

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS INFORMATION AND FORM

COMPLAINTS

If we do not resolve or finalise complaints or appeals within 60 days, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Administration Manager. *

SECTA Pty Ltd maintains a supportive and fair environment, which allows training participants, staff and stakeholders to lodge complaints. Complaints are ideally resolved as amicably as possible using this formal appeal process. We will adhere to the National Complaints Code to respond to complaints about vocational education and the organisation itself. This means that our complaints process is:

- well publicised and explained.
- accessible so you can lodge complaints and appeals by phone, electronically or in writing.
- fair and protect your rights.
- free so you can lodge a complaint without charge.
- handled in a manner that protects your privacy.
- transparent, equitable, objective and unbiased.
- comprehensive so that it effectively resolves a variety of complaints such as student dissatisfaction, assessment outcomes, poor service, fraud, misconduct etc.

Step 1:

If the complaint is regarding a fellow student, you should first discuss the matter with the student and try to resolve it. If you are not able to resolve it, then you should discuss the problem with your trainer/assessor to try to resolve it. If you were not able to resolve it, go to step 2.

If your complaint is regarding your trainer / assessor, or the organisation, then go straight to step 2.

Step 2:

You should lodge a formal written complaint to the Administration Manager by completing a Complaints and Appeals form that can be obtained from the Administration Manager or from the website. The Administration Manager will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing and record the complaint in the Register of Complaints.

SECTA Pty Ltd will commence the complaints process within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint and supporting information. All reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

Step 3:

If the complaint was not able to be resolved to your satisfaction by the Administration Manager, then you must ask for the complaint to be escalated to the Director. The Administration Manager will email your complaint to the Director.

The Director will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing and commence investigation into the matter within 10 working days. The Director is empowered to make a determination that is considered to be fair and equitable by both parties. The complainant has the right to have their version of events heard in the resolution negotiation and have an independent advocate present.

Complaints are investigated fairly and objectively with details of the investigation provided in writing to the complainant. The details will state the outcomes and reasons for the decisions made.

Step 4:

The complaint will be recorded in the Register of Complaints by the Administration Manager.

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, the matter may be referred to an independent mediator such as the local National Training Complaints Hotline (133873) or the Department of Fair Trading (NSW: 13 32 20 / VIC: 1300 55 8181) for review.

Recording:

A copy of all the documentation, in particular the complaint and its outcome, is placed in the student's file. A copy of the documentation is forwarded to the complainant.

Where the resolution requires a documented change to policies and procedures, the Director notifies the appropriate staff member of the change to ensure that the procedure for document change as listed in the procedure for Document Control is followed with the appropriate records made.

In the event that a complaint is substantiated, SECTA Pty Ltd will take prompt and appropriate action to resolve the circumstances.

Complaints cannot be anonymous because this is considered unfair in that ongoing discussion cannot take place to resolve the issue between both parties. Information submitted to a trainer or any staff member is treated with respect and taken as an opportunity for improvement to the organisation's practices and Quality Management System. Privacy requirements and student/ individual rights are maintained at all times.

If the student chooses to access our complaints and appeals processes, SECTA Pty Ltd will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

***NOTE: We aim to finalise any complaints and appeals within 60 days of the initial lodgement in the event that the complaint cannot be finalised within the 60 days the RTO will notify the complainant in writing why it has not been finalised and any other information they can provide at the time to assist the complainant**

APPEALS

If you are not happy with the outcome of a **complaint**, then the following appeal process is followed.

The appeal is discussed directly with the Director. If this does not resolve the matter, then the appeal is to be documented and submitted to trigger mediation by using either a simple written letter or a copy of the complaints and appeals form.

The Director records the student's dispute in the RTOs Register for Continuous Improvement and puts written notification on the student's file and organises attendance by the student as SECTA Pty Ltd representatives at the local court to meet with the VET Ombudsman representative. These are trained mediators, familiar with the alternative dispute resolution mediation process. The process is also without cost.

You can also contact the Ombudsman of New South Wales <http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint/>

NOTE: The National Training Complaints Hotline is also accessible on 13 38 73 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm nationally) or via email at skilling@education.gov.au

An appellant may deliver their own version of the matter to the mediator and request a support person be present. The rules of alternative dispute resolution apply.

The matter should then consider the issues raised an attempt to resolve the appeal to the satisfaction of the appellant. All appeals of complaints that are found to be proven must be acted upon through the continuous improvement process to make systematic changes to prevent the recurrence of this a problem again

The final agreement achieved through the alternative dispute resolution process is put into court orders which bind the parties to the agreed resolution. There is no further appeal mechanism beyond this point. The student may always revert to common law. Each step of the complaints and appeals process Aust Skills Systems will allow the student to make representation either orally or in writing prior to reaching a decision.

If the student has complaints that do not directly concern Aust Skills System but may affect their ability to achieve competency, they shall be referred to appropriate external support groups for assistance

APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES: REASSESSMENTS

SECTA Pty Ltd maintains a supportive and fair environment, which allows training participants to appeal their assessments and recognition decisions. Appeals are ideally resolved as amicably as possible using this formal appeal process.

Step 1:

Discuss the matter with your assessor and explain the reason why you believe the assessment outcome is unfair. If you are not satisfied with the discussion, then go to Step 2.

Step 2:

Lodge a written appeal to the Administration Manager by completing a Complaints and Appeals form (Form 06). The Administration Manager will forward the appeal to the Director who will commence investigation into the matter within 10 working days.

The Director will appoint a mutually agreed-upon, qualified and independent assessor to review the records of assessment of the student's competence against the training package requirements. Where insufficient records to determine competence are available, the student may provide additional evidence of competence. The independent assessor's determination is final.

No further appeal mechanism exists beyond this point in the process.

Please note the following:

- Where the resolution requires a documented change to policies and procedures, such changes will be made in accordance with the procedure for document change including the appropriate records made.
- At each step of the assessment appeals process SECTA Pty Ltd will allow students to make representation either orally or in writing prior to reaching a decision. We also allow students to employ an independent person or panel to hear the appeal.
- If a complaint or appeal is not finalised within 60 days of the initial complaint being made, the complainant will be notified in writing.

