Definitions
For the purposes of this document the following applies:

The Act refers to the Higher Education Support Act 2003

Student/s refers to all persons enrolled in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act who are, or would, be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

Complainant refers to Students (as defined above) who have lodged an academic complaint with VFA Learning.

Overview
VFA Learning is committed to providing an effective, efficient, timely, fair and confidential academic grievance handling procedure for all students including those students eligible for VET FEE-HELP.

Complainants (students or prospective students) are entitled to access this grievance procedure regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the Complainant’s place of residence or mode of study.

Academic matters include those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, course content or awards in a VET course of study.

Responsibility
The RTO General Manager is responsible for implementation of this policy and procedure and ensuring that all staff are fully trained in its operation and Students and Complainants are made aware of its availability.

Formal Grievance Procedure
General principles applying to all stages of this grievance procedure which will be adhered to by VFA Learning are:

- The Complainant and respondent will have the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure.
- The Complainant and the respondent have the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.
- The Complainant and the respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised.
- At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complaints, grievances and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or the respondent if requested.
- Records of all grievances will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored in the office of the RTO General Manager.
- A Complainant shall have access to this grievance procedure at no cost.
Stage One
Formal grievances should be submitted in writing to the Compliance Manager (VFA Learning, 78 Yarra St, Geelong, 3220)

The Compliance Manager (the responsible officer, within VFA Learning) will then assess the grievance, determine the outcome and advise the Complainant in writing of their decision within fourteen days.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to access stage two of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One.

Stage Two
If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One they may lodge an appeal in writing with the RTO General Manager (VFA Learning, 78 Yarra Street, Geelong, 3220).

The Complainant’s appeal will be determined by the Director of Quality at VFA Learning.

The Reviewer will conduct all necessary consultations with the Complainant and other relevant persons and make a determination of the appeal. The Complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, including the reasons for the decision, within fourteen days.

The Complainant will be advised of their right to progress to Stage Three of the grievance procedure if they consider the matter unresolved.

Stage Three
If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two they may request that the matter be referred to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by VFA Learning.

The contact details for the external body are:

Mediation Solutions
13 Claremont Avenue
Newtown Vic 3220
Ph: (03) 5221 0422

VFA Learning will give due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review within 14 working days.

Publication
This Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure will be made available to Students enrolled with VFA Learning through publication on the website at www.vfalearning.vic.edu.au

This Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure was agreed to and ratified by the Board of Directors at VFA Learning on 16th May 2012.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION
- Complaints Policy (pg 7)