

Complaints and Appeals

In accordance with Clauses 6.1 to 6.6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015, AIHFE is committed to providing a fair and transparent complaints and appeals process that is publicly accessible and easily understandable.

General Complaints and Appeals Principles

AIHFE resolves to:

- Enable complainants and appellants to access our internal processes at no cost;
- Review and finalise all complaints and appeals as soon as possible, and no longer than 60-days, unless absolutely necessary, and where more than 60-days is required to finalise the complaint or appeal, reasons provided to the complainant or appellant as to why;
- Keep the complainant or appellant informed of the process and update them on the progress of their complaint or appeal every fortnight;
- Record the details of the complaint or appeal and all other pertinent information in our Complaints and Appeals register, and maintain the records securely;
- All written records, any follow-up letters and the outcome letter is to be saved on our Complaints and Appeals register, only accessible by authorised personnel;
- Utilise any complaints and appeals received as an opportunity for continuous improvement and take immediate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of re-occurrence;
- Treat any and all information received in a complaint or appeal in the strictest of confidence;
- Where a complaint is received about a particular staff member, the staff member is not to be involved in the complaints handling process;
- Not negatively impact or discriminate against the complainant or appellant for submitting a complaint or appeal;
- Ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process;
- Ensure this policy is publicly available, and easily accessible by our prospective and current students, staff and third-parties – published in our Student Handbook and on our website;
- Handle all complaints and appeals at no cost to the complainant or appellant;

- Provide adequate support mechanisms, such as providing the complainant or appellant to be accompanied or assisted by a support person at any meeting or interview;
- Provide for review by an appropriate party independent of the RTO and the complainant or appellant, at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal, if the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal; and
- Co-operate with any statutory body or external agency that may investigate the handling of a complaint or appeal.

Complaints vs Appeals

A complaint is dissatisfaction expressed about the services or people connected with AIHFE. It may involve matters concerning the quality of our courses, the efficiency of our systems and processes, the conduct of another learner, interactions with one of our staff members, or a third-party marketing our courses. Staff members should do their best to address, acknowledge and resolve issues that arise as they occur. Where it is not possible, the individual should be encouraged to lodge a complaint. A complaint can be made in writing and sent to AIHFE, PO Box 11, Parkwood WA 6147. It can also be made by any person, whether they are a learner, a staff member or even a passer-by. There is no time limitation on a person who is seeking to make a complaint.

A learner can appeal any decision made by AIHFE or a third-party providing services on AIHFE's behalf, not just assessment judgements. At times, a learner may appeal a decision due to compassionate or compelling circumstances. These circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the learner and they have an impact on the learner's capacity and/or ability to progress through a course. These circumstances may include chronic illness or severe injury sustained (including any mental health illnesses or injuries), where a medical certificate is able to corroborate the illness or injury; the passing of a close family member; major political upheaval or natural disaster; or a traumatic experience. An appeal can be made in writing and sent to AIHFE, PO Box 11, Parkwood WA 6147. An appeal must be made within **20 business days** from the date the decision is informed to the individual.

Unresolved Complaints and Appeals

Where the person making a complaint or appeal is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by AIHFE, they are provided with the opportunity for an independent party – **The Resolution Institute**, to review his or her concerns following the completion of our internal complaints and appeals handling process and act as an external mediator.

We will advise the complainant or the appellant of the availability of an independent party to review the handling of and the outcome of their complaint or appeal. The independent party is required to respond with their recommendations and their advice will be accepted by AIHFE as final, advised to the person making the complaint or appeal in writing, and implemented without prejudice. The Resolution Institute can also act as an external mediator.

Where we appoint the Resolution Institute to act as a mediator or to review our handling of the complaints and appeals process, there will be costs involved where the complainant or appellant will have to contribute to. AIHFE will contribute 50% to the fees incurred, and the complainant or appellant will be required to contribute 50%.

Where the complainant or appellant is still unsatisfied with the outcome of the independent review, they can be directed to the National Training Complaints hotline – 13 38 73.

