

## COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

### Complaint Handling Policy

Academy Green Learning is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaint handling process.

#### What is a complaint?

A complaint is generally negative feedback about services or people which has not been resolved locally.

#### Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to and may involve issues concerning the conduct of:

- Academy Green Learning as an organisation, it’s trainers, assessors or other staff
- Third party services provided on behalf of Academy Green Learning, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- A student of Academy Green Learning

This is an important point to note in understanding that this policy has a broad application and is not simply relevant to complaints that may be made by learners. A complaint may be made by an employer about Academy Green Learning or by the trainer about the conduct of the learner. Throughout this policy we refer to the person making a complaint as simply the complainant.

#### *Early Resolution of Complaints*

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It is often the case that complaints can be avoided by proper communication and respect between persons involved.

#### *Relationship to Continuous Improvement*

Frequently, the complaints handling process will explore weakness in the training and assessment or administrative system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that complaints received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement.

### Making a Complaint

A complaint may be received by Academy Green Learning in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person.

The complaints policy must be publicly available. This means that the complaints policy and procedure must be published on the Academy Green Learning website.

To make a complaint, the person is recommended to complete the Academy Green Learning – Complaint Form. This form is available via our website or can be obtained from the Academy Green Learning office.

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The completed complaint form is to be submitted to the Administration Assistant either in hard copy or electronically via the following contact details:

[info@academygreen.edu.au](mailto:info@academygreen.edu.au)

If a complainant has any difficulty assessing the required form or submitting the complaint to Academy Green Learning, they are advised to contact Academy Green Learning immediately at the following phone number:

02 8325 0177 [info@academygreen.edu.au](mailto:info@academygreen.edu.au)

A written record of all complaints is to be kept by Academy Green Learning including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. The complaints register within the student management system is to be used to record the details of the complaint and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the complaint handling process. Records relating to complaints handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.

The complaint is referred to the CEO; whereby the CEO reviews the complaint and determines if investigation or consultation is required; or if the matter can be solved internally.

Complaints are to be handled in the strictest confidence. NO Academy Green Learning representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of Academy Green Learning CEO. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the complainant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.

### *Communicating the Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure*

The complaints handling policy must be:

- Publicly available on the Academy Green Learning’s Website
- Integrated into the Academy Green Learning’s Student Handbook
- Included in the Academy Green Learning’s Policy and Procedure

### *Complaint Handling Timeframe*

Written acknowledgement by Academy Green Learning no **later than 24 hours** from the time the complaint is received. This acknowledgement is intended to provide the complainant assurance that Academy Green Learning has received the complaint and will review the relevant issues and provide a response as soon as practical. The acknowledgement must inform the person that they will receive a written response.

The handling of a complaint is to commence within **seven (7) working days** of the lodgement of the complaint and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

A written response must be provided to the complainant within **fourteen (14) working days** of the lodgement of the complaint.

As a benchmark, Academy Green Learning should attempt to resolve complaints as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve a complaint within **thirty (30) calendar days** is considered acceptable and in the best interest of Academy Green Learning and the complainant.

A complainant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the process of the complaint handling. Updates should be provided to the complainant at a minimum of **two (2) weekly intervals**.

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Complaints must be resolved to a final outcome within **sixty (60) calendar days** of the complaint being initially received. Where Academy Green Learning Chief Executive Officer considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the CEO must inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required.

### *Principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness*

A complainant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost. The principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness must be incorporated into the complaint handling process to ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable. Natural justice must be observed when it affects the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of individuals. The following principles are to be applied:

- **CEO bias.** Where the Chief Executive Officer of Academy Green Learning feels that they may have bias or there is a perception of bias process or where the person making the complaint is not satisfied with how the matter has been handled, the complainant is to be referred directly to an independent third-party for consideration and response.
- **Responding to Allegations.** Where a complaint involves one person making allegations about another person, it is a requirement for Academy Green Learning to hear both sides of the matter before making any judgements about the complaint being settled. A person who will be affected by a decision made by Academy Green Learning as a result of a complaint has the right to be fully informed of any allegations and to be provided adequate opportunity to be heard and respond. The person has the right to:
  - Put forward arguments in their favour,
  - Show cause why a proposed action should not be taken,
  - Deny allegations
  - Call for evidence to disprove allegations and claims,
  - Explain allegations or present an innocent explanation, and
  - Provide mitigating circumstances (information aimed at reducing the severity, seriousness of something).

Academy Green Learning also has an obligation to fully consider the substance of allegations and the response provided by parties before making a decision. Decisions must be communicated to the complainant and relevant person's subject of allegations in writing. This is to include advising these persons of their right to seek a third-party review of decisions made by Academy Green Learning.

