

- PROCEDURE -

Assessment Decision Appeals

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Procedure Statement

This document outlines the process, roles, responsibilities and timeframes for lodging, reviewing and resolving appeals of assessment decisions in accordance with [Standards for RTOs 2025](#) and the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

Scope

This procedure applies to students in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) who wish to appeal an assessment decision made by a TAFE SA assessor or an approved third party assessing on behalf of TAFE SA. It outlines the process for lodging an appeal and the responsibilities of TAFE SA educators and relevant staff in reviewing and resolving the appeal.

This procedure does not seek to limit or prevent the right of any person to seek the assistance of an independent person or relevant external agency for the resolution of the appeal.

TAFE SA educators, assessors and students are expected to participate in assessment appeals processes in good faith and engage constructively to resolve the matter. Assessment appeals are to be treated seriously, expeditiously, and sensitively. They should be conducted with procedural fairness, confidentiality and without any discrimination or victimisation.

Assessment appeals should be resolved by a process of discussion, co-operation and conciliation, with the aim of reaching a fair outcome and maintaining positive working, teaching and learning relationships.

Should an assessment appeal be referred to an external body, the internal assessment appeal procedures of TAFE SA may be suspended pending the outcome of the external review.

Grounds for Appealing an Assessment Decision

Grounds for lodging an appeal include but are not limited to:

- > Inconsistent application of marking guides and benchmarks in resulting:
 - the standard or benchmark applied to marking the assessment piece was incorrect or inconsistently applied.
 - An answer was correct but was not reflected in the benchmarks the assessor used.
- > Technical Issue:
 - Technical issues associated with submission, that is supported by evidence of the issue, such as a photo or screenshot.
- > Submission deadline error:
 - a piece of work submitted on time, was incorrectly assessed as a late submission.
- > Feedback:

- the student believed that progress in the course was disadvantaged because feedback was not provided in a timely manner.
 - feedback was not provided.
- > Assessor bias:
 - the student has evidence that their assessment performance or outcome was impacted by bias.
- > Assessor did not offer a reasonable adjustment for a student living with a disability:
 - the assessor did not consult or apply a reasonable adjustment as stated on student access plan.
 - the student consulted the assessor and negotiated a reasonable adjustment, and it was not applied.
- > Result entry error:
 - an administrative error occurred in entering a result.
- > Inconsistent application of the assessment instructions:
 - the assessment conditions outlined in the instructions were not applied.
- > Inconsistency between feedback and result:
 - the assessor's written feedback was inconsistent with the result.

Appeals must be based on verifiable evidence. Reasons why a decision appeal may be denied include:

- > Dissatisfaction with the result awarded.
- > Lack of evidence to support the claim.
- > Student did not apply for special consideration or an extension in line with the requirements of the assessment procedure.
- > Student did not incorporate or adopt feedback provided by educators from a previous assessment attempt or learning activity.
- > Student had a personal preference for a different assessor that had not been requested in advance or could not be accommodated for valid reasons.
- > Concerns about financial implications of failing a course.

Timeframe to Appeal an Assessment Decision

Students may lodge an appeal within twenty (20) business days of **formal notification** of an assessment decision.

Formal notification occurs when the final outcome for a unit of competency (VET) or subject (HE) is recorded in the Student Information System (My TAFE SA for students).

Students are not prevented from lodging an appeal *before* formal notification of the final assessment outcome if they have otherwise been advised by their assessor that they are unable to achieve competency (or required learning outcomes for HE subjects), e.g. because they have been deemed unsatisfactory in a critical assessment task.

Assessment Decision Appeal Procedure

Students are encouraged to be familiar with this procedure and to utilise TAFE SA Student Success and Wellbeing (Student Support) when considering or lodging an appeal.

The end-to-end appeals process (from lodgement to outcome) must be completed within twenty (20) business days.

1. **Support:** Students have the right to be accompanied or represented by a support person such as a family member, friend, or counsellor when discussing assessment appeals with TAFE SA staff.
2. **Lodgement:** When a determination has been made by a student to appeal an assessment decision, the student must either:
 - > Discuss the appeal directly with the assessor. This will be documented by the assessor and verified by the student.
 - > Contact the assessor via email to inform them in writing of the appeal and what they believe is the valid reason for the appeal.This event initiates the formality of the process and is regarded day one (1) for the purposes of the twenty-day timeframe within which the appeal process must be completed.
3. **Initial review:** All appeals must be reviewed jointly by the assessor and the Principal Lecturer or the Educational Manager.

The Principal Lecturer or Educational Manager must deem whether the grounds of appeal are valid to be investigated, including that the lodgement:

- > is submitted within the required timeframe
- > provides evidence or justification.

If the appeal is deemed valid, it will then be investigated, and the student will be advised of the investigation proceeding.

If the appeal is not deemed valid, it will not be investigated further, and the student will be informed.

The decision to proceed or not to proceed must be provided to the student, in writing, within seven (7) business days of the lodgement.

Investigation: The Principal Lecturer or Educational Manager will investigate the appeal and determine the outcome.

Assessment appeals will be investigated by someone who was not involved in the original assessment decision and may involve a subject matter expert.

