationally endorsed industry Training Packages as a primary benchmark for assessment. Supporting this are industry standards or codes of practice. These and other industry specific publications and engagement inform the context and standard of performance during assessment.

In order to identify the precise assessment criteria, a methodology of unpacking a unit of competence is applied in order to assess the full scope of the unit including elements of competence and performance criteria, incorporating range statement information and the specific requirements of the evidence guide. This process ensures that our assessment strategies accurately reflect the requirements of the training package and specifically the required knowledge and skills.

Assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers/performance benchmarks to guide assessors in their judgements.

2. Assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment

In the delivery of assessment, The Penn College applies the principles of assessment. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- *Validity* - assessment is conducted against the broad range of skills and knowledge identified within each unit of competence and which is integrated with their practical application.
- *Reliability* - assessment is designed to gather and interpret evidence in a consistent manner that provides for reliable assessment both for the candidate and for assessors. This is achieved by using assessors who have the required competencies in

assessment and the relevant vocational competencies. Assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers to guide assessors in their judgements.

- *Flexibility* - assessment opportunities that reflect learner needs are provided. The chosen assessment strategies provide for recognition of a learner's prior learning and current competence by offering recognition of prior learning and credit transfer to all learners.
- *Fairness* - the assessment approach encourages fairness in assessment through consideration of the learner's needs and characteristics and through making reasonable adjustments when it is required. Assessors achieve this through clear communication with the learner to ensure that they is fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in the assessment process.

Assessment may comprise any combination of assessment methods, including but not limited to one or more of the following:

- Questioning (verbal or written)
- Observation of performance in the workplace (or simulated environment)
- Written responses to questions, assignments and case studies.

While students must perform satisfactorily (against pre-determined benchmarks) for all parts of all assessments for a unit, in order to achieve an outcome of 'Competent', students are also given two (2) attempts to demonstrate satisfactory performance in each part of each question. If after two (2) attempts, a student has not demonstrated satisfactory performance, they will be deemed 'Not Yet Competent' in the unit/unit cluster and will have the option of re-enrolling in the unit.

3. Evidence that meets the rules of evidence is gathered

Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency** - the collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly.
- **Validity** – the collection of evidence that is specified in the benchmarks for assessment.
- **Authenticity** – the collection of evidence that is authentic. To support this, assessors must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work. For all assessment, learner are required to state that the assessment is entirely their own work and has been completed according to the instructions provided.
- **Currency** – satisfaction that the learner currently holds the skills and knowledge relating to a particular assessment. This will mostly relate to recognition applications where a learner has been in the workplace for many years and is seeking recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through workplace experience or previous training.

4. Assessment is validated and continuously improved

Pre-assessment

To ensure that the assessment resources are consistent with the requirements of the Training Package and that they maintain their validity, currency, sufficiency and effectiveness, assessment tools are reviewed prior to use.

All assessment tools are to be validated prior to being used for the first time. A checklist guides the validation process and exists as a record of the validation activity.

Post-assessment

Assessment judgements made by assessors over time are reviewed periodically and systematically with the purpose of ensuring the RTO's assessment system produces valid assessment judgements and ensures graduates have the skills and knowledge required by industry, as expressed in the training package.

The assessment system itself is also examined to ensure it has produced graduates with the required skills and knowledge.

Assessment procedures

Assessment will normally take place after delivery of a theory component and the opportunity to practice the skill and apply the acquired knowledge. If you do not feel ready to attempt the assessment activities/tasks, please contact your trainer/assessor to discuss how they can help you prepare for the assessment stage of learning.

Assessment for a unit of competency usually includes more than one component and usually each component has more than one task/activity. The tasks may include: observations of performance, questioning (verbal or written), projects and/or portfolios of evidence.

Your performance in each of the components will be considered together to make a judgement about your competence in the unit.

You must perform satisfactorily in all parts of all components (against pre-determined benchmarks/model answers) in order to achieve an outcome of 'Competent' in the unit.

If after the two (2) maximum number of allowable attempts, you have not demonstrated satisfactory performance, you will be deemed 'Not Yet Competent' in the unit (meaning you have not yet met the requirements of the unit) and you will have the option of re-enrolling in the unit.

You will be given comprehensive instructions about the assessment activities and performance requirements.

You must perform satisfactorily in all components of all assessment for every unit of competency that comprise the qualification in order to be eligible to be awarded a qualification.

If you:

- do not understand how you will be assessed in a unit of competency
- do not understand a question your trainer/assessor asks you
- do not understand the tasks or the behaviors expected from you in the practical tasks

please ask your trainer/assessor to explain it to you.

You have the right to appeal an assessment decision and/or lodge a complaint about any aspect of the assessment process. Refer to section 12: *Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure* in this handbook for further information about lodging an appeal.

10. Student safety

Computer facilities

Extended periods of work with computers can result in general fatigue and eye strain. Repetitive tasks and incorrect posture will result in consistent aches and pains.

