



Complaints and Appeals Policy

Document Control

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- Approved By: Jason Hartwell (CEO)
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- Responsible Person: Jason Hartwell (CEO)

1. Purpose

Australian Operator Training is committed to providing a fair, transparent, accessible, and timely process for managing complaints and appeals in accordance with the 2025 Standards for RTOs and the principles of natural justice.

This policy ensures that all complaints and appeals are handled effectively, consistently, and at no cost to the complainant or appellant.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All current and prospective students
- Staff and contractors
- Employers and third parties interacting with the organisation
- Complaints relating to third-party providers delivering services on behalf of the organisation

This policy covers:

- Complaints relating to training, assessment, services, facilities, or staff conduct
- Appeals against assessment decisions, administrative decisions, or outcomes of complaints

3. Legislative and Standards Framework

This policy is aligned with:

- 2025 Standards for RTOs (including Outcome Standards 2.3 and 2.4)
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

4. Policy Statement

Australian Operator Training ensures that:

- Complaints and appeals processes are fair, transparent, and accessible
- Processes are provided at no cost to the complainant or appellant
- Individuals are not victimised or disadvantaged for making a complaint or appeal
- All parties are treated with respect and impartiality
- Decisions are based on evidence and procedural fairness
- Outcomes of complaints and appeals will be implemented promptly and any corrective actions will be actioned without delay
- The organisation is responsible for managing complaints and appeals relating to services delivered by third parties on its behalf

5. Definitions

Complaint: A formal expression of dissatisfaction with training, assessment, services, decisions, or conduct.

Appeal: A request for review of a decision made by the organisation, including assessment outcomes, administrative decisions, or complaint outcomes.

6. Principles

Australian Operator Training applies the following principles:

- Procedural fairness (natural justice)
- Timeliness
- Transparency
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Accessibility
- Continuous improvement

Complainants and appellants may be supported or accompanied by a third party at any stage of the process.

7. Access to the Process

Information about complaints and appeals is made available to all stakeholders via:

- Student Handbook
- Organisation website
- Direct contact with administration

Complaints and appeals may be submitted via:

- Email: jason.hartwell@aot.net.au
- Complaint/Appeal Form
- Written submission

Assistance will be provided to individuals who require support to access the process.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer

- Ensure compliance with this policy
- Act as final internal decision-maker where required
- Manage complaints and appeals processes
- Maintain registers and records
- Monitor timeframes and outcomes

Trainers and Assessors

- Attempt informal resolution where appropriate
- Provide evidence and documentation when required

9. Complaints Process

9.1 Informal Resolution (Optional)

Where appropriate, individuals are encouraged to raise concerns directly with relevant staff to seek early resolution.

9.2 Formal Complaint Submission

Complaints must be submitted in writing and include sufficient detail to allow investigation.

9.3 Acknowledgement

Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 business days of receipt.

9.4 Investigation

- Investigation will commence within 5 business days
- All relevant evidence will be considered
- All parties will be given the opportunity to present their case
- There will be no conflict of interest in the investigation process

9.5 Outcome

- A written outcome will be provided within 10 business days where possible
- All complaints will be finalised within 30 calendar days where possible
- If delays occur, the complainant will be informed in writing, including reasons and expected timeframe

If the complaints or appeals process is not finalised within 60 calendar days, Australian Operator Training will inform the complainant or appellant in writing of the reasons for the delay and provide regular updates on progress.

10. Appeals Process

10.1 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may be made where a person believes:

- Assessment was not conducted fairly
- Procedures were not followed
- There was bias, error, or unfair decision-making
- The outcome of a complaint was not appropriate

10.2 Appeal Submission

Appeals must:

- Be lodged within 20 business days of the original decision
- Be submitted in writing

10.3 Appeal Review

- Appeals will be reviewed by an independent person or panel not involved in the original decision
- All relevant evidence will be reassessed
- Parties will be given the opportunity to present additional information

10.4 Outcome

- A written outcome will be provided within 10 business days where possible
- Appeals will be finalised within 30 calendar days where possible
- Outcomes will include reasons for the decision

If the complaints or appeals process is not finalised within 60 calendar days, Australian Operator Training will inform the complainant or appellant in writing of the reasons for the delay and provide regular updates on progress.

11. External Review

If a complainant or appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the internal process, they may access an independent external review body.

External options include:

- National Training Complaints Hotline: 13 38 73
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Australian Operator Training will cooperate fully with any external review process.

Where appropriate, Australian Operator Training may refer the matter to an independent mediation or dispute resolution service to ensure impartial review.

12. Procedural Fairness

Australian Operator Training ensures that:

- Decision-makers are impartial and free from conflicts of interest
- All parties are given equal opportunity to present their case
- Decisions are evidence-based

13. Victimisation Protection

No individual will be victimised, discriminated against, or disadvantaged for lodging a complaint or appeal.

Any concerns regarding victimisation should be reported to senior management and will be investigated promptly.

14. Confidentiality

- All complaints and appeals are handled confidentially
- Information is disclosed only where necessary to investigate and resolve the matter

15. Records Management

Australian Operator Training maintains:

- Complaints Register
- Appeals Register
- Investigation records
- Outcome documentation

Records are:

- Stored securely
- Retained in accordance with legislative requirements
- Available for audit purposes

16. Continuous Improvement

The organisation will:

- Monitor complaints and appeals trends
- Identify systemic issues
- Implement corrective actions

Evidence includes:

- Continuous Improvement Register
- Management meeting minutes
- Trend analysis reports

Identified systemic issues will be escalated through the organisation's compliance and risk management processes.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or
- Following significant complaints, appeals, or regulatory changes

18. Approval

Jason Hartwell
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Operator Training