4. **Possible outcomes** of the appeal decision:
 - > Appeal is denied: the appeal was investigated and there were insufficient evidence or grounds for the appeal.

- > Reassessment: Educational Manager or Principal Lecturer may determine the need for the assessment to be undertaken again.
 - > Alternative assessor: Educational Manager or Principal Lecturer may engage an alternative assessor to verify results or, if required, conduct the assessment again.
 - > Result or grade change: Educational Manager or Principal Lecturer reviewed the evidence and determined the result, or grade was incorrect and a change of result or grade is made.
5. **Informing the student:** Principal Lecturers or Education Managers are to provide a written response to the student, as to the outcome of the appeal within twenty (20) business days of the date of lodgement. Where the determination is that reassessment should occur, the response must include details relating to location, time, and assessor details and should be conducted as soon as is reasonably practicable.
6. **Escalation:** If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the assessment appeal, they may escalate the appeal to the Faculty Director within seven (7) business days of the date of the appeal outcome. The Faculty Director will review the appeal to confirm whether the process has been conducted in accordance with this procedure and whether the decision is reasonable based on the available evidence. The Faculty Director may:
- > uphold the original decision, or
 - > require the appeal to be reconsidered, including referral for independent review (e.g. by a suitably qualified independent assessor or Teaching & Learning Specialist).

The Faculty Director will provide the student with a written outcome within seven (7) business days of receiving the escalation.

External Review

Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome determined, they may choose to raise their concerns through the appropriate external bodies that are identified in the TAFE SA Customer Feedback and Complaints Handling Procedure.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All parties must act reasonably and in good faith, disclosing information only to those legitimately involved in resolving the appeal. Unnecessary disclosure may also incur liability, or disciplinary action for breach of confidentiality.

Records and outcomes of assessment appeals will be kept confidential in the student's file.

System Improvement

TAFE SA acknowledges that the appeals process can provide opportunities for system improvements. Assessment decision appeals will be used in the continuous improvement of assessment tools and materials.

Where an appeal identifies a reasonable opportunity for improvement, the Principal Lecturer will record the improvement in the assessment feedback system and ensure appropriate action is taken in accordance with continuous improvement processes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Faculty Directors	Ensure that education and administration staff are aware of and adhere to processes and responsibilities associated with assessment appeals at TAFE SA.
Educational Managers	Are responsible for following the assessment decision appeal procedure steps and notifying students of the outcome.
Principal Lecturers	Are responsible for following the assessment decision appeal procedure steps and notifying students of the outcome.
Lecturers Educators Assessors	Are responsible for administering and respond to assessment appeals as per this procedure.
Student Success and Wellbeing	Support student wellbeing through academic misconduct cases.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Assessment	The process of collecting, observing and evaluating evidence of a student's learning to determine whether the student has met the required learning outcomes (Higher Education) or competency requirements (Vocational Education and Training).
Assessment Decision	The judgement made by an assessor or academic staff member regarding a student's performance against the required learning outcomes, unit requirements, or unit of competency, based on the assessment evidence provided.
Assessment Result or Grade	The outcome of an assessment decision recorded and communicated to the student, such as a grade, mark, or determination of competency.
Assessment Appeal	The review of an assessor's decision.

Associated Documents and References

Document Type/ Number	Document/Reference Title
Code of Ethics	Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector
Disability Discrimination Act 1992	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Disability Standards for Education	Disability Standards for Education 2005
PPMF TAFESA 1184	Academic Integrity Policy
PPMF TAFESA 1239	Academic Misconduct Procedure
PPMF TAFESA 1239	Assessment Design and Development and Continuous Improvement Procedure
PPMF TAFESA 1098	Assessment Policy
PPMF TAFESA 1240	Conducting Assessment Procedure
PPMF TAFESA 1032	Customer Feedback and Complaint Handling Policy
PPMF TAFESA 164	Customer Feedback and Complaint Handling Procedure
ESOS Act	Education and Training to Overseas Students Act 2000
Higher Education Standards Framework	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cwlth)
PPMF TAFESA 1158	International Students Attendance & Course Progress Procedure
Standards for RTOs	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025
PPMF TAFESA 1099	Resulting Policy
PPMF TAFESA 1100	Resulting Procedure
PPMF TAFE SA 1010	TAFE SA Respectful Behaviours Policy
PPMF TAFE SA 1227	TAFE SA Student Retention and Academic Progression Policy

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PPMF TAFE SA 1228	TAFE SA Student Retention and Academic Progression Procedure
TEQSA Act	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Document Control

TAFE SA procedures must undertake a full review process, including relevant stakeholder consultation and approval, at least every two years from the date of approval. Reviews may be actioned earlier according to related policy or procedure updates and/or reviews, strategic priorities, reforms, legislative or regulatory changes, or feedback received.

Approved by			
Procedure Owner	Victoria Griffith	Title	Acting Executive Director Academic Development
Contact person:	Victoria Griffith	Telephone	7210 3886
Responsible Unit		Teaching and Learning	
Version number		2.0	
Date of approval		20/02/2026	
Next Review Date		31/03/2028	
PPMF ID		PPMF TAFESA 1238	
Procedure Category		Operational	