Current work health and safety guidelines indicate that people working for long periods at computers should organise their work so as to allow a five to ten minute rest every hour.

This rest should include a change of position and stretching exercises as appropriate.

Posture can be improved by adjusting chair height so that the operator's feet are comfortably placed on the floor (or footrest) and your arms are at an approximately 90-degree angle.

The screen should be positioned to avoid reflection from lights and windows and at a suitable distance so that it can be easily read.

Work and study areas

Always ensure that all work areas are clean and clear of clutter so as to avoid the danger of accident by tripping or falling over.

11. AQF Certification issuance & re-issuance procedure

Certification issuance

Students who successfully complete all units of competency or modules in a nationally recognised qualification or course will be issued a **qualification testamur** - an official certification document that confirms that a qualification has been awarded to an individual (sometimes referred to as an: 'award', 'parchment' or 'certificate').

Students who are issued a qualification testamur will also be issued with a **record of results** - a record of all learning leading to a nationally recognised qualification or an accredited unit in which a student is enrolled (sometimes referred to as an: 'transcript of results', 'academic

transcript', 'record of achievement' or 'statement of results').

Students who successfully complete one or more nationally recognised units of competency (but not enough to be issued a qualification) will be issued with a **statement of attainment** - issued in recognition that one or more accredited units has been achieved.

The Penn College issues AQF certification documentation (qualification testamur, statement of attainment or record of results) only to a student who:

- it has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product as specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course, and
- has paid all agreed fees they owe to the RTO

Further, AQF certification documents will only be issued to a student if the student has supplied, and The Penn College has verified, their Unique Student Identifier (USI) (refer to the section 5: *Unique Student Identifier (USI)* in this handbook for further information about the requirement to have a USI).

Certification documentation will be issued to a student within 30 calendar days of the above requirements having been met.

Certification re-issuance

If a qualification, statement of attainment or record of results is misplaced or damaged, the student or past student may request the re-issue of the misplaced or damaged document by accessing, completing and submitting the *Request for re-issuance of documentation*, available from www.penncollege.edu.au.

For privacy reasons, the request must be made by the student (or past student) and the original or a certified copy of one of the following identification documents must be sighted by the Director of The Penn College:

- Driver's licence; or
- Australian Passport; or
- Australian Birth Certificate;

or if the student (or past student) doesn't have any of the above, the following will be accepted:

- Naturalisation Certificate (Australian Citizenship); and a Current Green Medicare Card.

A fee applies for the re-issuance of documentation and applicable fee information is located in the information about requesting the re-issuance of documentation at www.penncollege.edu.au.

Certification documentation will be issued within 10 calendar days of a complete request being submitted provided:

- payment has been received, and
- entitlement to the documentation has been confirmed - the student (or past student) requesting the documentation is the student (or past student) to whom the documentation was originally issued.

12. Complaints and appeals policy & procedure

The Penn College is committed to providing a fair complaints and appeals process and respects the right of stakeholders to lodge complaints and requests for appeals about decisions. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be adopted at each stage of the complaint and the appeal process and all people involved will be treated with courtesy and respect. The lodgement of a complaint or a request for an appeal will not disadvantage any stakeholder in their dealings with The Penn College.

The policy is made publically available by including it here, in the Student Handbook, which is available from the RTO's website.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a specific action or service of The Penn College or an allegation involving the conduct of:

- The Penn College, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- a third party providing services on behalf of The Penn College, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- a student of The Penn College.

What is an appeal?

An appeal is a request for a review of a decision made by The Penn College (or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf), including decisions about assessment.

Value of complaints and appeals

The Penn College values complaints and requests for appeals as opportunities to identify operational improvements to quickly and appropriately respond to changes in the marketplace or stakeholder expectations. The subject of complaints and requests for appeals and outcomes are recorded on a register to allow analysis of matters over time and identify any common factors that may need action.

It is preferable, to all parties, that matters are resolved as quickly and effectively as possible and stakeholders, including students, are encouraged to raise issues of concern directly with their trainer and assessor or the Director at the earliest opportunity with the view to addressing the matter in an informal but effective manner.

Procedures for making a complaint or lodging an appeal

If a stakeholder, including a student, is unable to raise issues of concern directly with their trainer and assessor or the Director with the view to addressing the matter in an informal manner, or if the stakeholder, including the student, is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal approach, a formal complaint or request for appeal may be lodged.

A complaint or request for appeal:

- must be made within 15 calendar days of the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal;
- must be made in writing using the *Complaint & Appeals Form* available at www.penncollege.edu.au or otherwise in writing provided the following information is included:
 - whether you are lodging a complaint or requesting an appeal;
 - your name, home phone number, mobile number and email address;
 - the date of the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal;
 - details of the complaint or appeal (you may attach supporting documentation if required);
 - any steps you may have taken to resolve the issue;
 - what outcome would you like to see from raising this complaint / appeal;
 - a statement that the information provided is, to the best of your knowledge, true and correct, that you acknowledge that The Penn College may use the information provided to investigate the complaint and that you understand that this information may also be used for the continuous improvement of the RTO's operations; and
 - your signature and the date (unless submitting by email).
- will be acknowledged in writing within two (2) calendar days of receipt of a complaint or request for appeal.

