

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

This procedure is available to interested parties:

1. For download from our website; or
2. By phoning or emailing our office.

We shall readily and openly receive, manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

1. The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff
2. Any third-party providing services on behalf of Connect Training
3. Any student or client of Connect Training

We shall resolve all complaints and appeals in a fair, effective, transparent and efficient manner to ensure a minimum of disruption to our business without detriment to the Student or complainant.

We shall not exclude any person from training for which they have paid while we investigate and respond to a complaint or appeal lodged by them or on their behalf.

We shall not subject a complainant or appellant to any harassment, coercion or other derogatory action while we investigate and respond to a complaint or appeal lodged by them or on their behalf.

We shall not charge a fee for the investigation and response to any complaint or appeal.

DEFINITIONS

INFORMAL COMPLAINT

A matter which has a minor impact on the services provided by our business, for which the complainant does not feel will require significant action to resolve.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

A matter which has a medium to significant impact on the services provided by our business, for which the complainant feels will require significant action to resolve and will severely impact on their training and its outcomes

APPEAL

An appeal is a request for the review of a decision in regard to:

1. Assessment decisions made by our trainers; or
2. Suspension or exclusion from our training.

Version Number	Date	Author
9.0	19/10/2019	TG
8.0	21/10/2018	CD, SB
7.8	13/10/2018	CD

LEVEL OF AUTHORITY FOR MANAGING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Due to the nature and possible outcomes of informal complaints and appeals, the authority to deal with informal complaints and appeals is any person be it a trainer or other staff member.

It is generally expected and accepted that informal complaints and their outcomes will not be recorded.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Due to the nature and possible outcomes on our business the authority to deal with formal complaints and appeals lies with the Training Manager.

INFORMAL PROCEDURE

The trainer, assessor or other staff member receiving an informal complaint will make all efforts to address the concerns of the student or complainant through an informal exchange of information, with a view to clarifying and understanding the nature of the complaint and attempting to resolve the issues presented.

Once the nature of the complaint is found the trainer, assessor or other staff member is required to work with the student or complainant to close the complaint with an agreed outcome.

If the outcome will incur a cost to our business, the RTO Manager is to be notified for the expenditure to be approved and actioned.

FORMAL COMPLAINT AND APPEAL PROCEDURE

Principles of resolution

Connect Training is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice.

Through this policy and procedure, Connect Training ensures that complaints and appeals:

1. Are responded to in a professional, consistent and transparent manner.
2. Are responded to promptly, fairly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
3. Can be made at no cost to the individual.
4. Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
5. Connect Training will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
6. There are no charges for students to submit a complaint or appeal to Connect Training, or to seek information or advice about doing so.

NOTE: Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to act under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Making a complaint or appeal

Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.

Complaints and appeals should be made in writing using the **Complaints and Appeals Form**. This form can be obtained by contacting Connect Training by email at info@connect.edu.au or calling 1300 737 434. Once the form has been completed it must be submitted to the Training Manager by emailing to info@connect.edu.au.

When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable Connect Training to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:

1. The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you;
2. Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal;
3. Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue; and
4. Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.

The student or complainant will:

1. Be required to submit their formal complaint or appeal in writing;
2. Have an opportunity to present their case at each stage of the procedure; and
3. Have the option of being accompanied or assisted by a third party (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire.

The Training Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and advise investigation has begun within 10 working days.

At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complainants and appeals will be recorded in writing.

Reasons and a full explanation in writing for the decisions and actions taken as part of this procedure will be provided to the Complainant and/or Respondent.

STAGE ONE

Persons involved in the investigation:

1. Training Manager as lead investigator;
2. Relevant personnel of Connect Training;
3. Complainant;
4. Person subject to the complaint (if applicable).

The Training Manager, will then assess the complaint or appeal, investigate, determine the outcome and advise the student or complainant in writing of their decision within 21 working days, including 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 Stage One outcomes, they may lodge an application for review in writing to the RTO Manager.

The complaint or appeal will then be determined by the RTO Manager, considering:

1. The nature of the complaint or appeal;
2. The outcomes determined;

3. The Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015;

The RTO Manager will conduct all necessary consultations with the complainant, respondent and any other relevant persons and make a determination.

The complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their review, including the reasons for the decision, within 10 working days and advised of their right to access Stage Three of this procedure if they are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two.

STAGE THREE

If the student or complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two they must advise in writing that they are not satisfied with outcome of Stage Two and that they are escalating the matter to, independent mediation through a mediation service.

This may include:

National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.

Email: ntch@education.gov.au

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

General principles applying to all stages of this complaints and appeal process which will be adhered to are:

1. The Appellant and Respondent will have an opportunity to present their case at each stage of the process;
2. The Appellant and Respondent have the option of being accompanied or assisted by a third party (such as a family member, friend or counsellor) if they so desire;
3. The Appellant and the Respondent will not be discriminated against or victimised;
4. At all stages of the process, discussions relating to conduct of the assessment and methods used to assess the student will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for the decisions and actions taken as part of this process will be provided to the Appellant and/or Respondent if requested;
5. Records of all appeals will be kept for a period of 5 years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored off site in secure cloud based storage; and
6. The Appellant shall have access to this process at no cost during the time of the appeal process, but a minimal fee will be applied for access to records in storage after the process has completed.

CONTINUING STUDENTS

Whereby a student makes a complaint or appeal, or another person makes a complaint or appeal on behalf of a student, such student shall not be excluded from any training or training related activities during the course of the investigation and subsequent reviews.

This does not apply to any complaint or appeal which is determined to be a non-complying complaint.

NON - COMPLYING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Any complaint or appeal which contains threats of violence or clearly identifies a breach of Australian Laws shall be deemed non - complying and will not be considered under the

terms of this procedure. Further such threats or breach of Australian Law shall be reported to the most appropriate law enforcement agency.

RECORDS OF FORMAL COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept for a period of 5 years. These records will be kept strictly confidential and stored in secure cloud based storage.

All documentation relating to the complaint or appeal including notes of the investigation are stored in the RTO's online management system for review by the RTO Manager and a copy of the final determination and original written complaint or appeal is to be placed in the students file.

