

Manage Complaints and Appeals

Purpose:	This policy and procedure has been developed to ensure that Water Training Australia has a system in place, so complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged, and dealt with fairly, efficiently, and effectively.
Reference:	ASQA – Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 Clause 6.1 – 6.6: Manage complaints and appeals.
Who is responsible:	The Operations Manager and administration team are responsible for implementing and ensuring this procedure is followed.
When:	Upon submission of a complaint or appeal.
Policy/ Process:	<p>Clause 6.1 & 6.3</p> <p>A copy of this policy will be published on our website and will be identified to students at induction and within the student handbook.</p> <p>This policy provides a process for escalation to ensure issues are addressed effectively. Internal processes must be exhausted before complaints are taken to an external party.</p> <p><u>Before you make a complaint:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where possible, attempts shall be made to resolve concerns informally. Water Training Australia encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Therefore, any party with a concern is encouraged to raise the matter directly with the other party concerned. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If you only wish to provide feedback, this can be provided anytime through the ‘contact us’ form on our website or by talking to any of our staff. b. If your concern relates to an assessment result, please refer to the ‘Assessment Appeals’ Process detailed below. 2. Any staff member can be involved in an informal process to help resolve issues. 3. If, at any time, you wish to escalate the issue to seek an efficient and effective resolution the ‘Formal Complaints’ process must be followed. <p><u>Formal Complaints:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any student, potential student, or third-party may submit a formal complaint to Water Training Australia with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated fairly with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process at this stage. A complaint must have a direct connection to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Water Training Australia, its trainers/ assessors, or other staff ii. a third-party providing services on Water Training Australia’s behalf, its trainers, assessors, or other staff or



- iii. a student of Water Training Australia
2. Formal complaints can be made by completing the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' or by calling Water Training Australia's Operations Manager on 0439 015 951 (*If dealing with the Operations Manager is not appropriate matters will be referred to the Managing Director*).
3. All formal complaints must be submitted to the Operations Manager and contain as many details as possible to facilitate an effective resolution.
4. Once a complaint has been received it will be:
 - a. acknowledged in writing, stating the details captured,
 - b. recorded in the 'Complaints and Appeals Register', and
 - c. monitored by the Operations Manager until resolved.
5. The Operations Manager will undertake appropriate investigations and cause analysis, ensuring confidentiality in-so-far as is possible, and decide on the appropriate action to ensure a successful resolution.
6. Relevant parties will be informed about the nature of the complaint and be given the opportunity to present their side of the matter.
7. Once a decision has been reached, the Operations Manager will notify all relevant parties involved in writing within 15 working days from the date the complaint was first received. The notice will include:
 - a. details of the outcome, and
 - b. advice that the complainant has the right to appeal the decision made by Water Training Australia and referred to the appeals policy herein.
8. The Operations Manager will ensure that Water Training Australia acts immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports corrective or preventative action, Water Training Australia must implement it as soon as practical through the Continuous Improvement Framework.
9. The outcome will be recorded on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' and copies of relevant documentation will be stored in a restricted access file.

Clause 6.2

Formal Appeals:

1. If a complainant is not satisfied with a decision or action taken by Water Training Australia, they have the right to appeal the decision where reasonable grounds can be established.
2. The appeal must relate to a decision or action of Water training Australia or a third party acting on its behalf such as:
 - a. Disciplinary actions; or
 - b. Outcomes of a complaint process that has been dealt with by Water Training Australia in the first instance.
 - c. For **Assessment Appeals**, see the procedure below.
3. To activate the appeals process, an 'Appeal Application' must be made by completing the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' available on Water Training Australia intranet, or by calling the Operations Manager on 0439 015 951.
4. The appellant is required to provide a summary of the grounds that the appeal is based on and the reason why they feel that initial decision made is unfair within 10 working days from the time they received notice of a decision.



5. Once the appeal has been received, the Operations Manager will determine the validity of the appeal, and where necessary, organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter, and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.
6. The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 15 working days from the date that the appeal was lodged unless more time is needed to schedule meeting attendees.
7. The Operations Manager will review the initial documentation of the complaint and shall decide based on the grounds of the appeal.
8. The appellant will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of the appeal. The notice will include:
 - a. reasons for the decision.
 - b. advice that the appellant has, at this point, the right to refer the matter to an external mediator and will be referred to the external appeals policy herein.
9. The Operations Manager will ensure that Water Training Australia acts on any substantiated appeal immediately.
10. The outcome will be recorded on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' and copies of relevant documentation will be stored in a restricted access file.

Before you make an Assessment Appeal:

1. If a student is not satisfied with an assessment outcome, they must notify their Assessor in the first instance within 7 working days. The Assessor will review their assessment process to ensure a fair and equitable decision. The Assessor will respond in writing outlining the basis of their assessment decision and may offer re-assessment if appropriate.

Formal Assessment Appeals:

1. If the Assessor's response is still not to the student's satisfaction, the student can formally appeal by completing and submitting the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' available on the Water Training Australia website or by calling the Operations Manager on 0439 015 951.
2. Once received the Assessment Appeal will be:
 - a. acknowledged in writing, stating the details captured,
 - b. recorded in the 'Complaints and Appeals Register', and
 - c. monitored by the Operations Manager until resolved.
3. A review of the assessment will be made by another assessor appointed by Water Training Australia and a decision will be made regarding the appeal. A review may determine either that the assessment decision remains 'as is', or if appropriate provide for a re-assessment opportunity.
4. The appellant will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of the appeal. The notice will include:
 - a. reasons for the decision.
 - b. advice that the appellant has the right to refer the matter to an external mediator at this point and will be referred to the external appeals policy herein.
5. The Operations Manager will ensure that Water Training Australia acts on any substantiated appeal immediately.



6. The outcome will be recorded on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' and copies of relevant documentation will be stored in a restricted access file.

External Appeals

1. Once internal processes have been exhausted, parties may refer the matter to an external mediator at their own expense.
2. External appeals are to be made by contacting:
RTO Legal
Address: 9/204 Alice Street
Brisbane Qld 4000
Tel: 07 3726 9559
Email: z@rto.legal

This final stage will be addressed within 30 days.

Outcomes from the external dispute and resolution service concerning a grievance will be implemented immediately.

Clause 6.4

Extensions

If more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the Operations Manager will inform the individual in writing, including reasons why more than 60 days are required, and regularly update the individual on the progress of the matter.

Clause 6.5

Record Management

1. *Electronic records:*
 - a. Electronic records are safe from loss as Water Training Australia performs electronic backups of server information at least once a week on-site at Water Training Australia premises.
 - b. Privacy is maintained as limited staff access the database (password protected), and all student/client information is only released as per Water Training Australia's Privacy Policy.
2. *Hard-copy records:*
 - a. Contents of files are not discarded unless the state and national storage requirements for retention, archiving and retrieval of information have been met.
 - b. Privacy is maintained as any hard -copy documents relating to a complaint or appeal are stored in a secure file system.

Corrective Action

1. A regular review of the complaints and appeals register will be conducted by the Operations Manager.
2. In the instance that Water Training Australia receives complaints and or appeals which demonstrate a pattern or trend, the Operations Manager will undertake further cause analysis and make appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.



Water Training
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Relevant Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints Register• Complaints and Appeals Form• WTA Website/Policies• Student Handbook• Privacy Policy
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