

Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a system of recording, solving, monitoring and acting on outcomes of feedback, complaints and appeals of customers, clients, students, volunteers, employees of Access Australia Group (AAG) or contracted third parties. AAG will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process and will also ensure that the complaint or appeal will be finalised as soon as practicable.

Suggestions for improvement and the lodgement of complaints are taken as positive influences that enable us to improve AAG's services and operations.

Scope

This procedure applies to any stakeholder of Access Australia Group (AAG) or any of its divisions who intends on providing feedback or making a complaint or appealing a decision.

References *(Refer to the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy - QPOL1-010)*

Definitions *(Refer to the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy - QPOL1-010)*

Procedures

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No.	Feedback procedures	Responsibility
1	Provide stakeholders with information on how to provide feedback on AAG's services, staff, etc. by using Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) and any other feedback mechanisms. Feedback can be positive or negative.	Staff
2.	Collate and review completed Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) forms for opportunities to implement continuous improvements to current processes.	Divisional managers
3	Review completed feedback forms at Quality Management Review meetings held twice a year for trends and continuous improvement progress.	Divisional managers
4	Store feedback documents in a locked storage area within the division until the feedback has been assessed when it will be stored in a locked cabinet in	Divisional managers

	the Chief Executive Officer's office	
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No.	Complaints and Appeals procedures	Responsibility
1.	Complaints and appeals general information	
1.1	Attempt an informal resolution prior to the complaint or appeal being lodged through discussion or general mediation with all parties concerned. This may include advice, negotiations and general mediation in relation to the issue. <i>(Resolution of issues at this stage may alleviate the need for a formal complaint process and will not be documented, recorded or reported on unless the grievance is relevant to the wider operation of AAG.)</i>	Line managers
1.2	Provide access and advice to the stakeholder regarding the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints policy (QPOL1-010), Feedback, Appeals and Complaints procedure (QP1-001), and the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) at induction. If required, provide stakeholder with a Complaints Policy – Easy English (QPOL1-035.2) version. These documents are also accessible on AAG's, and each of its divisional, websites.	Induction staff
1.3	Advise stakeholder regarding complaints and appeals of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints and appeals process being handled in a timely manner via the timelines found in the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy (QPOL1-010) and this procedure. No costs to complainant undertaking complaints and appeals, unless stipulated, in writing to the complainant or appellant, at the initial stages of the complaint or appeal. 	Induction staff
1.4	Ensure that the complainant or appellant is aware that all information regarding the complaint / appeal will only be provided to those who need to know about the complaint / appeal and that the privacy of the complainant or appellant will be protected (<i>refer to AAG's Privacy Policy -QPOL1-008, Section 11: Security of personal information</i>).	Induction staff
1.5	Provide access to volunteers, employees customers, clients and students of AAG's Privacy Policy (QPOL1-008) at inductions. AAG's Privacy Policy (QPOL1-008) is also available on AAG's, and each of its divisional, websites.	Induction staff
1.5	Document and update the complaint or appeal process in the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) and register it on the Customer Feedback and Complaints Log (QF1-003.1).	Induction staff
1.6	Maintain records of each complaint and / or appeal and the outcomes documented on the Customer Feedback and Complaints Log (QF1-003.1), which is securely stored where only authorised personnel have access to it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardcopy information is securely stored locked cabinets in the HR and Chief Executive Officer's offices; and Soft copies of information are electronically stored and can only be accessed through password protected logons. 	Chief Executive Officer / Human Resources Manager
AST only: Ensure that the student's enrolment has not ceased during the complaints / appeals process unless under extraordinary circumstances, such as students / staff at risk.		AST Team Leader

2	Complaints process	
2.1	Complete the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) and either mail or deliver to AAG's head office (18 – 20 St Andrews Avenue [PO Box 276] Bendigo, Victoria, 3552). If requested by the complainant a staff member can assist in completing this form.	Complainant
2.2	Provide as much clear information as possible to enable AAG to investigate and determine an appropriate course of action. This information could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of what happened and how it affected you • All relevant evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal • Details steps already taken to resolve this issue • Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved. 	Complainant / Complainee
2.3	Provide the complainant with a receipt of the complaint within 10 days of AAG having received the complaint.	Senior Manager / Chief Executive Officer
2.4	Select a neutral investigator or investigation team who is / are independent of the decision being reviewed who is / are able to examine the complaint without bias.	Senior Manager / Chief Executive Officer
2.5	Assess the details of the completed Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003) and other supporting documentation to determine the process to be taken, including timelines and actions to be taken, i.e., interviews. Provide a photocopy of the actions and timelines to the complainant (<i>refer to AAG's Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy (QPOL1-010 for timelines)</i>).	Nominated investigator / Team
2.6	Document timelines and actions to be taken prior to the complaint being investigated and enter into the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003). Ensure that the complainant is notified about the actions to be taken and timelines within ten (10) days of the formal written receipt being provided to the complaint regarding the progress of the issue.	Nominated investigator / Team
2.7	Prioritise the complaint, where AAG has received multiple complaints, based on the urgency of the complaint. Each timeline specified by AAG in its policy and procedure must not be exceeded without informing all parties about the reasons for the delay.	Nominated investigator / Team
2.8	Provide the opportunity for the complainant or complainee to present their case. Each of the parties shall be interviewed separately (unless they both agree for it to be conducted together) so that each person is provided with the opportunity to tell their side of the issue, prior to a decision being taken by the investigator / investigation team. The complainant or complainee may request a support person to accompany, assist or represent them.	Nominated investigator / Team
2.9	Ensure that where a third party, delivering services on behalf of AAG, are included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal where they are either the complainant or complainee. They will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made by, or against, them in writing.	Nominated investigator / Team
2.10	Provide all parties, within thirty (30) days of the formal written receipt of the complaint, regardless of the outcome, with written information about the progress of the complaint or appeal.	Nominated investigator / Team