- **Referring matters to authorities.** Where an allegation is made that involves alleged criminal or illegal activity and it is considered outside the scope and expertise of Academy Green Learning to investigate the matter, then in these circumstances Academy Green Learning reserve the right to report these allegations to law enforcement authorities. Persons related to the matter involving alleged criminal or illegal activity will be advised in writing if this course of action is being taken.
- **Third Party Review.** Where the person making a complaint is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by Academy Green Learning, they have the opportunity for a body or person that is independent of Academy Green Learning to review his or her complaint following the internal completion of complaint handling process. Before a person seeks a review by an independent third party, they are requested to first allow Academy Green Learning to fully consider the nature of the complaint and to respond to the person in writing. If after this has occurred, the person is not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right then seek a review by an independent third party. To request a review by an independent third party, the complainant should inform the Administration Assistant of their request who will initiate the process with the Chief Executive Officer.

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In these circumstances, the Academy Green Learning Chief Executive Officer will advise of an appropriate party independent of Academy Green Learning to review the complaint outcome (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to Academy Green Learning in regard to the recommended outcomes. The independent third-party is required to respond with their recommendations within **fourteen (14) working days** of their review being requested. This advice is to be accepted by Academy Green Learning as final, advised to the person making a complaint in writing and implemented without prejudice.

Where the Academy Green Learning appoints or engages an appropriate independent person to review a complaint, the Academy Green Learning will meet the full cost to facilitate the independent review.

### *Unresolved Complaints*

Once the complaint handling process has concluded; where the person making a complaint remains not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint handling procedure, the person is to be advised that they have the right to refer the matter to any external authority/agency that may be relevant to their complaint.

The following external agencies are nominated in the first instance as relevant points of referral the person may consider:

- In relation to consumer related issues, the person may refer their complaint to the **Office of Fair Trading**.
- In relation to the delivery of training and assessment services, the person may refer their complaint to the **National Training Complaints Service** via the following phone number: 1300 566 046 or visit the website at [complaints@education.gov.au](mailto:complaints@education.gov.au).
- In relation to matters relating to privacy, the person may refer their complaint to the **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** via the following details: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint> or call on 1300 363 992.

This guidance is also communicated to learners within the Student Handbook and also within the publicly available policies and procedures on Academy Green Learning website. It is expected that the above agencies will investigate the persons concerns and contact the Academy Green Learning for information. External agencies will typically request a copy of any record of how the complaint was handled from the person. Academy Green Learning is to ensure that the person is provided with a written response that they may use for this purpose.

Academy Green Learning is to cooperate fully with agencies such as the National Training Complaints Service, the Office of Fair Trading or ASQA that may investigate the handling of a complaint. Academy Green Learning considers that it would be extremely unlikely that a complaint is not able to be resolved quickly within Academy Green Learning internal arrangements.

## Record Management of Complaint Records

Records relating to complaints will present in two formats. There will be electronic records in the form of email correspondence and other documents which are communicated electronically and hard copy records which are submitted by the complainant or generated by Academy Green Learning. There is also a record of the complaint maintained within the Academy Green Learning student management system. This includes

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the details about the complaint and a diary log which records the progress of the complaint handling and closure. This record also records identified opportunities for improvement that result from complaints handling.

All records regardless of their format will be saved in a digital format into a secure folder located on the Academy Green Learning file storage. Each file is to be clearly labelled with the document title or subject and the date of which the document was received or generated. This folder must only be accessible to persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer. Records stored on the student management system are to be accessible only to administrators and managers.

To ensure records are maintained in a safe and suitable condition, the following is to apply:

- Records must be kept securely to prevent them being accessed by any non-authorised personnel.
- Records must be kept confidential to safeguard information and to protect the privacy of complainants.
- Records must be kept avoiding damage by fire, flood, termites or any other pests.
- Electronic data storage must be safe from destruction by fire or flood and should take account of the risk of component failure of a single storage device. Electronic data is also to be backed-up off site.

A correspondence record must be made for each complainant making a complaint. All email and letter communication should be retained with the complainant correspondence record within the complaint handling file.

### *Period of Retention of Complaints Records*

Academy Green Learning is to retain records relating to complaints handling for a minimum of five (5) years.

### *Destruction of Complaints Records*

Academy Green Learning CEO is the only person who can authorise (in writing) the destruction of complaint handling records. Records are only to be authorised for destruction after the retention period has lapsed. Documents identified for destruction are to be shredded before being recycled.

