

Complaints & Appeals

Policy and Procedure

Purpose

This document outlines AHRI policy on managing and responding to complaints and appeals regarding the training. The policy summarises the AHRI roles and responsibilities as per the RTO Standards 2015, available here - <https://www.asqa.gov.au/standards/support-progression/clauses-1.7-5.4-6.1-to-6.6>

Policy

This policy governs the process for fair complaints handling to ensure that complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively. This policy relates to responding to complaints about a situation, a process, a person or people, a facility, a service provided by or on behalf of AHRI by a third party.

AHRI's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure is available on the AHRI website, in Course Handbooks and on the Student Portal to inform learners of their rights and what they can expect from AHRI when managing their complaints and or appeals.

AHRI will attempt in all instances to identify potential causes of complaints and appeals and take appropriate action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence. A complaints and appeals process exists for both academic and non-academic issues. AHRI will investigate and respond to all complaints and appeals lodged by students:

- The process will commence within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint or appeal and supporting information and all reasonable measures will be taken to manage and finalise the process in the shortest possible time.
- The student's enrolment will be maintained while the complaint or appeal is ongoing.
- The student will have the opportunity to formally present their case at no cost.
- Where a meeting is required regarding the complaint or appeal, the student and the other party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person.
- The student will be given a written statement of the outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome.
- Where AHRI needs to make arrangements for final review by an independent party of the RTO at the individual's request, a fee of \$100.00 will apply.
- Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint can take further action through the Australian Skills Quality Authority at <http://www.asqa.gov.au>
- In relation to all complaints or appeals, if the process results in a decision that supports the student, AHRI will immediately implement the decision and/or preventive action required and advise the student in writing of the outcome within five (5) working days.

Procedure

At AHRI every effort is made to ensure each student is able to appeal against any decision or incident they feel is unfair or inconsistent with what they were told prior to enrolment. All complaints or appeals are handled with confidentiality and sensitivity and according to the AHRI Complaints and Appeals Process.

A complaint or appeal should be lodged via Survey Monkey with the links provided in your course materials. The policy and form are mentioned in the Course Handbook and students can receive the policy and procedure (including the links) by contacting the AHRI Student Support team.

AHRI will investigate and respond to all complaints and appeals lodged by students. The process will commence within 10 working days of the formal lodgement of the complaint or appeal and supporting information and all reasonable measures will be taken to manage and finalise the process in the shortest possible time. Aggregate data sourced from complaints and appeals will be used for quality assurance purposes. (Note: No identifiers or personal information is used in the aggregate data. All complaints and appeals are handled with the utmost confidentiality and respect for privacy.) All complaints are lodged and tracked in a Complaints and Appeals Register which outlines details of specific instances including the complaint, action and outcomes.

Complaint and Appeals Procedure for Academic Matters

Step 1:

Discuss the academic issue/decision with the Academic Coordinator.

Step 2:

If the issue is not resolved, complete a Complaints and Appeals Form (CAAF) via Survey Monkey – a link is available in your Student Handbook, LMS Portal or from the AHRI Student Support Team) and submit via Survey Monkey to: studentsupport@ahri.com.au

Step 3:

The Student Support Team representative will lodge and record the formal complaint and appeal to the *Manager, HR Standards & Learning*. The appeal will be investigated within 10 working days and the case examined by the *Manager, HR Standards & Learning* in consultation with the Academic Coordinator. Where a meeting is required regarding the appeal, the student may be accompanied by a support person.

Step 4:

The student will be advised of the outcome of the appeal within 4 weeks of formal lodgement, by the *Manager, HR Standards & Learning* any action taken will be recorded.

Step 5:

If the matter remains unresolved, the student can raise the complaint or appeal with AHRI's *GM, HR Standards and Learning*. The AHRI *GM, HR Standards and Learning* will provide a final opportunity for review by an independent reviewer, if the process has failed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

Step 6:

If the matter remains unresolved to the student's satisfaction, post the outcome of an independent review, they will be referred to ASQA to lodge their complaint at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

AHRI'S internal complaints and appeals procedure for Academic matters

Step 1:

Discuss the academic issue/decision with the Academic Coordinator.

Step 2:

If the issue is not resolved, complete a Complaints and Appeals Form (CAAF) via Survey Monkey – a link is available in your Student Handbook, LMS Portal or from the AHRI Student Support Team) and submit via Survey Monkey to: studentsupport@ahri.com.au

Step 3:

The Student Support Team representative will lodge and record the formal complaint and appeal to the *Manager, HR Standards & Learning*. The appeal will be investigated within 10 working days and the case examined by the Manager Learning & Development and Quality in consultation with the Academic Coordinator. Where a meeting is required regarding the appeal, the student may be accompanied by a support person.

Step 4:

The student will be advised of the outcome of the appeal within 4 weeks of formal lodgement, by the *Manager, HR Standards & Learning* and any action taken will be recorded.

