

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Complaints and Appeals Policy and related procedure are designed to ensure that Access Training and Logistics (ATL) responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction. This policy outlines ATL's approach to managing complaints and appeals and ensures that all students and other stakeholders are aware of the steps to take to have their dissatisfaction addressed appropriately.

This policy provides an avenue for all complaints to be addressed in a fair, constructive and timely manner.

Staff Complaints are to be dealt with through the ATL Staff Grievance Procedure.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students, prospective students, and other stakeholders of ATL.

Types of Complaints or Appeals

A complaint can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of ATL's services and activities, such as:

- The enrolment or induction process;
- The quality of education provided;
- Academic matters, including student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study;
- Handling of personal information and access to personal records; and/or
- The way someone has been treated

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 Despite all efforts of ATL to provide satisfactory services to its learners, complaints and requests of appeal may occasionally arise which require formal resolution

ATL is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints and appeals system which is easily accessible and offered to all complainants. ATL aims to:

- a) develop a culture that views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works
- b) set in place a complaints and appeals handling system that is learner focused and helps ATL to prevent these events from recurring
- c) ensure that any complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality
- d) ensure that the view of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a complaint or appeals is not discriminated against or victimised
- e) ensure that there is a consistent response to complaints and appeals

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 *Resolving issues before they become a formal complaint*

Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person concerned before it becomes a formal complaint. ATL's staff members are available to assist complainants to resolve their issues at this level.

4.2 *Lodging a complaint*

- 4.2.1 Where a complaint is not resolved in the first instance through informal means, the complainant will be advised to register a formal complaint using a Complaints and Appeals Form and submit this to a member of staff. All parties are encouraged to approach matters with an open view and attempt to resolve matters through discussion and conciliation
- 4.2.2 Once the Complaints and Appeals Form is received, details are recorded on the Complaints Register which is reviewed and maintained by the General Manager.
- 4.2.3 Where the complainant indicates that they prefer not to complete the form, then they should be referred directly to the General Manager, where the complainant may present the case formally. This information will be added to the Complaints Register

4.3 *Investigation and Resolution*

- 4.3.1 All formal complaints will be investigated by the General Manager who will identify a satisfactory resolution to the issue. This investigation will include conducting separate interviews with all parties
- 4.3.2 The proposed resolution will be communicated to the complainant and agreement to the proposed resolution sought. Upon receipt of the agreement, the General Manager will
 - provide the complainant with written confirmation of the resolution
 - record the action(s) taken to resolve the complaint on the Complaints and Appeals register
 - where applicable, communicate the outcome of the complaint resolution to the relevant staff member/s
 - present the outcome to the management team at their monthly meeting and review to identify whether change to any procedures or practices is required
 - if applicable, document the need for amendment to ATL policy, procedure documentation on the Continuous Improvement Register and implement the necessary improvement

4.4 *Resolution Timeframe*

- 4.4.1 All formal complaints and appeals will be responded to efficiently to ensure an effective resolution within a reasonable timeframe usually 30 calendar days or as soon as practicable.
- 4.4.2 In some cases, particularly if the matter is complex, resolution may take longer than 30 days. Where this is the case, the Complainant will be

- informed in writing, including reasons for the extra time required.
- provided with weekly updates on the progress of the matter

4.5 Complaints and Appeals Register

- 4.5.1 All formal complaints and appeals and their outcomes will be recorded on the Complaints and Appeals Register. The register will be regularly reviewed by management and used as an opportunity for improvement and reflection.

4.6 Procedural Fairness

- 4.6.1 No student, staff member, stakeholder or member of the public will be disenfranchised in any way during the complaint/appeal and resolution process
- 4.6.2 A student's progress through their course will not be disrupted whilst a complaint is being heard unless the nature of the issue means further progress is not possible
- 4.6.3 Complainants will observe strict confidentiality during all stages of the complaints resolution process. All communications and proceedings arising from the complaints process will remain confidential at the conclusion of the complaints resolution process.
- 4.6.4 Complainants have the right to nominate third party representation (e.g.: a family member or friend, counsellor, professional representation or support plan) if they require

4.7 External Complaints and Appeals

- 4.7.1 Where the Complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal complaints and appeals process, the Complainant can access an external complaints or appeals process at their own cost. Complainants must ensure they have accessed the internal processes first.
- 4.7.2 Complainants have several external complaint or appeal options including:
- Australian Skills & Qualifications Authority
 - Department of Fair Trading
 - Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- 4.7.3 ATL will provide complete cooperation with the organisation investigating the complaint or appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of the process. The General Manager will ensure any recommendations made are implemented within thirty days of being notified of the recommendations

4.8 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

- 4.8.1 A written record of all complaints and appeals handled under this policy and procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the complaint or appeal appropriate access to these records.
- 4.8.2 All records relating to complaints and appeals will be treated as confidential and will be covered by ATL's *Privacy Policy*

5.0 RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Conflict of Interest Register
Code of Conduct

6.0 RELATED LEGISLATION

Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Racial Discrimination Act 1975
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
Relevant State and Territory Legislation addressing Discrimination and Equal Opportunity
Privacy Act 1988
Education and Training Reform Act 2006
Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015

7.0 REVISION HISTORY

Rev #	Date	Detail of modifications
1	2015	Review to reflect Standards for RTOs 2015
2	2018	Minor review of wording and format