



Complaints Handling Policy

Skills Compliance is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaint handling process.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is generally negative feedback about services or people which has not been resolved locally. It may involve issues concerning:

- Skills Compliance training or assessment services, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- a third party's services provided on the Skills Compliance behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- a learner of Skills Compliance.

A complaint may be received by Skills Compliance in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person but are generally made by students and/or employers.

Early resolution of complaints

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It is often the case that complaints can be avoided by proper communication and respect between persons involved.

Relationship to continuous improvement

Frequently, the complaints handling process will expose weaknesses in the training and assessment system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that complaints received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement.

Complaint handling principles

Skills Compliance will apply the following principles to its complaints handling:

- A written record of all complaints is to be kept by Skills Compliance including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. The complaints register within RTO Data is to be used to record the details of the complaint and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the complaint handling process. Records relating to complaint handling must be stored securely to prevent access to unauthorised personnel.
- A complainant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost.
- Each complainant may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.
- The complaints policy must be publicly available. This means that the complaints policy and procedure must be published on the Skills Compliance website.
- The handling of a complaint is to commence within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the complaint and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The complainant is to be provided a written response to the complaint, including details of the reasons for the outcome. A written response must be provided to the complainant within fourteen (14) days of the lodgement of the complaint.



- Complaints must be resolved to a final outcome within sixty (60) days of the complaint being initially received. Where Skills Compliance Chief Executive Officer considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the CEO must inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. As a benchmark, Skills Compliance should attempt to resolve complaints as soon as possible.
- A timeframe to resolve a complaint within thirty (30) days is considered acceptable and in the best interest of Skills Compliance and the complainant. A complainant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the progress of the complaint handling. Updates should be provided to the complainant at a minimum of four (4) weekly intervals.
- Skills Compliance shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant during the complaint handling process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint handling process that find in the favour of the student shall be implemented immediately.
- Complaints are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No Skills Compliance representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of Skills Compliance Chief Executive Officer. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the complainant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.
- Complaints are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the complaint handling process. This means that the complainant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply. The complainant is entitled to have their complaint heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally the decision must be made based on logical evidence and decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not take into account irrelevant considerations.

Review by external agency

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by Skills Compliance, they have the opportunity for a body that is independent of Skills Compliance to review his or her complaint following the internal completion of complaint handling process. In these circumstances the Skills Compliance Chief Executive Officer will advise of an appropriate party independent of Skills Compliance to review the complaint (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to Skills Compliance in regards to the recommended outcomes. This advice is to be accepted as final and advised to the complainant in writing.

A complainant who remains not satisfied with the process applied by Skills Compliance following review by an independent party may refer their grievance to the Australian Skills Quality Authority - ASQA Online Complaint Form. Students are to be advised that ASQA will require the student to have exhausted all avenues through Skills Compliance internal complaints handling procedure before taking this option.

Skills Compliance considers that it would be extremely unlikely that complaints and appeals are not able to be resolved quickly within Skills Compliance internal arrangements.