



Compliants, Appeals and Grievances Policy

BUS-POL-009

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Preface

The contents of this Procedure are accurate at the time of publication and are updated regularly to ensure that the information remains current. Enquires about any information contained in this procedure should be directed to ASTRA Group Services Pty Ltd (ASTRA) by contacting:

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Amendment Page

2006	Version 1	Original Version
2007	Version 2	Updated by J.R
2008	Version 3	Updated by J.R
2009	Version 4	Updated by J.R.
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Sep 2010	Version 6	Updated by M.P.
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May 2015	Rev A	Updated by CD
Jan 2016	Rev B	Updated by BJ
Mar 2016	Rev C	Updated by BJ & BB
Feb 2017	Rev C.1	Reviewed by BJ

1. ACADEMIC APPEALS

This policy/procedure supports the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 in providing a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned. All complaints and appeals received by ASTRA Group Services (ASTRA) will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.

Despite all efforts of the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to provide satisfactory services to its students, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The following procedures provide students the opportunity to have any issues relating to a substantiated complaint or appeal resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties involved. This complaints and appeals process will be at no cost to the student.

1.1. GRIEVANCES

In the event that grievances / disputes cannot be resolved internally, we will advise students of the appropriate government body where they can seek further assistance. Circumstances that may result in a grievance could include:

- Verbal abuse;
- Discriminatory behaviour; and
- Unprofessional behaviour.

Students who believe they have cause to lodge a grievance should discuss the issue in the first instance with their Course Facilitator / ASTRA representative. If resolution is not reached, the lodged grievance will be escalated to the RTO Manager for mediation.

1.2. STUDENT COMPLAINTS, APPEALS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY

Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue. Any staff can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a student has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed. All complaints, appeals and grievance feedback must be received within 14 days of the alleged incident.

1.2.1. GENERAL COMPLAINTS

Any student, potential student, or third party may submit a formal complaint to the RTO with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process unless it is referred to a third party.

A student wishing to submit a formal complaint or appeal can do so by completing the 'ASTRA Complaints and Appeals Form' and state their case providing as many details as possible. This application form can be gained by contacting ASTRA Administration at the RTO.

All formally submitted complaints or appeals are submitted to the RTO Manager. It is their responsibility to deal with the complaint in the first instance. Complaints are to include the following information:

- Submission date of complaint;
- Name of complainant;
- Nature of complaint;
- Date of the event which lead to the complaint; and
- Attachments (if applicable).

Once a formal complaint is received it is entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'. The information to be contained and updated within the register is as follows:

- Submission date of complaint;
- Name of complainant;
- Description of complaint / appeal;
- Determined resolution; and
- Date of resolution.

Students are able to present their case in person and may be assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the complaint throughout the process at all times.

Once a complaint has been filed and logged in the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' the Student Administration Coordinator shall notify the RTO Manager of the complaint and provide any further documentation related to the matter.

The RTO Manager shall then refer the matter to the appropriate staff to resolve, or make a decision on the complaint within 10 working days and keep the complainant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint.

Once a decision has been reached the RTO Manager shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing. Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the students shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal. To appeal a decision the RTO must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal. Students are referred to the Appeals procedure 12.2.2. Appealing a Decision.

The RTO Manager shall ensure that the RTO will act immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, the registered provider must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required, and advise the student of the outcome.

Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints and Appeals register' by the RTO Manager and on the students file. The RTO will ensure that it follows the principles of fairness and natural justice in dealing with all complaints.

1.2.2. APPEALING A DECISION

All students have the right to appeal decisions made by the RTO where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by the RTO may include:

- Assessments conducted;
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment; and
- Any other conclusion / decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by the RTO in the first instance.

To activate the appeals process the student is to complete a 'Complaints and Appeals Form' which is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the student feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained and help and support with this process can be gained from student administrations department.

The RTO Manager shall then determine the validity of the appeal and organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.

When appealing a decision:

- The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged; and
- The RTO Manager shall ensure that the RTO acts on any substantiated appeal.

Where an appeal has been lodged it will be defined into one of the following categories and the appropriate procedures followed:

General appeals

- Where a student has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify the RTO in writing within 20 working days of the grounds of their appeal. Any supporting documentation should also be attached to the appeal;
- The appeal shall be lodged through student administrations and the student administration manager shall ensure the details of the appeal are added to the 'Complaints and Appeals Register';
- The RTO Manager shall be notified and shall seek details regarding the initial documentation of the complaint and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal; and
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the 'complaints and appeals register' updated. The student shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify the RTO if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

Assessment appeals

- Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment they are required to notify their assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate the assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The assessor shall complete a written report regarding the reassessment outlining the reasons why assessment was or was not granted;
- If this is still not to the student's satisfaction the student shall formally lodge an appeal by submitting a written letter outlining their reasons for the appeal. They shall lodge this with student administrations department and the appeal shall be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register';
- The RTO Manager shall be notified and shall seek details from the assessor involved and any other relevant parties. A decision shall be made regarding the appeal either indicating the assessment decision stands or details of a possible re-assessment by a 'third party'. The third party shall be another assessor appointed by the RTO; and
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision, and the 'complaints and appeals register' updated. The student shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify the RTO if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

External Appeals

- If a student is still dissatisfied with the decision of the RTO, a student may wish to escalate the matter;
- Appeals can relate to assessment decisions but they can also relate to other decisions, such as a decision to exclude a learner from a program. Clients should be encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through your complaint mechanisms. If they are not satisfied with the outcomes of these processes they should contact Australian Skilly Quality Authority (ASQA) by completing the online complaint form – <http://www.asqa.gov.au/>; and
- Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student the RTO shall follow the required action and recommendation from the third party mediator such as ASQA to satisfy the student's appeal as soon as practicable.

Note: Any complaints, appeals or grievance feedback not received within 14 days of the alleged incident may not be considered valid or acted upon. Only one formal appeal presentation will be entered into and the decision of the RTO Manager and/ or Director/s will be final.

1.3. STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

We expect that fair and equitable treatment is a reciprocal arrangement and as such have documented guidelines for management of inappropriate student behaviour.

In the first instance:

Students will be asked to cease any behaviour considered inappropriate either by Course Facilitators, assessors, workplace or other students. No argument will be entered into in relation to individual perceptions about 'appropriateness' – if the behaviour has offended, then it will be considered offensive and is therefore inappropriate.

In the second instance:

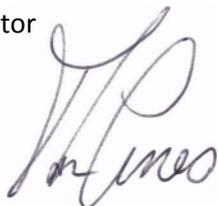
Failure to desist will result in a second request for specific behaviour to cease and may include temporary and short term ejection to allow for reflection and cooling off and/or written advice. These interventions will be used at the Course Facilitator/assessors discretion.

In the third instance:

Failure to cease inappropriate behaviour will result in ejection from class for the day (For any training paid for/or organised by an employer or government assistance agency, they will be immediately notified of the behaviour and actions taken by ASTRA). ASTRA Group Services reserves the right to permanently eject students for ongoing inappropriate behaviour without course refund. This decision will be made on a case by case basis considering evidence at hand and level of inappropriate behaviour.

Trevor Jones

Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Jones', written over a horizontal line.