## Complaint Handling Procedure

Academy Green Learning will apply the following procedure to its complaint handling:

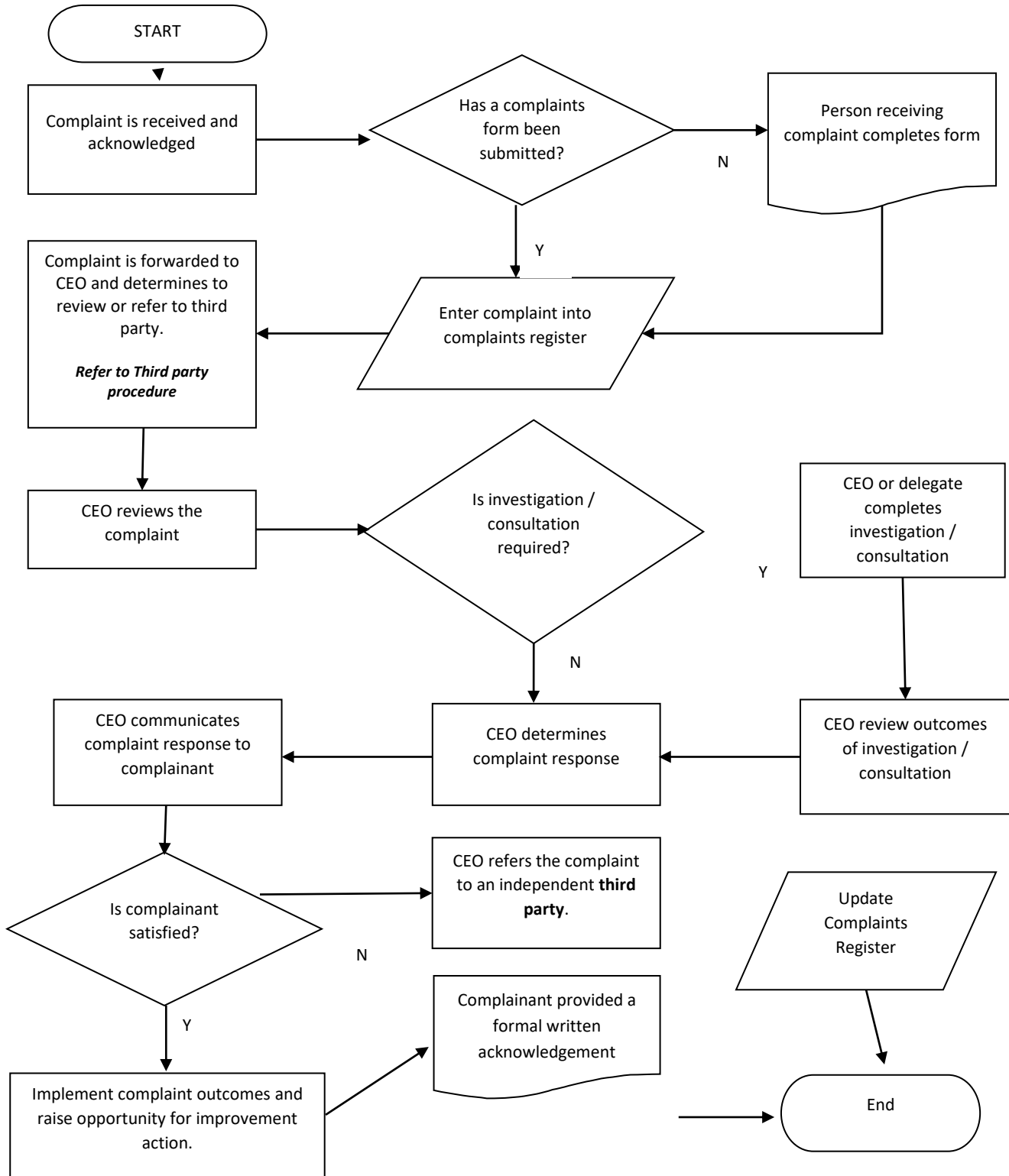
- (a) A complaint may be received in any form (written or verbal) although persons seeking to make a complaint are recommended to complete the complaint form which is available to them on the website. There is no time limitation on a person who is seeking to make a complaint.
- (b) The complainant must be provided a written acknowledgement as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours from the time the complaint is received using the written acknowledgement email template. The acknowledgement must inform the complainant that they will receive a written response within 14 days and explain the complaints handling process and the person's rights and obligations.
- (c) The complaint must be entered into the complaints and appeals register. The complaints and appeals register identifies the complainant, relation with Academy Green Learning, nature of complaint, findings/outcomes, any links with the Continuous Improvement report and the dates received & closed. Prior to entering the complaint form into the register, check if the person has not already submitted a complaint, if it is accurately recorded or if it has been recorded as a subsequent contact.

