

AMS RTO Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Purpose

Aerodrome Management Services Pty Ltd (AMS) is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs 2015). As such, AMS is required to have a fair and reasonable policy and procedure in place that outlines the steps for handling complaints and appeals received from learners, employees, third parties and stakeholders of the registered training organisation (RTO).

The objective of this policy is to ensure that AMS training staff always act in a professional manner when dealing with a complaint or an appeal.

This policy is intended to provide all parties with a clear policy and process relating to a complaint or an appeal. It also ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

Policy Statement

AMS acknowledges the clients' right to lodge a complaint or an appeal if they are dissatisfied with the training and/or assessment services that they have been provided by AMS.

This policy is based on providing and maintaining services that are fair and reasonable and afford a forum where issues or inadequacies can be raised and resolved.

AMS manages complaints and appeals in a timely and transparent manner which enables learners to be informed of, and to understand their rights and obligations, and the RTO's responsibilities in relation to complaints and appeals under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

AMS will ensure:

- that these procedures are communicated to all RTO staff and clients,
- that each complainant or appellant can formally present their case,
- that each complaint or appeal will be treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively, and confidentially,
- that each complaint or appeal (including its outcome) are recorded in writing,
- that each complainant or appellant is given a written statement of the appeal outcomes, including reasons for the decision, and
- it utilises the outcomes of any appeal to review existing practices which may potentially lead to continuous improvement.

The AMS Complaints and Appeals Policy will be made available on the AMS website in its entirety, and a summary included in the AMS RTO Student Handbook.

1 Policy Principles

1.1 General Principles

- a) Clients have the right to appeal a decision if they feel they were unfairly treated, or where they feel an assessment decision is incorrect and they have grounds for appeal.
- b) Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are followed at every stage of the complaint and appeal process by allowing anyone subject to a decision by the RTO, or anyone who has allegations made against them, to a right of reply before a decision is made.
- c) The decision maker in the process is independent of the decision being reviewed.
- d) The 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,
- e) The rights of the complainant and respondent will be acknowledged and protected throughout the resolution process, including the conduct of separate interviews initially,
- f) Each party lodging a complaint or an appeal may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person throughout the process.
- g) Complaints and appeals are handled in the strictest of confidence and records are secured in accordance with the AMS Privacy Policy and Australian Privacy Principles,
- h) Victimisation of complainants, respondents, or anyone one else involved in the complaint resolution process will not be tolerated,
- i) Complaints, appeals and outcomes are documented in the RTO Complaints and Appeals Register. Outcomes of complaints and appeals processes are used to inform continuous improvement activities,
- j) The investigative panel may need to obtain statements or further investigative evidence to formulate a formal investigation outcome,
- k) If a complainant raises a concern but is not willing to proceed with the complaint they are advised that because of the requirements of procedural fairness, in most circumstances no further action can be taken by the RTO,
- l) Appeals of assessment outcomes are to be lodged within 7 days of when the assessment outcome is informed to the learner.

2 Procedure

2.2 Informal Complaints and Appeals

It is expected that prior to initiating a formal complaint and appeal process, any parties involved will attempt to resolve concerns directly wherever possible. It is expected that many concerns will be resolved informally where possible.

- a) It is expected that all parties will participate in good faith in resolving concerns.
- b) Clients are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the trainer in the first instance.

2.3 Formal Complaints and Appeals

- a) Complaints must be made in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the incident using the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Form*.
- b) The RTO & Training Lead will acknowledge receipt of all complaints and appeals in writing. The acknowledgement will outline the anticipated review period.
- c) The RTO & Training Lead will record the complaint or appeal on the RTO Complaints and Appeals Register (within our Student Management System, PowerPro).
- d) AMS will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint together with either an investigatory panel or in collaboration with the CEO, the complainant will then be advised of the outcome. This may lead to occasions where an industry-training representative may be invited to act as an objective party to negotiate a satisfactory resolution.
- e) Complaints, where possible, are to be resolved within 14 calendar days of the initial application.
- f) The complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint or appeal, within seven (7) days of resolution.
- g) Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO will inform the complainant or appellant in writing, outlining reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required, and regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.
- h) If the process fails to resolve the complaint or appeal or the client is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to an independent third-party for review, at the request of the appellant. All costs incurred for the external review will be advised to the client before proceeding.

3 Responsibilities

All AMS RTO employees are responsible for:

- conducting themselves in a manner consistent with the AMS Code of Conduct,
- the accurate and timely documenting of complaints and appeals as outlined in this procedure,
- ensuring that learners are fully informed of the RTO's policy and procedures for handling complaints and appeals,
- assisting a complainant or appellant to resolve concerns directly and informally with parties involved in the first instance,
- assisting a complainant or appellant to lodge a formal complaint or appeal using the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Form, where required.

The RTO & Training Lead is responsible for:

- maintaining the RTO Complaints and Appeals Register,

- ensuring that complaints and appeals are managed in a transparent manner in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness,
- offering independent review of decisions, where required,
- determining independent internal or external third parties to review complaint and appeal processes,
- ensuring that complaints and appeals outcomes are used to inform continuous improvement strategies.

4 Training

AMS applies a “just cause” approach to all investigations. The investigation panel referenced in this policy shall comprise of staff trained in the Incident Cause Analysis Method (ICAM™).

5 Records Management

Records of all complaints and their outcomes are maintained securely. Records of complaints include:

- How the complaint or appeal was dealt with,
- The outcome of the complaint or appeal,
- The timeframes for resolution of the complaint or appeal,
- The potential causes of the complaint or appeal, and
- The steps taken to resolve the complaint or appeal.

6 Monitoring and Improvement

All complaints practices are monitored by the RTO & Training Lead and will be discussed at Training Meetings regarding Opportunity for Improvement and processed in accordance with the AMS Continuous Improvement Policy.

7 Access & Equity

The AMS Access & Equity Policy applies to this policy.