
29. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY & PROCEDURE

This procedure has been developed and implemented to ensure that GTPS has an efficient and effective complaints and appeals management process to allow its students to express any concerns they may have that relates to the nationally recognised training programs offered by GTPS.

In addition, this procedure outlines the process by which GTPS will continuously improve the quality of services based on information gained from complaints and appeals made by its students

Definitions

Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with an action, product or service by a client, staff member, or other stakeholder.

Complaints Process

A process by which a student, staff member, industry client, or other stakeholder may raise a concern about the conduct of:

- a) the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- b) a third-party providing services on behalf of the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- c) a student of the RTO.

Appeals

A process whereby a student, staff member, industry client, or other stakeholder may request the review of a decision made by the RTO or a third-party providing services on the RTO's behalf. The decision made by the RTO or a third party may be an assessment decision or may be about any other aspect of the RTO's operations. An appeal is generally an escalation of a complaint, where the appellant is dissatisfied with the process or outcome of a complaint.

Process

Complaints Management (informal resolution)

1. All students/stakeholders are encouraged to firstly resolve any complaints they have in an informal manner.
2. Student/stakeholders can do this by approaching the person/s against whom they are making the complaint and try to rectify issues that relate to their complaint.
3. In the event the student/stakeholder is unable to resolve their complaint through the informal process then the student/stakeholder has the option of lodging a formal complaint.

Complaints Management (formal resolution)

4. A student/stakeholder may choose to raise a concern formally in writing. Formal written complaints should be submitted to the Training Coordinator and should contain the following details
 - a. the reasons for the formal complaint i.e. the why, and
 - b. provide situational background to the complaint i.e. the what, when, who, where and how.
5. The Training Coordinator, having regard for the relevant circumstances will consider the formal complaint by:
 - a. reviewing the student's/stakeholder's letter;
 - b. verifying that all appropriate GTPS procedures have been correctly carried out;



- c. sourcing additional information from appropriate staff concerning the subject of the complaint;
 - d. discussing the matter directly with the student/stakeholder;
 - e. undertaking other investigation or action as appropriate.
6. After consideration of all available evidence, the Training Coordinator may decide to:
 - a. Dismiss the complaint
 - b. Uphold the complaint and direct that:
 - ✓ restitution as appropriate be made to the student/stakeholder, and/or
 - ✓ where relevant administrative systems or procedures be reviewed;
 - ✓ appropriate preventative action be undertaken;
 - ✓ other actions as appropriate.
7. The student/stakeholder will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of submission of the formal complaint. The written advice of the outcome shall include the reasons for the outcome and advise the student/stakeholder of their right of appeal.

Appeal Against Assessment Decision

- Any student dissatisfied with the mark awarded or outcome of an assessment task, or the result for a unit because they feel the mark or result is unfair or incorrect, may submit a request to the GTPS Training Coordinator for a review.
- In the first instance, such review will be undertaken by the original assessor. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, then he/she may lodge a formal appeal.
- The appeal must be in writing, explain reasons for the appeal, and be submitted to the GTPS Training Coordinator within 10 working days of the student being notified of the review outcome.
- Where reasonable grounds for appeal exist, the GTPS Training Coordinator will arrange for an external review to be undertaken. Any costs associated with the external review will be borne by GTPS.
- The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the external review. The outcome of the external review will be final.

Further Appeals Management

1. A student/stakeholder has the right of appeal on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. That the investigation process did not take account of all matters related to the complaint;
 - b. That the student/stakeholder can provide new evidence which could not reasonably have been provided at the time of the formal complaint resolution process;
 - c. That a procedural irregularity has occurred in the hearing of a complaint during the formal resolution process.
2. An appeal must be lodged in writing to the RTO Manager within 5 working days of notice of the outcome of the formal complaint's procedure.
3. Upon receipt of the written appeal the RTO Manager will:
 - a. Consider the matter and complete the investigations within 5 working days of notification of appeal;
 - b. Report to the Senior Management his/her findings, decision and recommendations, and
 - c. The Senior Management will consider all evidence and on reaching a decision, notify the Appellant in writing of the outcomes of the process, the reasons for the decision(s) and any specific action to be taken.



4. The decision of the Senior Management is the final step in GTPS internal Complaints and Appeals Process.

Independent Mediation and Consultation

At any time during the complaint and appeal process the complainant/appellant may seek the advice or mediatory services of an external independent person or body of their own choice for example Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV)- **1300 372 888** or VRQA (www.vrqa.vic.gov.au) or on phone contact **(03) 9637 2806** or National Training Complaints Hotline Phone **133873** or via email to skilling@education.gov.au

Record Keeping

1. Staff members associated with investigating and resolving a complaint or appeal are required to keep file notes of any related discussions or actions. Such file notes are to be marked 'Strictly Confidential' and be held in a secure restricted place. All official correspondence with the complainant/appellant will be retained in the same place.
2. Notes should be kept to a minimum stating only facts and relevant details as described by the parties. Dates and times of interactions should also be recorded.
3. All complaints and appeals including the nature of the complaint/appeal, the outcomes of the complaint/appeal will be recorded onto our Complaints & Appeals Register; and
4. Actions arising from our Complaints & Appeals Register will be used to continuously improve GTPS systems and operations.

Forming part of this policy is:

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Approved: GTPS CEO	<i>Sonia Bhatia</i>	Date	10 Jan 2022
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