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- (d) The complaint is forwarded to the Chief Executive Office for review. The CEO will determine if the complaint requires further investigation or consultation.
- (e) Where a complaint is made about or involves allegations about another person, Academy Green Learning is obliged to inform this person about this complaint or allegation and provide them the opportunity to respond and present information in response to the issues raised.
- (f) Where a complaint is received by Academy Green Learning which involve allegations about alleged criminal conduct, Academy Green Learning are to recommend the person making the complaint refer the matter to the relevant State or Territory Police Service.
- (g) The CEO reviews the outcomes of the investigation/consultation and determines the complaint response within an acceptable timeframe. The complaints response letter template can be used to identify the findings and outcomes to the complainant.
- (h) Academy Green Learning shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant during the complaint handling process.
- (i) Decisions or outcomes of the complaint handling process that find in favour of the learner shall be implemented immediately.
- (j) The complainant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply ensuring natural justice and procedural fairness is applied at every stage of the complaint process.
- (k) Academy Green Learning must request written acknowledgement from the complainant once the complaint has been resolved.
- (l) Complaint handling procedures should conclude with an analysis of the circumstances to identify any opportunities for improvement.
- (m) The complaint must be accurately updated and recorded in the Complaints Register.

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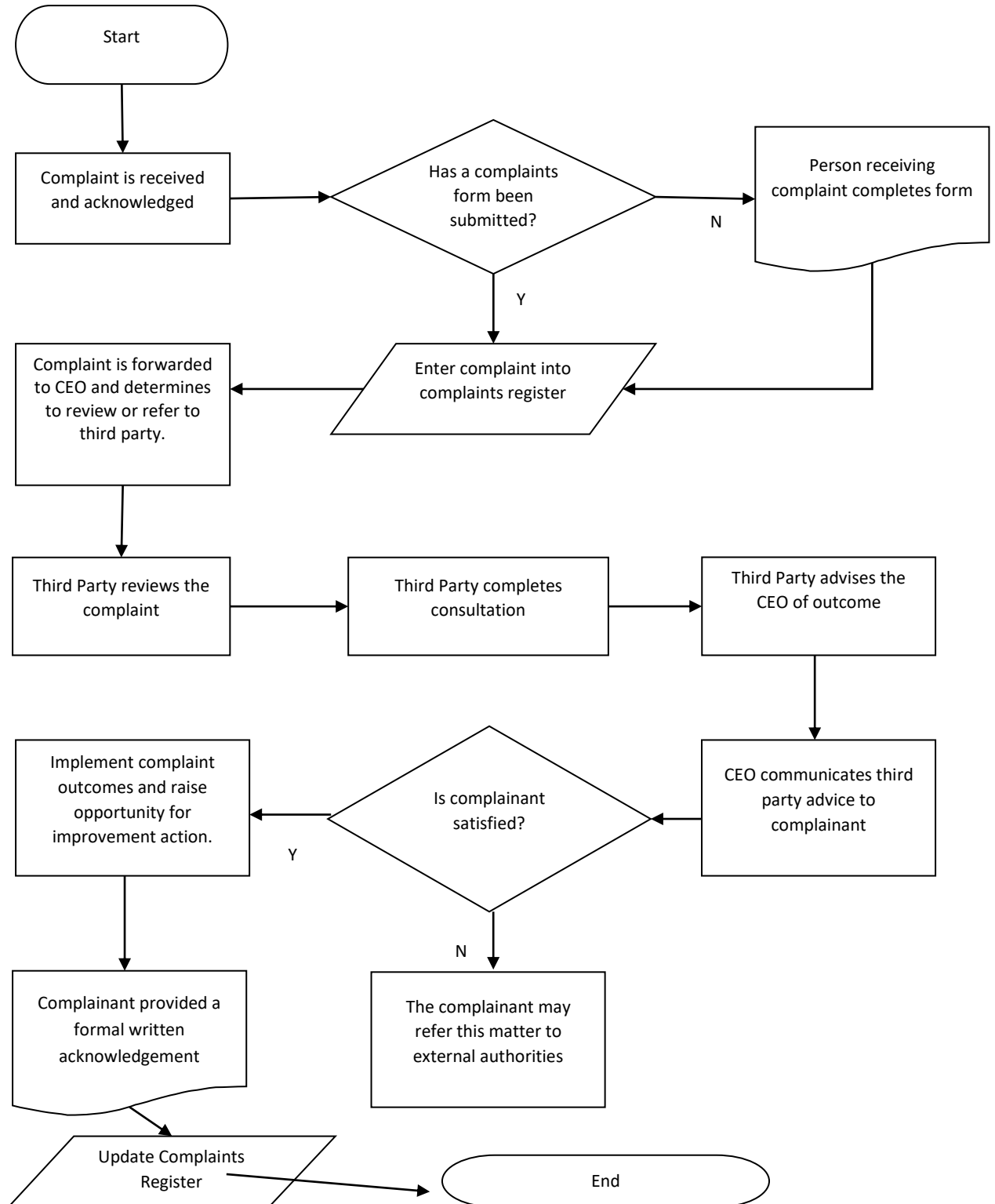
## Complaints Handling Process



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## Third Party Review Process



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## Appeals Handling Policy

Academy Green Learning is committed to providing a fair and transparent appeals handling process.

