

Complaints/Appeals Procedure

Background / Context

This process has been developed to ensure that students of Arbortrim Australia Pty Ltd (Arbortrim) who wish to make a complaint related to any of Arbortrim's training and assessment products, services or staff member(s) or appeal any decision that affects their enrolment, are taken seriously and handled professionally in order to achieve a speedy resolution.

This process is referred to in the Arbortrim Prospectus & Student Handbook.

Processes

A. Informal Complaint

Prior to making a formal complaint or lodging an appeal, Arbortrim encourages students to discuss the matter with the person involved or a member of the management team in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable resolution as quickly as possible, however if a resolution is not achieved the following formal processes will be followed.

B. Formal Complaint

- i. Formal complaints should be made in writing using the *Complaints/Appeals Form* and made attention to the General Manager within 30 days of the issue arising, where practical.
 - a) When making a complaint, provide as much information as possible to enable the RTO to investigate appropriately and determine an appropriate solution
 - b) The complainant is invited to include suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
 - c) The General Manager is to:
 - record details of the complaint in the *Complaints & Appeals Register*
 - enter details of the complaint into VETtrak
 - forward the complaint to the Quality & Compliance Manager for investigation.
- ii. Quality and Compliance Manager acknowledges receipt of complaint and commences process
 - a) Provide receipt of the complaint to the complainant within five (5) working days.
 - b) Commence the complaints and appeals process. All reasonable measures must be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable and within ten (10) working days. If the matter is particularly complex or goes on to the CEO phase of the complaints process or further, the matter may take longer to resolve.
- iii. Enrolment status
 - a) Students will be advised that choosing to access this policy and procedure, will not affect their enrolment status during the complaints handling process and that they may choose to be supported by a third party during any stage of the complaint process.
- iv. Investigate and review the complaint
 - a) Upon receiving the complaint, the Quality & Compliance Manager may request further details from the complainant. This may be sought by written or verbal request or by face-to-face interview with the complainant and/or respondent(s).
 - b) When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the persons being interviewed may have another person accompany them.
 - c) Investigation into the matter will take place to ensure the RTO has accurate, complete and relevant information.
 - d) The Quality & Compliance Manager will review the information and decide on the appropriate actions to be taken.
- v. Recommend resolution and provide report to complainant.
 - a) The Quality & Compliance Manager will endeavour to resolve the complaint within ten (10) working days and will recommend a solution to resolve the matter.
 - b) The Quality & Compliance Manager will provide a written report to the complainant outlining the steps taken to address the complaints and will include their recommendations and reasons for their decision.

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The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint.

- c) The Quality & Compliance Manager will advise the Administration Manager Arbortrim of the outcome of the complaint and provide them with all records and documents relating to the complaint and decision making process.
- d) The Administration Manager Arbortrim will:
 - record outcome of the complaint in the *Complaints & Appeals Register* and in VETtrak
 - place all of the documentation pertaining to the complaint into the student's records.

C. Complaints lodged with auspice partner

Complaints lodged by a student of a 3rd party organisation in an auspice arrangement with the RTO will follow the above however initial lodgement will be with the Contract Manager at the 3rd party organisation. The Contract Manager will then forward the documentation on to the Contract Manager of the RTO for them to record and forward the complaint on to the General Manager.

D. Internal Appeals

In the event that:

- a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome from their complaint; or
- a student believes that they have the grounds for an RTO initiated decision to suspend or withdraw them from a course

they may make the decision to lodge an appeal.

- i. An appeal is to be lodged in writing using the *Complaints/Appeals Form* and addressed to the Administration Manager: Arbortrim.
- ii. The Administration Manager: Arbortrim is to:
 - record details of the appeal in the *Complaints & Appeals Register* and VETtrak
 - collect all of the records pertaining to the original complaint or decision to suspend or withdraw the student and prepare them for review
 - forward the appeal and all relevant documentation to the CEO for review.
- iii. The CEO is to review all of the documentation provided to them and may, seek to interview the appellant to clarify any of the issues and to provide them with a further opportunity to present their case. The appellant may be accompanied by a support person.
- iv. The CEO shall:
 - make a decision regarding the appeal
 - notify appellant in writing of the outcome and the reason(s) for their decision
 - notify the appellant of their right to appeal the matter to an external agency and request that they advise Arbortrim in the event that they exercise this right
 - notify the Administration Manager: Arbortrim of the outcome of the appeal.
 - will provide the Administration Manager: Arbortrim with all records and documents relating to the complaint and the appeal .
- v. The Administration Manager: Arbortrim will:
 - record outcome of the appeal in the *Complaints & Appeals Register* and VETtrak
 - place all of the documentation pertaining to the complaint and the appeal into the student's records.

E. External Complaints/Appeals

If a complaint/appeal remains unresolved the student may lodge a complaint with the National Complaints Hotline:

- by phone on 13 38 73; or
- by following the instructions at:
<http://www.industry.gov.au/skills/nationaltrainingcomplaintshotline/Pages/default.aspx>; or
- utilise the Australian Mediation Association (phone: 1300 799 675). There are fees associated with accessing the services of this organisation although an initial free dispute resolution consultation is available.

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Associated Forms / Files/ Systems/Policies and Procedures

Complaints/Appeals Form
Complaints & Appeals Register
VETtrak Policy and Procedures
Deferment, Suspension or Withdrawal from Training Policy and Procedure.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
General Manager of RTO	Receipt and entry of lodgement of formal complaints into Complaints & Appeals Register. Referral to Quality & Compliance Manager.
Quality & Compliance Manager	Acknowledges receipt of complaint to complainant via email. Conducts review and investigation of the complaint. Decide on appropriate outcomes. Provide written report to complainant outlining reason for decision and actions to be taken Ensure any improvements fed into RTO operations.
Administration Manager	Records outcome in Complaints/Appeals Register and stores documentation.
Contract Manager	Receive and forward onto General Manager of the RTO.

Revision History

Date	Revision	Revised by
19/08/2016	Policy and procedure reviewed and updated to V4.1	Quality & Compliance Manager
23/12/2015	Policy and procedure reviewed and updated	Quality Manager