

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Purpose

This policy and procedure is to provide clear and practical guidelines to ensure that complaints and appeals can be resolved in accordance with the principles of natural justice, equitably and efficiently.

Scope

This complaints and appeals policy applies to stakeholders, clients, staff, students or third parties of Far North Training & Consultancy.

Definitions

Complaints are allegations made that relate to the conduct of the RTO, its staff, a third party offering services on its behalf, or other students.

Appeals relate to any decisions made by Far North Training & Consultancy and include appeals that relate to assessment decisions.

Complaints and Appeals include but are not restricted to matters of concern relating to training delivery and assessment; the quality of the training; student support and materials; discrimination; and sexual harassment.

Natural Justice is concerned with ensuring procedural fairness:

- Decisions and processes should be free from bias.
- All parties have the right to be heard.
- The respondent has a right to know of what s/he is accused.
- All parties are told the decision and the reasons for the decision.
- No action relating to an enrolment status of the complainant/appellant will be taken until such time as a complaint/appeal has been resolved. However, the CEO retains the right to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the student and/or of others.

Policy

Far North Training & Consultancy believes that a person, who has a complaint or appeal, has the right to raise the complaint or appeal and expect that every effort will be made to resolve it in accordance with this policy, without prejudice or fear of reprisal or victimisation.

The person has the right to present the complaint or appeal formally and in writing.

Far North Training & Consultancy will manage all complaints and appeals fairly, equitably and efficiently as possible. Far North Training & Consultancy will encourage the parties to approach the complaint or appeal with an open mind and to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation. Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion and conciliation, Far North Training & Consultancy acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent mediation between the

parties. The parties will be given the opportunity to formally present their case to the independent mediator.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process of making and resolving complaints. Far North Training & Consultancy seeks to protect the rights and privacy of all involved and to facilitate the return to a comfortable and productive learning environment.

A copy of this Policy is available via the Far North Training & Consultancy website and is available in this Student Handbook. The information will also contain contact details of any external authorities that maybe approached if a complaint or appeal is something Far North Training & Consultancy is unable to deal with.

Procedure

Should you have a complaint or appeal, the following steps are to be followed:

1. You should discuss the issue / complaint with the person involved to try and resolve it verbally.
2. If no resolution is reached, you should discuss the issue / complaint with his / her trainer or the Training Manager (if applicable) to see if it can be resolved.
3. If still no resolution you should put the following information relating to the complaint or appeal in writing to the Training Manager: Complaints form /Appeal form
 - description of the complaint or appeal
 - state whether you wish to formally present their case
 - steps taken to deal with the complaint or appeal
 - what you would like to happen to fix the problem and prevent it from happening again.
4. Upon receipt of the complaint/appeal, the Training Manager will acknowledge all complaints/appeals in writing within 5 working days of receipt and decide the most appropriate person to handle the complaint/appeal based on the issue and the previous steps taken.
5. This process must commence within 48 hours from the time the Training Manager receives the written complaint/appeal (notification) and a response / resolution must be presented within 30 days. The complainant/appeallant must be notified of the outcome within that timeframe.
6. If the complaint/appeal is not dealt with to your satisfaction, you may lodge an appeal to the CEO.
7. Upon receipt of the appeal, the CEO will decide the most appropriate person to handle the appeal based on the issue and the previous steps taken.
8. This process must commence within 48 hours from the time the CEO receives the written appeal (notification) from you and a response / resolution must be presented within 30 days. You must be notified of the outcome within that timeframe.
9. Assessment decision appeals must be presented in writing to the Training Manager within 15 days of the student receiving their assessment result. All assessment appeals will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days of receipt.

10. Upon receipt of the assessment appeal, the Training Manager will decide the most appropriate person to handle the appeal based on the industry area and the nature of the appeal.
11. Should the issue still not be resolved to your satisfaction, the Training Manager/CEO will make arrangements within 14 days, for an independent third party to mediate the issue. The Community Justice Service at the Far North Queensland Dispute Resolution Centre is the mediation service used. Usually this service is free however if any costs are involved they will be shared equally between the person and Far North Training & Consultancy.
12. The mediator will arrange a mutually convenient time for both sides to attend the mediation and to **present their case. All parties agree to abide by the mediator's decision.**
13. All parties involved will receive a written statement of the outcomes, including reasons for the decision within the 14 day period. If the process is taking longer than 60 days from the complaint or appeal being received you will be notified in writing of the reason for the delay and kept informed about all progress.
14. If you are still not happy with external mediation, you may take your complaint/appeal to the VET Regulator - the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Information about the process can be found at <http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-a-complaint---domestic-students/before-you-make-a-complaint---domestic-students.html> or at the National Complaints Hotline at <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>
15. All documentation relating to complaints or appeals will be archived for audit purposes.
16. Substantiated complaints/appeals will have their root cause investigated and the outcomes of the investigation will be used to seek to put corrective and preventive actions in place to remedy practices and process.

The Far North Training & Consultancy's Training Manager will be person responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy and Procedure.