### What is an Appeal?

An appeal is an application by a learner for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding during their time with Academy Green Learning. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute. Appeals must be lodged within twenty-eight (28) working days of the decision or finding being informed to the student.

It is important to note that a learner may appeal any decision made by Academy Green Learning or a third-party providing services on Academy Green Learning’s behalf. Contrary to the popular belief that appeal relates only to assessment decisions, appeals can relate to administrative decisions that Academy Green Learning may make. Examples of this include an appeal of a decision to deny a refund or to deny an application for credit transfer. As the process for handling assessment appeal compared with an appeal of an administrative decision is slightly different, this difference has been catered for within this policy with adjusted processes for both situations.

### Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to and may involve issues concerning the conduct of:

- Academy Green Learning as an organisation, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- Third party services provided on behalf of Academy Green Learning, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- A student of Academy Green Learning.

Throughout this policy we refer to the person making an appeal as simply the appellant.

### Early Resolution of Appeals

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It is often the case that the learner’s decision to make an appeal can be avoided by proper communication and consultation with learners at the time a decision is made.

### Relationship to Continuous Improvement

Frequently, the appeals handling process will expose weakness in the training and assessment or administrative system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of appeals handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that appeals received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement.

## Making an Appeal

An appeal may be received by Academy Green Learning in writing using the specified form within twenty-eight (28) working days of the decision or finding being informed to the person.

To appeal a decision, the person is required to complete the Academy Green Learning – Request for an Appeal of a Decision form. This form is available via our website. The completed Request for an Appeal form

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is to be submitted to the Administration Assistant either in hard copy or electronically via the following contact details:

[info@academygreen.edu.au](mailto:info@academygreen.edu.au)

If a person seeking an appeal has any difficulty assessing the required form or submitting the appeal to Academy Green Learning, they are advised to contact Academy Green Learning immediately at the following phone number:  
 02 8325 0177

A written record of all appeals is to be kept by Academy Green Learning including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. The appeals register within the student management system is to be used to record the details of the appeal and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the appeal handling process. Records relating to appeal handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.

The appeal is referred to the CEO; whereby the CEO reviews the appeal and determines if re-assessment, investigation or consultation is required; or if the matter can be solved internally.

Appeals are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No Academy Green Learning representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of Academy Green Learning CEO. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the appellant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.

### *Communicating the Appeals Handling Policy and Procedure*

The appeals handling policy and procedure must be:

- Publicly available on the Academy Green Learning website
- Integrated into the Academy Green Learning Student Handbook
- Included in the Academy Green Learning Policy and Procedure Handbook.

### *Appeals Handling Timeframe*

- Written acknowledgement by Academy Green Learning **no later than 24 hours** from the time the appeal is received. This acknowledgement is intended to provide the appellant assurance that Academy Green Learning has received the appeal and will review the relevant issues and provide a response as soon as practical. The acknowledgement must inform the person that they will receive a written response.
- The handling of an appeal is to commence within **seven (7) working days** of the lodgement of the appeal and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- A written response must be provided to the appellant within **fourteen (14) working days** of the lodgement of the appeal, including details of the reasons for the outcome.
- Where an appellant is not satisfied with the handling of the appeal by Academy Green Learning a body or person from an independent third party can be requested to review the appeal. The third-party is required to respond to with their recommendations within **fourteen (14) working days** of their review being request.
- Appeals must be lodged within **twenty-eight (28) working days** of the decision or finding being informed to the person. An appeal must be submitted using the Academy Green Learning – Request for an Appeal of a Decision form.

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- As a benchmark, Academy Green Learning should attempt to resolve appeals as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve an appeal within **thirty (30) calendar days** is considered acceptable and in the best interest of Academy Green Learning and the appellant.
- An appellant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the process of the appeal handling. Updates should be provided to the appellant at a minimum of **two (2) weekly intervals**.
- Appeals must be resolved to a final outcome within **sixty (60) calendar days** of the appeal being initially received. Where Academy Green Learning Chief Executive Officer considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the appeal, the CEO must inform the appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required.

