

Policy Name:	Grievances, Complaints and Appeals
Policy No.	E4.0
Issued:	20 March 2023
Reviewed:	

### Purpose

To provide a pathway for stakeholders, including learners, to communicate a grievance, complaint or appeal that will allow for constructive and timely resolution.

### Areas Affected

#### General

Despite best efforts, there will be occasions where the expectations of HITsa's learners or other stakeholders have not been met, and the individual or group may feel dissatisfied or unfairly treated.

HITsa has a commitment to dealing with complaints and appeals fairly, efficiently and effectively, in line with RTO Standards.

Being aware of such experiences, reflecting and responding is an essential part of HITsa's continuous improvement commitment.

Having a process readily accessible ensures that current and prospective learners are properly informed and protected. The process for raising complaints or grievances is communicated to current and prospective learners and other stakeholders through this policy and procedure which is available on HITsa's website, the student handbook and enrolment form. This policy is also an inclusion of the student's induction.

#### RTO Standard

**Standard 6: Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.**

#### Principles

To meet this standard, HITsa will apply the following

- All parties will be treated with respect
- Factual information will be collected to assess and respond to issues
- Commitment to the principles of negotiation and mediation
- Act, investigate and respond without judgement
- Focus on win:win outcomes for all involved
- Provide access to an external party such as Training Advocate or Australian Skills Standard Authority
- Respect and protect the privacy of all parties involved and keep all aspects of the issue confidential
- Address and respond to issues in a timely manner
- Keep parties regularly informed of progress throughout the process
- The complainant has a right to withdraw the complaint at any time
- Reflect state or federal funding obligations, as appropriate
- Consider legal reporting obligations, as appropriate
- There will be no reprisal or disadvantage for a learner or other stakeholder as a result of escalating an issue in good faith

## Types of grievances and complaints

Academic Appeal	<p>A student may challenge an academic decision they received</p> <p>Grounds for appeal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment process did not provide students with a fair, flexible and reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their competency.</li> <li>• The student was not informed in advance of the conditions and method of assessment.</li> <li>• The process used was discriminatory in some way.</li> <li>• The student was ill or suffered misadventure at the time of assessment (must be supported by a medical certificate).</li> </ul>
Appeal against a decision made by HITsa other than an academic decision	A student may challenge any decision made by HITsa that is believed to impact on their ability to demonstrate their positive intent, eg. refusal for admission on specific grounds
Complaint	An expression of discontent about HITsa, its staff, policies & procedures, other learners or third parties providing services on behalf of HITsa

## Procedure

Ref	Steps	Responsibility
1	<p>Receipt of a Complaint or an Appeal</p> <p><b>Verbal receipt:</b> Recommend the complainant/appellant attempts to resolve the matter with the party(ies) concerned. Offer for a senior staff member, being the Executive Officer or Business Manager, to facilitate the conversation between the parties. Should a mediation session be scheduled, inform the complainant / appellant that they may have a support person also attend if they so choose.</p> <p>If this is unsuccessful or determined to be inappropriate then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide the complainant/appellant with access again to the Complaints and Appeals Procedure and the Complaints and Appeals form</li> <li>2. Offer them assistance to complete the form.</li> </ol> <p><b>Written receipt:</b> Acknowledge receipt of written complaint / grievance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Ensure the complainant/appellant is aware that they will receive an acknowledgement of the complaint or appeal in writing with information that will outline the process to be used to attempt to: provide a resolution within 7 business days. (RTO Standard 6.4 prescribes 60 days)</li> <li>4. Forward the form to the Executive Officer who will, if appropriate, record the issue on the continuous improvement register</li> </ol>	All HITsa staff – Administrative, trainers & third parties

2	<p><b>Investigate the Complaint or Appeal</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant / appellant and advise them of the actions to be undertaken. Record the time, date and discussion points of this interaction.</li> <li>2. Respectfully investigate the complaint / appeal by engaging with all parties associated. Record the time, date and discussion points of all interactions. Investigation will include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interviewing the complainant, the respondent and any other relevant witnesses to establish the facts</li> <li>b. Before interviewing, advise each party that they may have a support person also attend the interview</li> <li>c. Inform each party of the possible consequences that may result from the outcome of the investigation</li> <li>d. Remind all parties of the need to maintain confidentiality</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Appoint an independent person if Executive Officer is directly involved in the complaint or appeal situation.</li> <li>4. Inform the complainant/appellant in writing of the reasons if the complaint or appeal is likely to take longer than 7 business days to resolve</li> <li>5. Allegations of illegal misconduct will be promptly investigated and/or escalated to the appropriate legal authorities as a priority. HITsa will co-operate fully with authorities.</li> </ol>	Executive Officer or independent internal person if relevant
3	<p><b>Determine the Complaint or Appeal Outcome</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the outcome of the complaint and appeal and inform in writing all relevant parties of the outcome within 7 business days of the complaint or appeal being received (or other date if advised to the parties).</li> <li>2. Ensure all parties are made aware that the complainant/appellant can request an independent third party review of the outcome</li> </ol>	Executive Officer or independent internal person if relevant
4	<p><b>Continuous Improvement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Record outcomes of the complaint or appeal on the relevant section of the continuous improvement register, and action improvement opportunities.</li> </ol>	Executive Officer
5	<p><b>Record Keeping</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The complaint / grievance / appeal is recorded in the HITsa Complaints Register</li> <li>2. The outcome is recorded in the Complaints Register</li> <li>3. Documentation must be securely filed and retained for a period of 3 years</li> </ol>	Executive Officer

**Informal Resolution** – Should informal resolution be recommended as a first step in the resolution of a verbal complaint / grievance, support from a senior HITsa staff member (Executive Officer, Business Manager) shall be offered to facilitate the conversation between the parties.

**END**

Date	Version	Amendment(s)
20.03.23		Original Document – Replaces HITP001/12