



Complaints & Appeals Policy

v2.2

Students & Clients

Australian Testing Services Pty Ltd
Registered Training Organisation 21642

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline ATS's approach to managing dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of students, clients, staff and other members of the community. It provides a transparent approach for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

This policy and procedure ensures compliance with Standard 6 of the Standards.

Definitions

Appeal means a request for a decision made by ATS to be reviewed.

Complaint means a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by ATS.

Services means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support.

Standards means the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 from the VET Quality Framework.

Policy

1. ATS responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - The RTO.
 - Trainers and assessors.
 - Any third-party providing Services on behalf of ATS.
 - Any student or client of ATS.
 - An ATS employee.
2. Complaints may be made in relation to any of ATS's services and activities such as:
 - The application and enrolment process.
 - Marketing information.
 - The quality of training and assessment provided.
 - Training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements.
 - The way someone has been treated by a Trainer, ATS employee or another student.
 - The actions of another student.
3. Appeals may be made to request that a decision made by ATS is reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
 - Course admissions.
 - Refund assessments.
 - Response to a complaint.
 - Assessment outcomes / results.
 - Other general decisions made by ATS.
4. ATS is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice.

5. Through this policy and procedure, ATS ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
 - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - Are able to be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
 - Are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.
6. ATS acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter. Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by ATS.
7. An independent party will be recommended by ATS and a cost to deal with the matter will be discussed and offered, however complainants and appellants are able to use their own external party at their own cost.
8. Students are encouraged initially and wherever possible; to resolve concerns or issues in an informal manner directly with the person(s) concerned. Trainers and assessors are available to assist students with resolving issues at this level if required. Where an issue relates to a trainer or assessor then the complaint can be brought to the attention of an ATS member of staff.
9. Formal complaints and appeals should be made in writing using the Complaints and Appeals Form, or other letter and sent to ATS's head office at 1 Westgate Drive, Laverton North VIC 3026 attention of the Accounts/Office Manager.

Complaints must be made within 14 calendar days of an incident.

Appeals must be made within 7 calendar days of the original assessment decision or response to a complaint.

When making a complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant should provide as much information as possible to enable ATS to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:

- The issue the complaint is about or the decision that is being appealed – describing what happened and how it affected the complainant.
 - Any evidence the complainant has to support your complaint or appeal.
 - Details of any steps that have already taken to resolve the issue.
 - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
10. Some or all members of the management team of ATS will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
 11. Where a student chooses to adopt this policy and procedure, ATS will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.
 12. All formal complaints and appeals will be investigated and responded to efficiently by the CEO or their delegate to ensure an effective resolution within 60 days, and a proposed resolution will be provided in writing. In matters where additional time is needed, the complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time as the matter is resolved.
 13. ATS will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*.

14. All potential causes of complaints and appeals will be identified and investigated by ATS during any complaints and appeals process. Appropriate corrective action will be determined and implemented to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.
15. Any documentation relating to the investigation of a complaint or appeal will be retained in a secure cabinet in the Archive Store and access will be restricted to persons authorized by the CEO.
16. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.