### *Principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness*

An appellant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost. Each appellant may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting. The principles of Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness must be incorporated into every stage of the appeals handling process to ensure that decision-making is fair and reasonable. Natural justice must be observed when it affects the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of individuals. The following principles are to be applied:

- **CEO bias.** Where the Chief Executive Officer of Academy Green Learning feels that they may have bias or there is a perception of bias process or where the person making the appellant is not satisfied with how the matter has been handled, the appellant is to be referred directly to an independent third-party for consideration and response. This means that the appellant is entitled to have their appeal heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. The decision must be made on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not consider irrelevant considerations.
- **Third Party Review.** Where the appellant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by Academy Green Learning, they have the opportunity for a body or person that is independent of Academy Green Learning to review his or her appeal following the internal completion of the appeal handling process. Before a person seeks a review by an independent third party, they are requested to first allow Academy Green Learning to fully consider the nature of the appeal and to respond to the person in writing. If after this has occurred, the person is not satisfied with the outcome, they have the right then seek a review by an independent third party. To request a review by an independent third party, the appellant should inform the Administration Assistant of their request who will initiate the process with the Chief Executive Officer.

In these circumstances, the Academy Green Learning Chief Executive Officer will advise of an appropriate party independent of Academy Green Learning to review the appeal outcome (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to Academy Green Learning in regard to the recommended outcomes. The independent third-party is required to respond with their recommendations within **fourteen (14) working days** of their review being requested. This advice is to be accepted by Academy Green Learning as final, advised to the person making an appeal in writing and implemented without prejudice.

Where the Academy Green Learning appoints or engages an appropriate independent person to review an appeal the Academy Green Learning will meet the full cost to facilitate the independent review.

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## Unresolved Appeals

Once the appeals handling process has concluded; where the person seeking an appeal of a decision remains not satisfied with the outcome of the appeals handling procedure, the person is to be advised that they have the right to refer the matter to any external authority/agency that may be relevant to their appeal. The following external agencies are nominated in the first instance as relevant points of referral the person may consider:

- In relation to consumer related issues, the person may refer their matter to the Office of Fair Trading.
- In relation to the delivery of training and assessment services, the person may refer their matter to the National Training Complaints Service via the following phone number: 13 38 73 or visit the website at <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>
- Privacy matters to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner via the following details: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/individuals/how-do-i-make-a-privacy-complaint> or call on 1300 363 992

This guidance is also communicated to learners within the Learner Handbook and also within the publicly available policies and procedures on Academy Green Learning Website. It is expected that the above agencies will investigate the persons concerns and contact the Academy Green Learning information. External agencies will typically request a copy of any record of how the appeal was handled from the person. Academy Green Learning is to ensure that the person is provided with a written response that they may use for this purpose.

Academy Green Learning is to cooperate fully with agencies such as the National Training Complaints Service, the Office of Fair Trading or ASQA that may investigate the handling of an appeal. Academy Green Learning considers that it would be extremely unlikely that an appeal is not able to be resolved quickly within Academy Green Learning internal arrangements.

## Record Management of Appeals Records

Records relating to appeals will present in two formats. There will be electronic records in the form of email correspondence and other documents which are communicated electronically and hard copy records which are submitted by the appellant or generated by Academy Green Learning. There is also a record of the appeal maintained within the Academy Green Learning student management system. This includes the details about the appeal and a diary log which records the progress of the appeal handling and closure. This record also records identified opportunities for improvement that result from appeals handling.

All records regardless of their format will be saved in a digital format into a secure folder located on the Academy Green Learning file storage. Each file is to be clearly labelled with the document title or subject and the date of which the document was received or generated. This folder must only be accessible to persons authorised by the Chief Executive Officer. Records stored on the student management system are to be accessible only to administrators and managers.

To ensure records are maintained in a safe and suitable condition, the following is to apply:

- Records must be kept securely to prevent them being accessed by any non-authorised personnel.
- Records must be kept confidential to safeguard information and to protect the privacy of complainants.
- Records must be kept avoiding damage by fire, flood, termites or any other pests.

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- Electronic data storage must be safe from destruction by fire or flood and should take account of the risk of component failure of a single storage device. Electronic data is also to be backed-up off site.

### *Period of Retention of Appeals Records*

Academy Green Learning is to retain records relating to appeals handling for a minimum of five (5) years.

### *Destruction of Appeals Records*

Academy Green Learning CEO is the only person who can authorise (in writing) the destruction of appeals handling records. Records are only to be authorised for destruction after the retention period has lapsed. Documents identified for destruction are to be shredded before being recycled.