Complaints Handling Procedure

- 1. Complaint received** – when a complaint is received, the information is to be recorded in our Complaints and Appeals register. The Complaints and Appeals register must also be updated regularly throughout the complaints handling process.
- 2. Letter of acknowledgement sent to complainant** – within **5 business days** of receiving the complaint, the complainant is to be sent an acknowledgement letter, informing them that we have received their complaint, our complaints handling process, and the associated timeframe in which we will endeavour to finalise the matter.
- 3. Investigate the complaint** – the CEO is then responsible to investigate the claim. If the complaint is about the CEO, a staff member is responsible to investigate the claim. This investigation must commence within **10 business days** from the date the complaint was submitted and must identify the potential cause(s) of the complaint.
- 4. Finalise the complaint response** – as a benchmark, we will endeavour to resolve all complaints as soon as possible. The CEO (or the staff member assigned) must finalise their response to the complainant and prepare the response as soon as possible, but no later than **20 business days** from when the assessment of the complaint commenced. The response to the complainant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed, what corrective actions will be taken, and what outcomes have been identified as a result of the complaint. If a complaint is unable to be finalised within **20 business days**, the complainant should be notified on a fortnightly interval of the progress of the investigation and why the

additional time is required. The complaint should be finalised within 60-days, unless absolutely necessary.

5. **Appeal** – where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint or the handling of the complaint, the complainant can lodge an appeal within **20 business days** of receiving the notification of the outcome of the complaint.
6. **Continuous improvement** – opportunities for improvement identified as a result of the complaint are to be recorded in our Continuous Improvement register and submitted to be discussed at the next management meeting. Any decisions or outcomes of the complaints handling process that find in the favour of the complainant shall be implemented immediately.
7. **Records entered into and documents saved** – information relating to the complaint is entered into the Complaints and Appeals register.

Appeals Handling Procedure

1. **Appeal received** – when an appeal is received, it should be checked that the appeal is made no later than **20 business days** from when the assessment decision or the outcome of the complaint was advised to the individual. The information regarding the appeal is to be recorded in our Complaints and Appeals register. The Complaints and Appeals register must also be updated regularly throughout the appeals handling process.
2. **Letter of acknowledgement sent to appellant** – within **5 business days** of receiving the appeal, the appellant is to be sent an acknowledgement letter, informing them that we have received their appeal, our appeals handling process, and the associated timeframe in which we will endeavour to reach an outcome.
3. **Review the facts, materials and evidences pertaining to the appeal** – the CEO is then responsible to review the appeal. This review must commence within **10 business days** from the date the appeal was submitted. Appeals are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the appeal handling process. This means that the appellant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information with the right of reply. The appellant is entitled to have their appeal heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally, the decision must be made based on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not take into account irrelevant considerations. Where the appeal is in relation to an assessment decision,

a re-assessment may be recommended. Learners participating in a re-assessment should be provided with additional training to support the improvement and ability to demonstrate competence. Re-assessments should be scheduled to occur as soon as possible following the outcome of an appeal and it should be undertaken by a different Assessor than used during the initial assessment.

- 4. Finalise the appeal response** – as a benchmark, we will endeavour to resolve all appeals as soon as possible. The CEO must finalise their response to the appellant and prepare the response as soon as possible, but no later than **20 business days** from when the assessment of the appeal commenced. The response to the appellant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed, what corrective actions will be taken and outcomes have been identified as a result of the appeal. If an appeal is unable to be finalised within **20 business days**, the appellant should be notified on a fortnightly interval of the progress of the review and why the additional time is required. **The appeal should be finalised within 60-days, unless absolutely necessary.**
- 5. Independent review** – where the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of appeal or the handling of the appeal, the CEO is to arrange for the appeal to be considered by an appropriate independent third-party and external mediator – **The Resolution Institute**. Any recommendations made by the independent third-party will be accepted as final, advised to the appellant and implemented by AIHFE within **10 business days** (unless circumstances does not permit) without prejudice. Where the appellant is still unsatisfied with the outcome, they may refer the matter to the National Training Complaints Service – 13 38 73.
- 6. Continuous improvement** – opportunities for improvement identified as a result of the appeal are to be recorded in our Continuous Improvement register and submitted to be discussed at the next management meeting. Any decisions or outcomes of the appeal handling process that find in the favour of the appellant shall be implemented immediately.
- 7. Records entered into and documents saved** – the information relating to the appeal is entered into the Complaints and Appeals register.

Continuous Improvement Process Flow-Chart