Procedures for investigating a complaint or appeal

Complaints and requests for appeals will be investigated by a person or persons who was not/were not involved in the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal.

Details of complaints and requests for appeals will only be made known by those directly concerned.

The person or persons conducting the investigation will interview the person making the complaint and, if the complaint was about a person, will separately interview the person the complaint is about. They may also review documentation, including RTO policies and procedures and may, if relevant, interview other stakeholders and staff.

In the case of an appeal against an assessment or other decision, the person or persons conducting the investigation will review the decision and the evidence used to make the decision. If it is an assessment decision being appealed, the assessor and student will be interviewed separately to find out whether there is any relevant information not contained in the student's file.

A complainant or appellant may be accompanied by and/or assisted by a support person at any time.

Regardless of the outcome, and while complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable, the complainant or appellant will be notified of the outcome, and reasons for the outcome, in writing within 30 calendar days of the complaint or appeal being lodged.

Where The Penn College considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise a complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant will be:

- informed in writing of the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and
- regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

Review by a third party

If the complaints and appeals process fails to resolve a complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant may request a review by a party independent of themselves and The Penn College. A mediator can be provided by the [Australian Mediation Association](#); however, the complainant or appellant must organise the mediation and meet all costs of engaging a mediator. The RTO will reasonably cooperate in any organised mediation session/activity.

Use of complaints and appeals to inform continuous improvement

The causes of complaints and appeals are identified and corrective action is taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence and to inform the continuous improvement of RTO operations. The *Complaints and Appeals Form* ensures that such causes and opportunities are captured in the RTO's *Continuous Improvement Register* and the *Approach to monitoring compliance and continuous improvement* ensures the systematic consideration of these causes and opportunities for improvement.

13. Management of records

The Penn College is committed to meeting its obligation to manage and ensure the accuracy and integrity of certain records relevant to the operations of the RTO and respects that individuals have the right to keep their personal information private.

Access to records, privacy & accuracy

- The Penn College is required to collect certain information for national database and tracking purposes, to assist in ongoing qualification issuance as required and to contact and communicate with students during the period of a student's enrolment. As an example, the *Enrolment Form* collects information about a student, some of which is used by the RTO during the period of enrolment (e.g. contact details and details about work experience and qualifications achieved) and some of which is collected to contribute to national records of VET activity (e.g. reason for study, employment status and level of schooling).
- In recognition of a student's right to keep their personal information private, the RTO is committed to protecting and maintaining privacy, accuracy and security of your training records. All data is confidential and is not forwarded to any other party unless the RTO is legally obligated to do so as a condition of its registration or a student has given written consent for the data to be released to a third party. Some data must be provided to the national statistical database to comply with the Total Vet Activity reporting requirements for RTOs.
- Records about progress, competency achievement, and qualification issuance are updated periodically by the Director of The Penn College or its Trainers and Assessors.
- Students are able to confirm and update and/or correct their personal and sensitive information during their enrolment period by contacting the Administration Office of The Penn College.
- Access to electronic records is password controlled via access to a secure online database and access is limited to those who need the information/record in the course of providing training and assessment services or in administering the RTO. The Director of The Penn College has access to all records and will provide access to essential others as the need arises. Access to hard copy records is also controlled by the Director of The Penn College.
- Certain information about students, including information related to enrolment, progress and attainment must be retained by the RTO for 30 years. Students may have access to their records, including records of progress and records of certification issued to them at a mutually convenient time agreed with the Administration Office. Students may be required to provide photo ID for this access.
- If you have a complaint about the management of your records and privacy, you have the right to lodge a complaint. Refer to section 12: *Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure* in this handbook for further information about lodging a complaint.

Treatment of records on ceasing operation

The Penn College acknowledges that it has a responsibility to transfer records to ASQA should The Penn College ceased to operate. Student records of achievement are retained by the RTO in its Student Record System and will be forwarded to ASQA within 30 days of the organisation effectively ceasing to operate as an RTO.

Student records of achievement will include the following information for each student.

- family name, first name
- residential post code
- date of birth
- student ID number
- enrolment and commencement dates
- code and title of qualification, course or program student enrolled in
- codes and titles of units of competency completed and results (if applicable)
- date the Certificate or Statement of Attainment was issued

Destruction of Records

The Director of The Penn College is the only person who can authorise the destruction of physical/hard copy records. Records are only to be authorised for destruction after the retention period has lapsed.

Documents identified for destruction are to be securely destroyed, for example shredded.