## Appeals Handling Procedure

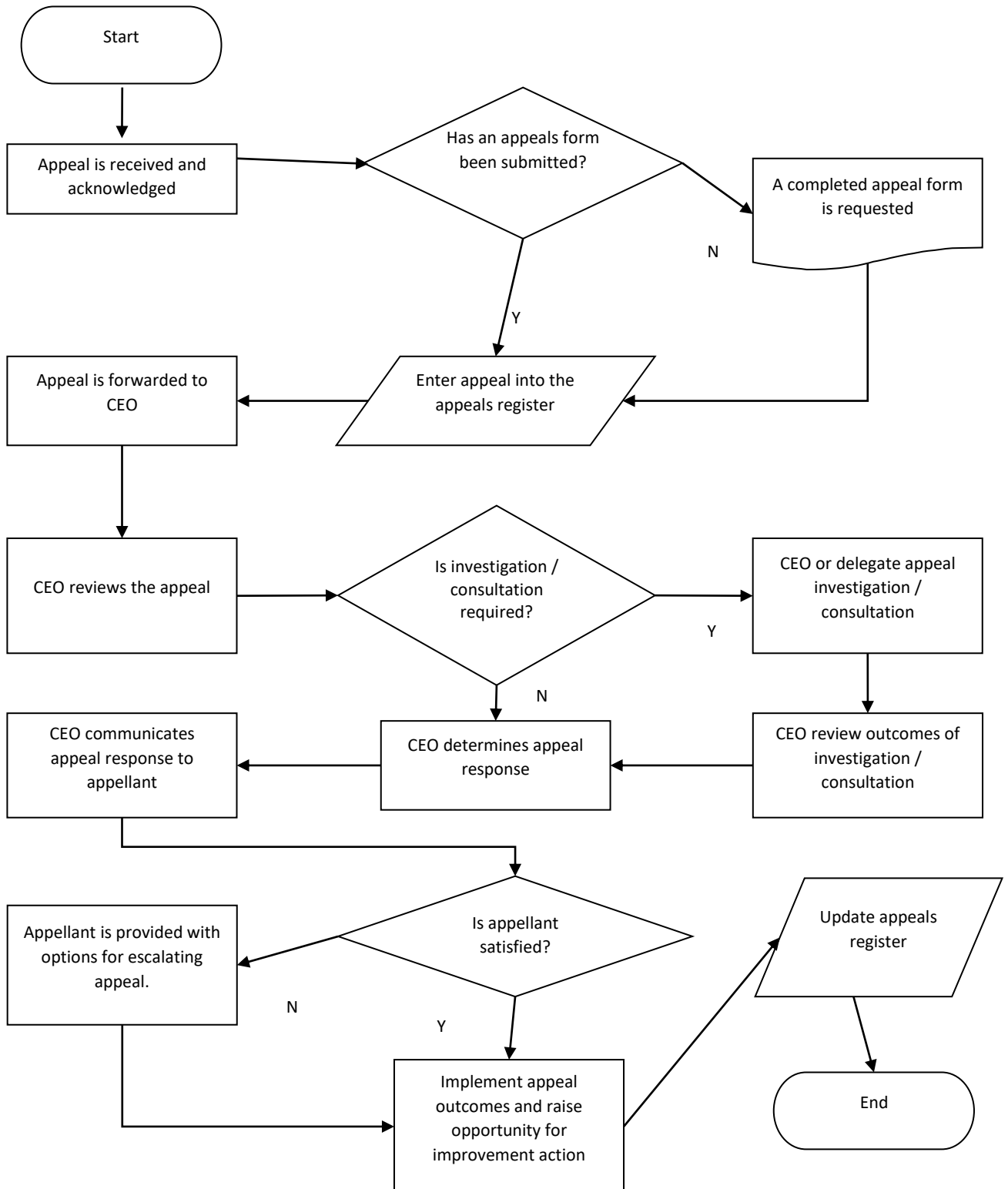
Academy Green Learning will apply the following procedure to its appeals handling:

- An appeal must be received in writing using the Request an Appeal of a Decision form. Appeals must be lodged within twenty-eight (28) working days of the decision or finding being informed by the person.
- The complainant must be provided a written acknowledgement as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours from the time the appeal is received using the appeals written acknowledgment email template. The acknowledgement must inform the appellant that they will receive a written response within 14 days to explain the appeals handling process and the person's rights and obligations.
- The appeal must be entered into the complaints and appeals register. The complaints and appeals register identifies the appellant, relation with Academy Green Learning, nature of appeal, findings/outcomes, any links with the Continuous Improvement report and the dates received & closed. Prior to entering the appeals form into the register, check if the person has not already submitted an appeal, if it is accurately recorded or if it has been recorded as a subsequent contact.
- The appeal is forwarded to the Chief Executive Office for review. The CEO will determine if the appeal requires further investigation or consultation (administrative appeal) or if the appellant is offered re-assessment with the option of additional training (assessment appeal).
- The CEO reviews the outcomes of the investigation/consultation and determines the appeal response within an acceptable timeframe. The CEO is to use the appeals response letter template to advise the appellant of the findings and outcomes.
- Academy Green Learning shall maintain the enrolment of the appellant during the appeals handling process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the appeals handling process that find in favour of the learner shall be implemented immediately. If this is an assessment appeal, the candidate may agree to additional training whereby Academy Green Learning must provide this to the candidate and re-assessment
- must be completed. If the candidate is deemed not competent after re-assessment, they must meet with the Academy Green Learning Chief Executive Officer to discuss the assessment process and outcome.
- The appellant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply ensuring natural justice and procedural fairness is applied at every stage of the appeals process. If the appellant is dissatisfied with the appeal decision, they are to be referred to the complaints handling process.
- Academy Green Learning must request written acknowledgement from the appellant once the appeal has been determined.