2.11	Inform the complainant, in writing, if more than sixty (60) calendar days has elapsed since the formal written receipt of the complaint, of why AAG are requires extra time to process and finalise the complaint and regularly update the complainant of the progress of the complaint.	Nominated investigator / Team
3	Internal Appeals process	
3.1	Explain, clearly, on the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) the details as to why the complaint is not satisfied with the previous decision and feels the decision is unfair. Mail or deliver to AAG's head office (18-20 St Andrews Avenue, [PO Box 276] Bendigo, Victoria, 3552). The appeal is to be lodged with AST within one (1) month of the finalisation of the complaint.	Appellant
3.2	Provide the appellant with a receipt of the complaint within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the appeal.	Chief Executive Officer
3.3	Review the appeal, unless the Chief Executive Officer is a party to the appeal (in this case the Operating Officer), and if required, forms a team to assist with the appeal.	Chief Executive Officer
3.4	Determine the validity of the appeal and organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution, within seven (7) working days from when the appeal was formally lodged with AAG	Chief Executive Officer
3.5	Notify complainant in writing of the appeals outcome with all the reasons for determining the decisions.	Chief Executive Officer
3.6	Write to the appellant and other relevant parties, when more than sixty (60) calendar days have elapsed from when the appeal was formally lodged with AAG, to explain why extra time is required. Regularly update all the relevant parties of the progress of the appeal.	Chief Executive Officer
4	External referrals for unresolved complaints	
4.1	Determine whether the appellant wishes to pursue the matter further and explain the option of activating the external appeals processes and let AAG know if they intend to proceed with the external appeals process.	Chief Executive Officer
4.2	Provide information to staff, students clients, etc. wanting external assistance on unresolved complaints with access to the relevant authority such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints Resolution and Referral Service National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline National Training Complaints Hotline <i>For more information, please refer to the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy (QPOL1-010)</i>	Manager
5	Finalisation	
5.1	Complete the complaints and appeals process, when the matter has been resolved or rectified, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signing and dating the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2). Completing the Customer Feedback and Complaints Log (QF1-003.1). 	Relevant manager
5.2	Secure the completed Feedback, Appeals and Complaints forms in locked storage.	Chief Executive Officer
5.3	Review after three (3) months, or at Quality Management Review meeting, to ensure that recommended actions are successfully being integrated into the organisation, where changes are recommended due to complaint / appeal /	Chief Executive Officer

	feedback. If recommended changes are still creating issues, it will necessitate AAG immediately relooking at the issue(s) that require further action and determining other preventative actions.	
5.4	Provide the Quality Management Review (QMR) team with access to the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003.2) and the Customer Feedback and Complaints Log (QF1-003.1), The QMR, held twice a year, will review each complaint and appeal for finalisation, an opportunity for continuous improvement and a reflection on current practices and processes.	Chief Executive Officer

No.	Assessment Appeals procedures (RTO only)	Responsibility
1	Communicate informally with the student regarding the assessment issues and where possible seek a fair and equitable solution before formalising the appeal. Advise the student to access asqaconnect at: https://asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/ to provide clarity to them as to whether an appeal to ASQA is warranted or can be dealt within AST's processes.	Trainer/assessor
2	Formalise the process by completing the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form (QF1-003) when other informal solutions have failed to resolve the issue. This is to be done within five (5) working days from when the assessment was returned to the student and forwarded to the RTO: Executive Manager.	Student
3	Complete a written report regarding the request to review the assessment, providing reasons for the review including: 1. Details of why the original assessment result was not acceptable 2. Details of the outcome of the informal resolution process 3. Any specific issues that are relevant to the assessment results and 4. Any new and relevant evidence that supports the acceptance of the work that was produced for assessment. Attach a clean copy of the assessment tasks that have been returned to the student.	Student
4	Evaluate the application to see if there is any foundations for the review.	Chief Executive Officer / AST Executive Officer
5	Set up a review process with an independent assessor, if a formal review is warranted, and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm that all appropriate assessment procedures have been properly conducted A clean copy of the students' work to be provided for reassessment along with assessment criteria Independent review report to be created after reassessment. 	Chief Executive Officer / AST Executive Officer
7	Forward the results of the independent review to the student within ten (10) business days of the review being completed.	Chief Executive Officer / AST Executive Officer
8	Determine whether the appellant wishes to pursue the matter further and explain the option of activating the external appeals processes. Once AST is made aware of the appellant wanting to pursue external process AST can provide information on where to go to access external appeals options (<i>refer</i>	Chief Executive Officer / AST Executive Officer

	to point 4.2 above).	
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Forms / Records

Form ID	Title	Review schedule	Location
QF1-003.1	Customer Feedback and Complaints Log	2 years	Intranet
QF1-003.2	Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Form	2 years	Intranet
QF1-003.3	Compliments and Suggestions Form	2 years	Intranet

Complaints and appeals flowchart

