

# Appeals Policy

## 1. Purpose

All-Ways Training Services (AWTS) is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs). As such, AWTS is required to demonstrate that:

- (a) it operates a complaints management system that:
  - (i) allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation;
  - (ii) ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness;
  - (iii) identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints; and
  - (iv) provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved;
- (b) information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students;
- (c) VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints;
- (d) outcomes of complaints are documented by the organisation and communicated to all parties to the complaint; and
- (e) feedback and complaints are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

This policy is based on providing and maintaining training and assessment services that are fair and reasonable and providing effective processes for VET students to challenge decisions that adversely affect them.

The object of this policy is to ensure that AWTS staff and third party partners, act in a professional manner at all times. This policy provides clients with a clear process to register an appeal. It ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

## 2. Policy Statement

AWTS acknowledges that students have the right to appeal an assessment decision, based on valid grounds for appeal.

AWTS has provision for students to appeal against assessment decisions, including those made by a third party partner.

AWTS ensures that students have access to a fair and equitable process for lodging an appeal against an assessment decision.

In doing so, AWTS ensures that:

- (a) it operates an appeals management system that:

- (i) allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation, where those decisions adversely affect the student;
  - (ii) ensures all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness;
  - (iii) specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals; and
  - (iv) provides avenues for review by an independent party if requested by the appellant (at no or low cost to the appellant);
- (b) information about how to appeal an adverse decision through the appeals management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students;
- (c) outcomes of appeals are documented by the organisation and communicated to the appellant; and
- (d) the outcomes of appeals are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1 The following words and expressions have the following specific meaning, as in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs):

**Assessment** means the process by which an NVR registered training organisation, or a third party delivering services on its behalf, collects evidence for the purposes of determining whether a VET student is competent to perform to the standard specified in the training product.

**Third party** means any person who has an arrangement with an NVR registered training organisation to deliver services, but does not include:

- (a) employees of the organisation;
- (b) experts engaged by the organisation; or
- (c) government agencies and government funded agencies that refer VET students to the organisation and do not receive any payment from the organisation for doing so.

### 4. Policy Principles

#### 4.1 Underpinning Principles

- a) Students have the right to lodge an appeal against an assessment decision if they feel they were unfairly treated during an assessment, and/or where they feel the assessment decision is incorrect and they have grounds for an appeal.
- b) The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the appeal process.
- c) The appeals policy is publicly available, via the AWTS website.
- d) The appellant must provide detail of their appeal in writing.
- e) All appeals must be lodged within 5 (five) working days of the date of the assessment result notification to the student.

- f) Every appeal will be heard by at least 1 (one) member of the Compliance Team and at least 1 (one) Company Director.
- g) If the appeals process fails to resolve the appeal or the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the matter may be referred to an independent third party for review, at the request of the appellant. The appellant will be provided with a quote prior to agreeing to a third party review and all costs incurred for the third party review will be known to all parties before proceeding. AWTS will ensure that the cost to the student is either waived or is capped at <20% of the total cost.
- h) All appeals are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.
- i) If the appeal will take in excess of 60 calendar days to finalise, AWTS will inform the appellant in writing providing the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. The appellant will also be provided with regular updates on the progress of the appeal.
- j) AWTS strives to deal with appeal issues as soon as they emerge, in order to avoid further disruption or the need for a formal complaint process.
- k) All appeals will be handled 'in-confidence' and will not affect or bias the progress of the participant in any current or future training

## 4.2 Grounds for Appeal

Valid grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision (where the student feels the assessment decision is incorrect) could include the following:

- a) The judgement as to whether competency has been achieved and demonstrated was made incorrectly;
- b) The judgement was not made in accordance with the Assessment Plan;
- c) Alleged bias of the assessor;
- d) Alleged lack of competence of the assessor;
- e) Alleged wrong information from the assessor regarding the assessment process;
- f) Alleged inappropriate assessment process for the particular competency;
- g) Faulty or inappropriate equipment; and/or
- h) Inappropriate conditions.

## 4.3 Appeal Outcomes

An investigation into an Appeal may result in one of the following outcomes:

- a) Appeal is upheld; in this event the following options will be available:
  - i. The original assessment will be re-assessed, potentially by another assessor.
  - ii. Appropriate recognition will be granted.
  - iii. A new assessment shall be conducted/arranged.
- b) Appeal is rejected/not upheld; in accordance with AWTS Assessment Policy, the student will be required to:
  - i. undertake further training or obtain further experience prior to further assessment; or

- ii. re-submit further evidence; or
- iii. submit/undertake a new assessment.

## 5. AWTS Responsibilities

The Director of AWTS is the Appeals Resolution Officer. The Director may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the appeal if necessary.

Details concerning the scope of the Appeals Policy are to be clearly displayed throughout the organisation and contained within the Staff Induction Process, Student Handbook and the AWTS website.

## 6. Appeal

### 6.1 Appeals Process

All appeals shall follow the below process:

- a) Appeal to be made in writing within 5 (five) working days of notification of the assessment decision, using the Appeals Form.
- b) A submitted Appeals Form will constitute a formal appeal from the appellant. Further detail may be provided by the appellant verbally.
- c) The Director AWTS shall be informed of receipt of any appeal.
- d) The Director AWTS may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the appeal, as appropriate.
- e) Appeals will be processed in accordance with the Appeals Flowchart – Annex A.
- f) Appeals, where possible, are to be resolved within 28 days of the initial application.
- g) In all cases the final conclusion will be endorsed by the Director AWTS.
- h) The appellant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their appeal, within 5 (five) working days of the resolution.
- i) If the outcome is not to the satisfaction of the appellant, they may seek an appointment with the Director AWTS.
- j) If the appellant is not satisfied with the decision they have the option to seek External Arbitration to pursue the appeal.

## 7. Access & Equity

The AWTS Access & Equity Policy applies. (See Access & Equity Policy)

## 8. Records Management

Records of all appeals and their outcomes are maintained securely.

Records of appeals will include:

- a) How the appeal was dealt with;
- b) The outcome of the appeal;
- c) The timeframes for resolution of the appeal;

- d) The potential causes of the appeal; and
- e) The steps taken to resolve the appeal.

All documentation from appeal processes are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

## **9. Monitoring and Improvement**

All appeals practices are monitored by the Director AWTS and will be discussed at Continuous Improvement Meetings with areas for improvement identified and acted upon (see Continuous Improvement Policy).

**ANNEX A: Appeals Process**