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- (k) Appeals handling procedures should conclude with an analysis of the circumstances to identify any opportunities for improvement.
- (l) The appellant must be accurately updated and recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

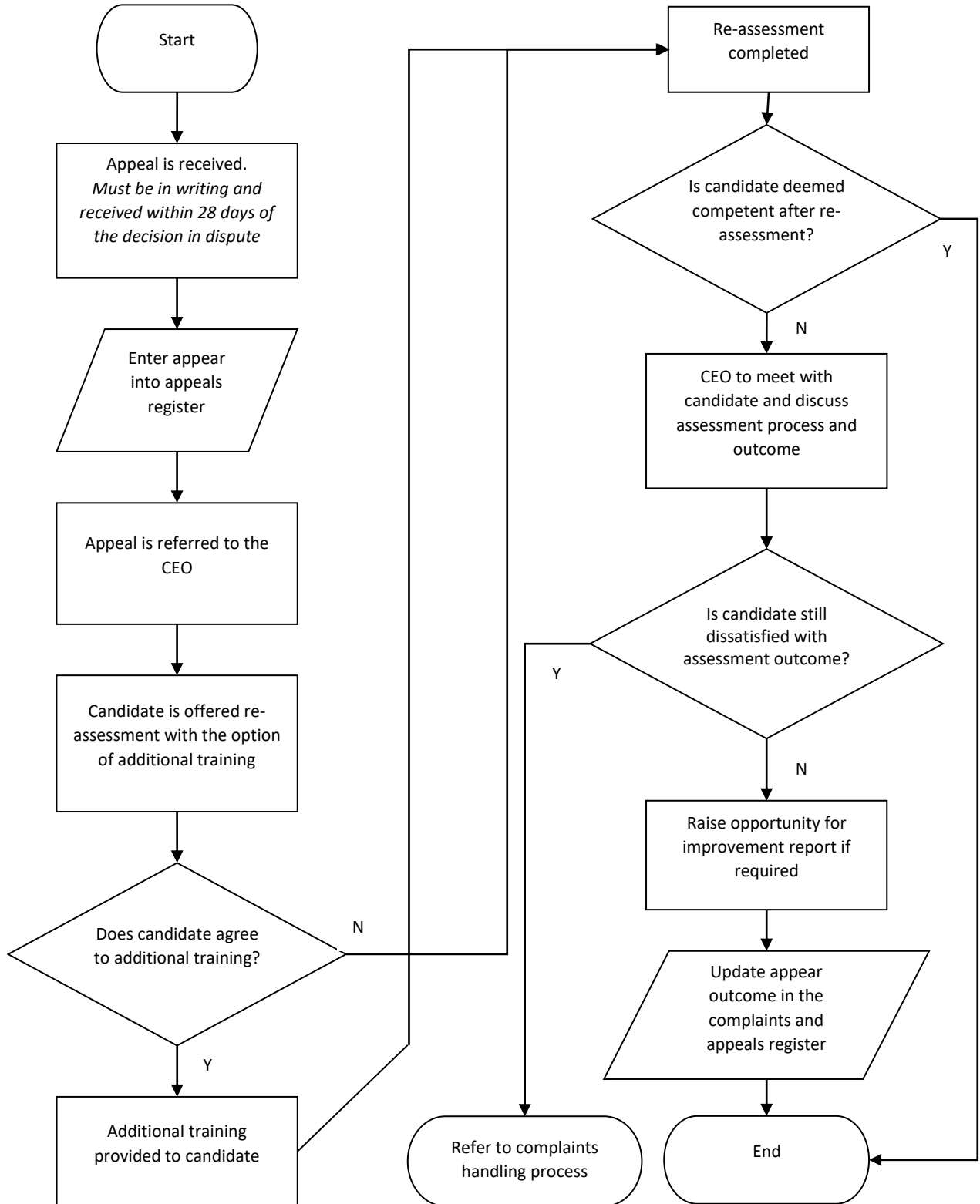
## Administrative Appeals Handling Process



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## Assessment Appeals Handling Process



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