

Complaints 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 have a policy and processes in place to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of staff, students and third party training and assessment providers who provide services on behalf of AWTS.

This policy is based on providing and maintaining training and assessment services that are fair and reasonable and afford a forum where issues or inadequacies can be raised and resolved. This process provides opportunity for complaints to be recorded, acknowledged and dealt with in a fair, efficient and effective manner.

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

2. Policy Statement

AWTS acknowledges the student's/clients' right to lodge a complaint when they are dissatisfied with the training and/or assessment services and experiences that they have been provided by AWTS.

AWTS will ensure that clients/students have access to a fair and equitable process for expressing complaints, and that AWTS will manage the complaint with fairness and equity.

In doing so, AWTS:

- a) has written procedures in place for collecting and managing complaints in a constructive and timely manner;
- b) ensures that these procedures are communicated to all staff, third party partners and clients/students;
- c) ensures that all necessary documentation and resources are in place to enable clients/students to submit a complaint;
- d) ensures that each complaint and its outcome is recorded in writing; and
- e) ensures that complaints and their outcomes are fed into continuous improvement initiatives.

3. Definitions

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

Services means:

- (a) training and assessment;
- (b) training support services (but excludes counselling, mediation, and information and communication technology services); and
- (c) any activities related to the recruitment of VET students including marketing, enrolment, induction, or the collection of fees.

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 Principles

In managing complaints, AWTS will ensure that:

- a) The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint process.
- b) The complaints policy is available on all courses and outlined in Student Handbook.
- c) There is a procedure for making a complaint.
- d) Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively and confidentially.
- e) Complaints will be resolved on an individual case basis, as they arise.
- f) All clients/students have the right to express a concern or problem and/or lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the training and assessment services that they have been provided (including through a third party) or the behavioural conduct of another student.
- g) All formal complaints are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.
- h) The complaint resolution procedure is based on the understanding that no action will be taken without consulting the complainant and respondent, using a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation.
- i) The rights of the complainant and respondent will be acknowledged and protected throughout the complaint resolution process, including the conduct of separate interviews initially, where necessary.
- j) In the interest of confidentiality, the number of people involved in the resolution process will be kept to a minimum.
- k) Final decisions will be made by the Director AWTS or an independent party to the complaint.

- l) The complaint resolution procedure emphasises mediation and education while acknowledging that in some instances formal procedures and disciplinary action may be required.
- m) If the complaints process fails to resolve the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to an independent third party for review, at the request of the complainant. AWTS will obtain a quote prior to instructing a third party and all costs incurred for the third party review will be known to all parties before proceeding.
- n) If the complaint will take in excess of 60 calendar days to finalise AWTS will inform the complainant in writing providing the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. The complainant will also be provided with regular updates on the progress of the complaint.
- o) Victimisation of complainants, respondents or anyone one else involved in the complaint resolution process will not be tolerated.
- p) All complaints will be handled as Staff-In-Confidence and will not affect or bias the progress of the client in any current of future training.

4.2 Types of Complaints

A complaint may include allegations involving the conduct of:

- a) AWTS, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- b) A third party providing services on behalf of AWTS, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- c) A client/student of AWTS.

5. AWTS Responsibilities

The Director of AWTS is the Complaints Resolution Officer. The Director may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint if necessary. If this could cause a conflict of interest, the Director of AWTS should enlist an independent person to be responsible for the resolution of the complaint.

The Complaints Policy is available on the AWTS website, and can be made available by other means upon request.

6. Process

If a client/student has a complaint, they are encouraged to speak immediately with the trainer/assessor to resolve the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied that the issue has been resolved they will be asked to complete a Complaints Lodgement Form, to lodge a formal complaint, and the Complaints Procedure will be followed.

7. Access & Equity

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

8. Records Management

Records of all complaints and their outcomes are maintained securely.

Records of complaints include:

- a) How the complaint was dealt with;
- b) The outcome of the complaint;
- c) The timeframes for resolution of the complaint;
- d) The potential causes of the complaint; and
- e) The steps taken to resolve the complaint.

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

9. Monitoring and Improvement

All complaints 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: Complaints Process

