

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure provide clear and practical guidelines to ensure that complaints and appeals received about Seaton Training, about and from students, trainers, staff and/or third parties can be resolved equitably and efficiently, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

This complaints and appeals policy and procedure will manage allegations involving the conduct of:

- Seaton Training, its trainers, assessors and other staff
- stakeholders and others
- a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- a student of Seaton Training

Complaints and appeals can arise from matters of concern relating to:

- training delivery and assessment
- the quality of the training
- student support
- materials
- discrimination
- harassment

Definitions

Complaint - is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action or service of the Registered Training Organisation.

Appeal - is where a student or staff member or stakeholder of Seaton Training or another interested party disputes a decision arising from a complaint, an assessment decision, or another decision made by the RTO.

Natural Justice - is concerned with ensuring procedural fairness. It involves:

- Decisions and processes free from bias
- All parties having the right to be heard
- All parties having a right to know how and of what, they are involved/accused
- Investigating a matter appropriately before a decision is made
- All parties being told the decision and the reasons for the decision

Person – is the someone making the complaint (complainant or appellant) and can be an individual, a group or an entity/organisation.

Policy

Seaton Training believes that a person, who has a complaint or appeal, has the right to raise the complaint or appeal and expect that every effort will be made to resolve it in accordance with this policy, and without prejudice or fear of reprisal or victimisation.

The person has the right to present the complaint or appeal formally and in writing.

Seaton Training will manage all complaints and appeals fairly, equitably and as efficiently as possible. Seaton Training will encourage the parties to approach the complaint or appeal with an open mind, and to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.

Seaton Training seeks to prevent complaints by ensuring high levels of satisfaction with its training and assessment, its performance as an RTO and with its public image. If a complaint should arise, all staff are expected to be fair, courteous and helpful in all dealings with the person making the complaint or lodging the appeal, and to assist or refer where they can.

Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, Seaton Training acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent person/party to mediate. The parties involved will be given the opportunity to formally present their case in an independent forum.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints/appeals. Seaton Training seeks to protect the rights and privacy of all involved, and to facilitate the return to a comfortable and productive learning environment.

A copy of this Policy is available to the public, all stakeholders, students and staff via the Seaton Training website and is available in the Student Handbook. Information and contact details of external authorities who may be approached, is also included.

Procedure

Should a person have a complaint or appeal, the following steps are to be followed:

1. Discuss the issue directly with those involved to try and resolve it verbally.
2. If no resolution is reached, discuss the issue with the Training Manager to see if it can be resolved.
3. If there is still no resolution, the person should put the following information relating to the complaint or appeal in writing to the Training Manager. This **written notification** can be made by email, letter or over the phone (with a dictation made by the RTO representative), and must include:
 - The name of the person submitting the complaint and their contact details including address, email and / or contact phone number
 - A description of the complaint or appeal
 - A statement about whether the person wishes to formally present their case
 - Information about any prior steps taken to deal with the complaint or appeal
 - What they would like to happen to fix the problem and prevent it from happening again

4. A written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint/appeal will be forwarded to the complainant within five working days.
5. The Training Manager will deal with the issue personally. This process must commence within five working days from the time the Training Manager receives the **written notification** and a response/resolution must be presented within 20 working days.
6. The Training Manager will:
 - Undertake a preliminary enquiry to determine nature of the complaint/appeal
 - Inform other relevant parties (if necessary)
 - Provide all parties an opportunity to present their case (with a support person and/or parent/guardian if a student is under 18 years of age)
 - Discuss with the parties any resolution and any arrangements required by the RTO
 - Record the outcome of discussion on the Complaints Register (Vetnet)
 - Provide the outcome in writing to the person (and other parties if relevant)
7. Should the issue still not be resolved to the person's satisfaction, the Seaton Training will make arrangements for an independent party to resolve the issue and outline any costs that may be involved with this to happen, to the person. The person will be given the opportunity to formally present their case. The time frame for this process may vary but should take no longer than 14 working days.
8. All parties involved will receive a written statement of the outcomes, including reasons for the decision within the 14-working day period. If the process is taking longer than 60 days from the complaint or appeal being received, the person will be notified in writing of the reason for the delay, and kept informed of all progress.
9. If the person is still not happy with outcomes from the independent process, they may take their complaint to the VET Regulator - the Australian Skills Quality Authority.
 - Information about the process can be found at:
<http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-a-complaint---domestic-students/before-you-make-a-complaint---domestic-students.html>
or at the National Complaints Hotline 13 38 73 or visit
<https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>
10. From any substantiated complaints and appeals, the causes will be reviewed as part of the RTO's continuous improvement processes, and appropriate corrective action will be taken to prevent or reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence. Actions will be recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register
11. Any complaint that is related to illegal activity, such as theft, assault etc., will be immediately referred to the appropriate authority.
12. All documentation relating to complaints or appeals will be stored securely as per the Records Management Procedure
13. The Training Manager will contact the complainant / appellant and determine if they were satisfied with the process and if they had any suggestions for improvement via a VetSurvey.

For further information please contact

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