

How to raise a complaint

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If you have a complaint about your VET FEE-HELP or VET Student Loans provider, you may be able to lodge your complaint with us. Read this fact sheet first to see how to raise a complaint with your provider and with our Office.

Contact your provider first

You should try to resolve the problem with your provider before contacting us. Providers are required to have a two-step internal complaint-handling process that is published on their website.

Generally, we will not investigate complaints until they have been raised with the provider first. If you are dissatisfied with the provider's response to your initial complaint, you can request that the provider reviews its decision.

If this does not resolve your complaint, you can then contact our Office.

If your provider is closed, and there is no available representative to make a complaint to, you can contact us in the first instance.

Tips to lodge a complaint with your provider

- Check your provider's website for its complaints policy, this is sometimes called a grievance policy. The policy should give you information on how your provider accepts complaints and how long the provider will take to respond to your complaint.
- Give your provider clear and relevant information. Ideally you should make your complaint in writing.
- Ask for a complaint reference number and keep copies of any written complaints you make.
- Give your provider time to resolve your complaint—at least 10 business days. You can ask the provider to confirm the timeframe when you first lodge the complaint.
- Follow-up with the provider if you do not get a response within the agreed or published timeframe.

How to lodge a complaint—phone or email

Providers will usually ask that you lodge a complaint in writing, often using a specific complaint form. This information should be available on the provider's website.

If you are not able to complain in writing, you may wish to ask a friend or relative to help you or you can call your provider to organise an alternative way to make your complaint.

Contact us

ombudsman.gov.au/vslo
1300 362 072

GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601

The Ombudsman has offices in:

- » Adelaide
- » Brisbane
- » Canberra
- » Melbourne
- » Perth
- » Sydney

1. Talk to your provider about your problem first.
2. Lodge a complaint through their internal process.
3. If you are not satisfied with their response, you can ask for a review.
4. If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Ombudsman.

If you make a complaint over the phone, or in person, you should note the date and details of any conversations you have with the provider during or immediately after the conversation.

What to include in your complaint

Set out your complaint as clearly and briefly as possible. Remember to:

- be specific rather than general
- focus on the facts that are relevant to your complaint and don't go into excessive detail
- attach copies of relevant documents (evidence)
- indicate what action or outcome you would like as a result of your complaint.

Keep records

Keep copies of all correspondence you receive and send and any other important documents or notes. This includes details of telephone calls. You may need to send further emails or provide more information. It helps if you can easily find this and have evidence to back up your claims.

Follow up

If the provider does not respond in its published timeframe, call your provider to ask about the progress of your complaint.

If no progress has occurred, or if the provider cannot explain how things have progressed, contact your provider again. If you are unable to sort out the matter after making reasonable efforts to do so, you should consider contacting us.

When to contact the Ombudsman

If you are dissatisfied with your provider's response after you have gone through its internal two-step complaints process, you should consider contacting us by lodging a complaint online at ombudsman.gov.au/vslo or calling us on **1300 362 072**.

We may ask you to provide the following information:

- your name, date of birth and contact details
- the name of your provider, your Student ID number and your Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN)
- the date you enrolled in your course
- the date you lodged your complaint with your provider
- a copy of the written complaint you lodged with your provider
- a copy (or details) of your provider's response to your complaint
- the outcome you are seeking by approaching our Office.

More information is available at ombudsman.gov.au.

Please note: This document is intended as a guide only. For this reason, the information should not be relied on as legal advice or regarded as a substitute for legal advice in individual cases. To the maximum extent permitted by the law, the Commonwealth Ombudsman is not liable to you for any loss or damage suffered as a result of reliance on this document. For the most up-to-date versions of cited Acts, please refer to the [Federal Register of Legislation](#).