Step 5:

If the matter remains unresolved, the student can raise the complaint or appeal with the *GM, HR Standards and Learning*. The AHRI GM HR Standards and Learning will provide a final opportunity for review by an independent reviewer, if the process has failed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

Step 6:

If the matter remains unresolved to the student's satisfaction, post the outcome of an independent review, they will be referred to ASQA to lodge their complaint at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

Additional Notes Regarding the Process

If the matter pertains to a request for a review of a result for any piece of assessment, the application must be submitted **within ten (10) working days after the return of the assessment**. Students may apply for assessment review only after they have discussed their performance with their academic coordinator. Students are required to provide sufficient grounds on the CAAF to justify their request for review and submit the original and marked assessment. Where insufficient grounds for re-assessment are given, the QA team may decline the application for review.

There are several options available in regard to the review of an assessment:

- a) No error is found, the existing result is accepted; or
- b) Agreement to amend the result where an error has been found; or
- c) Agreement to an internal or independent external re-assessment of the work; or
- d) Student to complete an Alternative or Supplementary Assessment.

Depending on the complexity of the assessment review and in the event that the review results in a decision to have the piece re-assessed, it may take up to four weeks from the time the student submits their application to the time they are notified of the outcome. Where an assessment piece is required to be reassessed, a fee of \$50 will apply.

All outcomes from the Complaints and Appeals Process will be provided to the student in writing and the reasons for any decisions will be given.

Complaint and Appeals Procedure for Non-Academic Matters

Step 1:

Discuss the issue with the AHRI Student Support team via email to: studentsupport@ahri.com.au

Step 2:

If the issue is not resolved, complete a Complaints and Appeals Form (CAAF) via Survey Monkey – a link is available in your Student Handbook, LMS Portal or from the AHRI Student Support Team) and submit it to *Manager, Member and Student Support* via Survey Monkey to: studentsupport@ahri.com.au

Step 3:

The complaint will be investigated within 10 working days and the case will be examined by the AHRI. Where a meeting is required regarding the complaint, the student may be accompanied and assisted by a support person.

Step 4:

The student will be advised of the outcome of the complaint investigation within 4 weeks of formal lodgement, by the Manager, Member and Student Support and any action taken will be recorded.

Step 5:

If the matter remains unresolved, the student can raise the complaint or appeal with the AHRI GM Strategy and Operations, will provide a final opportunity for review by an independent reviewer, if the process has failed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

Step 6:

If matter remains unresolved from the student's perspective, post the outcome of an independent review, student will be referred to ASQA to lodge their complaint at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

AHRI'S internal complaints and appeals procedure for Non-academic matters

Step 1:

Student Support representative assists student with issue/complaint.

Step 2:

Student Support representative files Complaints and Appeals Form and lodges the complaint in the Complaints and Appeals Register and notifies the *Manager, Member & Student Support*. The *Manager, Member & Student Support* has 10 days to action the issue.

Step 3:

Student Support representative presents formal complaint/appeal for examination at QA meeting.

Step 4:

AHRI's *Manager, Member & Student Support* advises student of outcome and any action to be taken within 4 weeks of formal lodgement. Records of action to be taken are also updated in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

Step 5:

If the matter remains unresolved, the student can raise the complaint or appeal with the *GM, Strategy and Operations* who will provide a final opportunity for review by an independent reviewer, if the process has failed to resolve the complaint or appeal.

Step 6:

If matter remains unresolved from the student's perspective, post the outcome of an independent review, they will be referred to ASQA to lodge their complaint at <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

AHRI's dispute resolution procedures do not prevent the student from pursuing other legal remedies involving external dispute resolution organisations. The above complaint and appeal procedure do not remove the right to take further action under Australia's Consumer Protection Laws.

External Complaints Resolution Body

If students are still not satisfied with the quality of service or training provided by AHRI, after the AHRI Complaints and Appeals Process has been utilised, they can then make a complaint to the RTO regulatory body, Australian Skills Quality Authority. Information regarding the ASQA complaints process is available at:

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

Disciplinary procedures

AHRI expects that every student and member of staff will treat fellow students and staff with complete integrity, dignity and fairness. However, it is acknowledged that on rare occasions, where all other resolution processes have failed, there may be a need for disciplinary action to be taken. Accordingly, the AHRI *GM, HR Standards & Learning* may, after hearing all sides of the argument, impose disciplinary penalties ranging from a simple warning through to expulsion (for students). In all instances a disciplinary decision can be appealed through the Complaints and Appeals Process.

Definitions

- A working day is any day other than a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday during term time.
- A student is a person enrolled in an AHRI education or training program or the parent(s)/legal guardian of a student where that student is under 18 years of age.
- A support person is a friend/teacher/relative not involved in the grievance. Please note that lawyers are not acceptable support persons at this stage of the complaints handling process.
- ASQA - Australian skills and quality authority
- QA - Quality Assurance Meetings
- CAAF - Complains and Appeals form