Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional Year

Student Complaints & Appeals Policy

REVIEW RECORD	
Version	3.0
Effective	23 November 2026
Next Review	November 2028
Approved by	Executive Director

1. Purpose

1.1 Sydney Dance Company encourages honest and open communication between all staff, students, dancers and faculty. Everyone is entitled to fair and consistent treatment and prompt consideration and resolution of an appeal of an assessment decision or a complaint made. The following provides guidelines on how Sydney Dance Company will process and manage an appeal/complaint raised by you.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to academic and non-academic complaints and appeals relating to Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional Year (PPY), including training, assessment, enrolment, marketing, facilities, student support, fees and conduct involving staff or students. It sets out the student complaint pathway and the responsibilities of staff who receive, manage or review those matters.

2.2 VET Student Loans provisions apply to relevant loan-assistance matters. Where a complaint also engages the staff complaints procedure, the coordinated arrangements in Section 5 apply. This policy does not replace that procedure or determine employment rights.

3. Definitions

Appeal: A request to review a decision made by Sydney Dance Company, including an assessment outcome, treatment during assessment, a refund decision, a response to a complaint or another administrative decision affecting a student.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction with training, assessment or services, or with the conduct of Sydney Dance Company, its staff or another student.

Complainant: The person making a complaint.

Appellant: The person requesting an appeal.

Support person: A person who accompanies or assists a party during the complaint or appeal process, subject to the arrangements in this policy.

4. Access and Guiding Principles

4.1 This procedure includes formal internal consideration, internal appeal and independent external review. Students may seek assistance from a support person throughout the process.

4.2 Your first point of contact to discuss and manage any informal complaints regarding your experience in PPY at Sydney Dance Company should be the Head of Training, Program Manager or other Sydney Dance Company staff.

4.3 For a formal complaint or appeal, ask the Head of Training or Program Manager for an Appeals / Complaints Form. Submit the completed form to any Sydney Dance Company staff member for handling under Section 6.

4.4 Choosing to access and make use of this policy and procedure will not affect your enrolment status. Each party may be accompanied or assisted by another person at every internal and external stage. Any cost of a person chosen by a party is that party's responsibility. Students will not be charged any fee for lodging, hearing, internally appealing or externally reviewing a grievance. Sydney Dance Company will meet any external reviewer's fees necessary to provide this procedure.

4.5 Complaints and appeals will be handled consistently, objectively and sensitively, in accordance with natural justice and procedural fairness. Each party is entitled to be heard by an impartial decision-maker and receive a decision based on relevant evidence. All parties are expected to act honestly and respectfully. No person will be victimised or disadvantaged for raising a concern or participating in this procedure in good faith. A complainant's identity will be protected as far as the circumstances allow, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed where disclosure is necessary for procedural fairness or required by law.

4.6 The staff member receiving a complaint will promptly identify any immediate safety or wellbeing concerns and refer critical matters to an appropriate Senior Leadership Team member for urgent action, with an initial response targeted within 24 hours of receipt. Urgent protective action will not wait for completion of the ordinary grievance stages. Any necessary interim arrangements will be explained to affected parties and will not prejudge the complaint or appeal.

5. Relationship with the Staff Complaints Handling and Investigation Procedure

5.1 Application of the two procedures

a. This student policy operates alongside the SDC Complaints Handling and Investigation Procedure 2021 (titled *Sydney Dance Company Respectful Workplace Complaint Handling and Investigation Procedure*). Staff must adhere to that procedure within its scope: complaints concerning discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, vilification or victimisation involving workers. Its worker coverage includes employees, contractors, volunteers and student placements, apprentices and work experience students/interns.

b. This policy remains the student-facing pathway for academic and non-academic complaints and appeals, including complaints about staff conduct. Routine matters such as assessment, fees, facilities or course administration will continue under this policy unless they also raise matters within the staff procedure's scope. A complaint may

engage both procedures, for example where a student raises an allegation of harassment involving a staff member. Students are not required to decide which procedure applies or lodge the same complaint twice. Students will submit a complaint through either mechanism; the handling of the complaint will be decided by the Director Training & Education and the student will be informed of this at receipt of complaint.

6. Formal Complaint Procedure

6.1 Lodging a formal complaint or initial assessment appeal

a. Formal complaints and initial assessment appeals should be made in writing and addressed to the Head of Training. Use the Complaints and Appeals Form or provide equivalent written details to any Sydney Dance Company staff member for referral. Informal discussion is encouraged but is not a prerequisite. If the Head of Training is involved in the matter or has a conflict of interest, the Program Manager will arrange consideration by an uninvolved member of the Senior Leadership Team.
b. Please raise a complaint as soon as possible after the incident. Provide as much information as possible, including what happened and when, who was involved, the effect on you, supporting evidence and any steps already taken to resolve the matter. Staff can assist you to record your complaint in writing. The absence of an earlier informal discussion does not prevent formal consideration.
c. The complainant is invited to include suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.

