



Lead Investigations Officer – Student Complaints and Appeals

Portfolio/Faculty	Engagement and Support
Department/Workgroup	Student Complaints and Appeals
Position No.	To Be Allocated
Classification	PAACT Worker Level 8 (PW8)
Reports to	Executive Director – Engagement and Support
Direct reports	Student Complaints and Appeals Officer
Date:	December, 2024

Portfolio Overview

The Engagement and Support portfolio provides a range of Institute wide services that promote student engagement, success and foster a positive Holmesglen experience. The portfolio consists of a range of departments that support the student journey from pre-enrolment to graduation. Departments include:

- Apprentice Central
- Brand, Marketing and Communications
- Learning Skills Centre
- Library
- Registrar
- Student Complaints and Appeals
- Student Recruitment
- Student Engagement and Equity
- Student Wellbeing

Department/Workgroup

The Student Complaints and Appeals workgroup is a small, dedicated team responsible for addressing and managing student complaints and appeals within in the Institute. The workgroup operates within the legal and regulatory frameworks established by the Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA), the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) and relevant state and federal laws, ensuring that all processes are fair, transparent and consistent.

The workgroup reviews complaints from students or external parties regarding issues such as academic matters, student welfare, misconduct or administrative concerns. They ensure that complaints are handled in a timely, confidential and impartial manner. When students are dissatisfied with the outcomes of their complaints, the workgroup is responsible for reviewing and processing appeals. This includes investigating cases where students appeal academic results, disciplinary actions, or other institutional decisions.

The workgroup is instrumental in ensuring the Institute's complaints and appeals policies and procedures are up to date and aligned with relevant legal, ethical and regulatory requirements and that students and employees are educated on the complaints and appeals process. The workgroup tracks the nature, volume and outcomes of complaints and appeals to identify themes or systemic issues and makes recommendations to Holmesglen's governance committees for continuous improvement.

About the Role

The Lead Investigations Officer – Student Complaints and Appeals plays a key role within the Engagement and Support portfolio at Holmesglen, leading investigations into student complaints and appeals in accordance with institutional policies, procedures, and relevant legislation. This role involves ensuring that all student complaints and appeals are handled impartially, thoroughly, and in a timely manner, while upholding the institution's commitment to fairness, transparency, and compliance. The Lead Investigations Officer will also contribute to continuous improvement initiatives aimed at enhancing the student experience.

The Lead Investigations Officer manages the complaints and appeals process, providing mentoring to other staff and leadership in the management of complaints relating to complex, serious or systemic issues. The successful candidate will have a strong background in investigative practices, policy interpretation, and conflict resolution, as well as an understanding of the vocational and higher education sectors' regulatory environment.

Key Accountabilities

- 1 Manage the Institute wide student complaints and appeals process and maintain detailed and accurate records of all investigations, decisions and outcomes, ensuring compliance with institutional policies and relevant legal, ethical and regulatory requirements.
- 2 Supervise the Student Complaints and Appeals Officer, ensuring that complaints and appeals are responded to in a timely and professional manner, initial assessments of complaints or appeals are conducted, simple issues are resolved through first contact resolution and more complex, serious or systemic issues are escalated for further investigation.
- 3 Lead investigations into student complaints and appeals relating to complex, serious or systemic issues, including reviewing evidence, conducting stakeholder interviews, establishing appeals panels, recommending resolutions and communicating outcomes to all stakeholders.
- 4 Provide expert advice to staff and students regarding the development, review, interpretation and application of policies and procedures relating to complaints and appeals.
- 5 Analyse themes, produce reports for governance committees and make recommendations for continuous improvements based on the outcomes of investigations and feedback from stakeholders.
- 6 Liaise with students, staff and other stakeholders, including external agencies, to gather information, clarify matters and provide responses to resolve issues.
- 7 Deliver training sessions to staff and students and provide accurate and up to date information to increase awareness and understanding of the Institute's complaints and appeals process.
- 8 Ensure compliance with the requirements of Holmesglen policies, procedures and processes, applicable legislation, and relevant regulatory and government authorities.
- 9 Support the Institute's Strategic Plan and Vision and work to ensure that all activities align to the Institute's commitment to quality.
- 10 Act in accordance with Holmesglen safety policies and procedures, including Child Safety Standards, to ensure that departmental work areas and operations comply with relevant Occupational Health and Safety legislation.

Key Selection Criteria

- 1 Proven experience in handling complex complaints and appeals in a tertiary education environment or similar sector, with a focus on investigative practices and dispute resolution.

- 2 Strong leadership abilities, with a demonstrated capacity to mentor and guide team members and manage competing priorities in a high pressure environment.
- 3 In-depth knowledge of complaints handling processes and relevant legislation and regulations, including the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO Standards), Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF), Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act and Victorian consumer protection laws.
- 4 High-level written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to present findings clearly and effectively to a range of stakeholders, including students, staff, executives and external bodies.
- 5 Strong analytical skills, with the ability to evaluate complex information, identify key issues, and make sound, evidence-based decisions.
- 6 Proven ability to resolve complex issues, mediate disputes, and find solutions that balance the interests of the students and the Institute.

Qualifications

Mandatory

- A relevant degree in law, dispute resolution, public policy, or a related field or lesser qualifications with relevant experience.

Desirable

- Formal training or qualifications in investigation and complaint handling processes is highly desirable.
- Membership of or affiliation with a relevant professional body would be an advantage.

Knowledge

- Thorough understanding of the student complaints and appeals process within the context of the Australian tertiary education sector, including relevant legislation, regulations, and institutional policies.
- Familiarity with the requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO Standards), Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) and Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act.
- Knowledge of contemporary issues in tertiary education, particularly related to student welfare, complaints management, and dispute resolution.

Skills and Experience

- Extensive experience in conducting impartial and thorough investigations, including interviewing witnesses, gathering evidence, and compiling investigation reports.
- Demonstrated ability to mediate and resolve disputes in a fair and constructive manner.
- Exceptional attention to detail in managing case documentation and ensuring accuracy in decision-making.
- Ability to build and maintain positive relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders, including students, staff, and external agencies.
- Proficiency in using case management systems and other relevant software tools for document management and reporting. Experience in contributing to the development, review, and implementation of institutional policies and procedures.

Other Relevant Information

- This position description describes in general terms the normal duties which this position is expected to undertake. Duties not specifically mentioned in this document, but within the capacity, qualifications and experience normally expected from people occupying positions classified at this level may be allocated.

- Employees attending certain workplace settings, including health and care facilities, may be required to meet mandatory vaccination obligations
- Due to the nature of the position, there may be a requirement to accommodate flexible working hours and attendance requirements.
- The incumbent may be required to perform their duties at any campus or location controlled by Holmesglen Institute or elsewhere as directed.
- Holmesglen is a child safe organisation. This position requires a valid Victorian Employee Working with Children check and National Police Records check.
- Holmesglen cultivates a workforce that embraces and values student voice and partnership.

About Holmesglen – Who we are

Holmesglen is a leading Australian provider of vocational and higher education and one of the largest government-owned TAFEs in the state of Victoria. With 40 years' experience and more than 140,000 graduates, we are TAFE at its best by transforming lives, building workforce capability and enriching communities through education and training.

We are a leader in education, training and applied research, renowned for its innovation and its commitment to learner and industry success. We offer industry training, certificate, diploma, and degree programs across six locations and seven campuses.

Locations include Chadstone, City, Moorabbin, North Melbourne, Glen Waverley, and Eildon.

As a multi-award-winning institute, you can learn more and do more at Holmesglen. [holmesglen.edu.au](https://www.holmesglen.edu.au).