6.2 Acknowledge receipt and commence the process

a. Sydney Dance Company will provide receipt of the complaint to the complainant within five working days.
b. Sydney Dance Company will commence formal consideration of the complaint or initial assessment appeal. All reasonable measures must be taken to finalise this stage as soon as practicable and within 14 working days. Complex matters may require longer, subject to written reasons, an expected completion date and progress updates. Subsequent internal appeal and external review stages have the separate timeframes set out below.

6.3 Investigate and review the complaint

a. Upon receiving the complaint, the Head of Training may request further details from the complainant. This may be sought by written or verbal request or by face-to-face interview with the complainant and/or respondent(s).
b. Each party will have a fair opportunity to present their position and relevant evidence, respond to adverse information and be heard, in writing or at a meeting. Each party may be accompanied or assisted by a support person.
c. Investigation into the matter will take place to ensure Sydney Dance Company has accurate, complete and relevant information.
d. The appropriate Sydney Dance Company staff member assigned to manage the complaint will review the information and decide on the appropriate actions to be taken.

e. If a stage cannot be completed within its stated timeframe, Sydney Dance Company will notify the affected parties in writing before that timeframe expires, explain the reasons, give an expected completion date and provide progress updates at least every 10 working days. If the overall process is expected to take more than 60 calendar days, the complainant will also receive written reasons for that delay and regular progress updates until resolution.

6.4 Recommend resolution and provide a written decision

a. The Head of Training, or the Sydney Dance Company staff member appointed to consider the matter, will endeavour to resolve the complaint or initial assessment appeal and provide a written decision within the existing target of 14 working days of receipt; any extension will be explained in writing. The decision will set out the issues considered, steps taken and timeframes, findings, reasons, recommendations and actions to be implemented. It will also explain how and where to request an internal appeal under Section 6.5.
b. The complaint will be logged by Sydney Dance Company and form part of the Continuous Improvement Processes.

6.5 Internal appeal

a. If you are dissatisfied with the formal decision, request an internal appeal in writing through the Program Manager, identifying the decision, reasons for appeal, outcome sought and any supporting evidence. Please submit the request within 20 working days of receiving the decision. Later requests will be considered where there are reasonable grounds for delay. Sydney Dance Company will acknowledge receipt within five working days and arrange review by a Senior Leadership Team member who was not involved in the original decision and has no conflict of interest, or an independent internal committee or unit with appropriate expertise
b. The internal reviewer will consider the original records, grounds of appeal and any further evidence, give each party a fair opportunity to be heard and respond, and provide a written appeal decision within 14 working days of receiving the appeal, subject to the written extension and progress-update arrangements above.
c. For an assessment appeal, Sydney Dance Company will appoint an appropriately qualified assessor who was not involved in the original assessment decision to review the original task, evidence and assessment requirements and reassess the original task as appropriate. The student will receive the reassessment outcome and reasons in writing. Any change to the result will be recorded and communicated to the student. The internal appeal and independent external review rights in this policy remain available; reassessment does not remove those rights.

7. Independent External Review

7.1 For complaints about VET Student Loans or VET FEE-HELP loan assistance, students may contact the VET Student Loans Ombudsman (VSLO) directly using its online complaint process or other contact options. Sydney Dance Company is a member of that external dispute resolution scheme. The VSLO generally expects students to first use their provider's internal complaint and appeal processes. It assesses complaints, investigates and makes recommendations; it cannot itself re-credit a debt or compel action in the way a court can.

7.2 For matters outside the VSLO's jurisdiction, including non-loan disputes or matters about personal information, Sydney Dance Company will arrange an appropriately qualified external independent reviewer. The existence of the VSLO does not replace the obligation to provide external independent review of an appealed decision. If the VSLO declines a matter or cannot provide the required review, Sydney Dance Company will arrange another appropriate external independent reviewer.

enquiries@asqa.gov.au7.3 Students may also report regulatory concerns to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) through its reporting service, by calling 13000 701 801 or emailing enquiries@asqa.gov.au.

SYDNEY DANCE COMPANY

Complaints and Appeals Form

First Name:	**Surname:**
Qualification enrolled in: ☐ CUA51520 Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance) ☐ CUA60120 Advanced Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance)	
Contact details:	
Mobile number:	**Email address:**
Appeal / Complaint Detail	
Reason for this appeal: ☐ Assessment outcome ☐ Disciplinary action ☐ Attendance records ☐ Course fees ☐ Other (please specify) _____	**Reason for this complaint:** • Staff member (name: _____) • Services (specify: _____) • Other (please specify _____)

Appeal / Complaint summary – please outline the reason for your appeal / complaint and attach any evidence to support your claim. Please attach additional pages if required.

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Do you have any suggestions for resolution that you would like to be considered?

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I acknowledge that all the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Privacy statement:
The information on this form will be used to assess and resolve your complaint or appeal, conduct any internal appeal or independent external review, implement outcomes and meet legal obligations. Records will be kept securely for at least five years after finalisation. Parties who use the procedure may request access to records of their use through the Head of Training or Head of Open Programs & Learning, subject to protections for others' personal information. Information will otherwise remain confidential and will only be disclosed to authorised personnel, relevant independent reviewers, the VET Student Loans Ombudsman, the department or other bodies where necessary for these purposes or required or authorised by law.