

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



1. SCOPE

In accordance with the revised **National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 (Standards) [2.7 & 2.8]**, this policy encompasses the systems that ensure that feedback and complaints management processes address concerns and inform continuous improvement strategies while maintaining an effective appeals procedure that is available where decisions of the RTO, or a third party adversely impacts on a person across Tactical Training (Australia) Pty Ltd (TTA) scope of registration and within the training and assessment industry.

2. AUDIENCE AND APPLICABILITY

This *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* is applicable to all persons employed or contracted by TTA, all divisions and facilities of TTA, and all students enrolled with or formerly enrolled with TTA.

The policy sets out the commitment of TTA to ensure all persons have access to a fair, equitable, and documented process for dealing with complaints and appeals efficiently and effectively.

3. PURPOSE

This policy ensures that the TTA management systems remain effective and efficient in their operation and are compliant with the *Standards* particularly:

Standard 2.7

Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation.

An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:

- 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.*

Standard 2.8

Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student.

An NVR registered training organisation demonstrates:

- 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.*

The purpose of an effective feedback and complaints management system is to enhance the overall quality of the VET sector and to strengthen stakeholder engagement, confidence, and trust in TTA.

This policy and procedure document assists TTA to identify and rectify any systemic issues found and to ensure that TTA is continuously improving practices to meet the outcomes described in the Standards and to better meet student, staff, and other person's needs.

TTA recognises that decisions made can have significant impact on students and staff and is committed to a fair and equitable appeals process.

4. DEFINITIONS

The **Definitions** section of the **Standards** defines certain words and expressions which have specific meaning in the **Standards**. TTA and all staff will defer to the definitions as published in the **Standards** where relevant.

Words and expressions that remain undefined in the **Standards** take on dictionary meaning under the direction of the *Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)*, or where specification is required, TTA's acceptance of the defined word as it relates to the RTO.

For this policy document, TTA has identified the necessity to define the following expressions:

Complaint means a statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. [Oxford Languages]

Complaints arise when a person is not satisfied and requests action to be taken to resolve the matter. These matters can include unfair or unjust treatment in the assessment process, unjust disciplinary measures, sexual harassment, or any failure to adhere to the principles of equality of opportunity in education or employment. It does not matter whether a person suffers an injustice or only thinks so. Goodwill is damaged either way unless there is a chance to air the complaint and seek mutually acceptable resolution and outcomes. [TTA]

Appeal means an application (as to a recognized authority) for corroboration, vindication, or decision. [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Appeals arise when a student is not satisfied with an assessment decision or result that has been made. Appeals can relate to assessment decisions, but they can also relate to other decisions, such as a decision to exclude a student from a program, or where a person is dissatisfied with a decision related to complaints that are not assessment outcomes related. [TTA]

Compliance Standards means the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025*.

Person means a student, prospective student, staff member, client, customer, and employer. [TTA]

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.

5. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Feedback and Complaints Management

5.1 Fostering a receptive, blame-free culture that is open to feedback and improvement.

TTA collects feedback from all cohorts as part of our continuous improvement strategies. This feedback is entered into our recording systems. Trainers and Assessors also review the written feedback following their training sessions and bring any concerns raised in person to the management team.

TTA is devoted to improving the quality of our training products and services and actively seeks feedback for improvement purposes.

TTA staff are encouraged to speak freely and openly about concerns in team meetings which is acknowledged as a safe space, and the TTA management team have an open-door policy to discuss and resolve issues raised.

5.2 Ensuring there is no detriment to people who complain.

Every effort is made to resolve complaints as part of our strategic direction for service delivery as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). TTA is committed to the provision of an equitable, reliable, efficient, safe and healthy learning and workplace environment, this includes ensuring that any person raising a complaint is not ill-treated or discriminated against in any way. We do this by establishing privacy protections and ensuring that all involved in the investigation process are unbiased and neutral.

5.3 Making it easy and accessible for people to provide feedback and make complaints.

To achieve our vision and to provide a fair and unbiased training environment, employees and students may bring any complaint or appeal concerning any aspect of the delivery and assessment of their course, or any dissatisfaction with the services provided or rights and obligations as detailed in the terms and conditions of their enrolment.

TTA advise prospective students at their pre-enrolment interview about the complaints and appeals process and direct them to where they can find more information.

Written feedback is collected from all cohorts following training. Any concerns prior to this collection of feedback, is asked to be directed in person to a Trainer and Assessor or a customer care member, or via email to privacy@tacticaltraining.edu.au

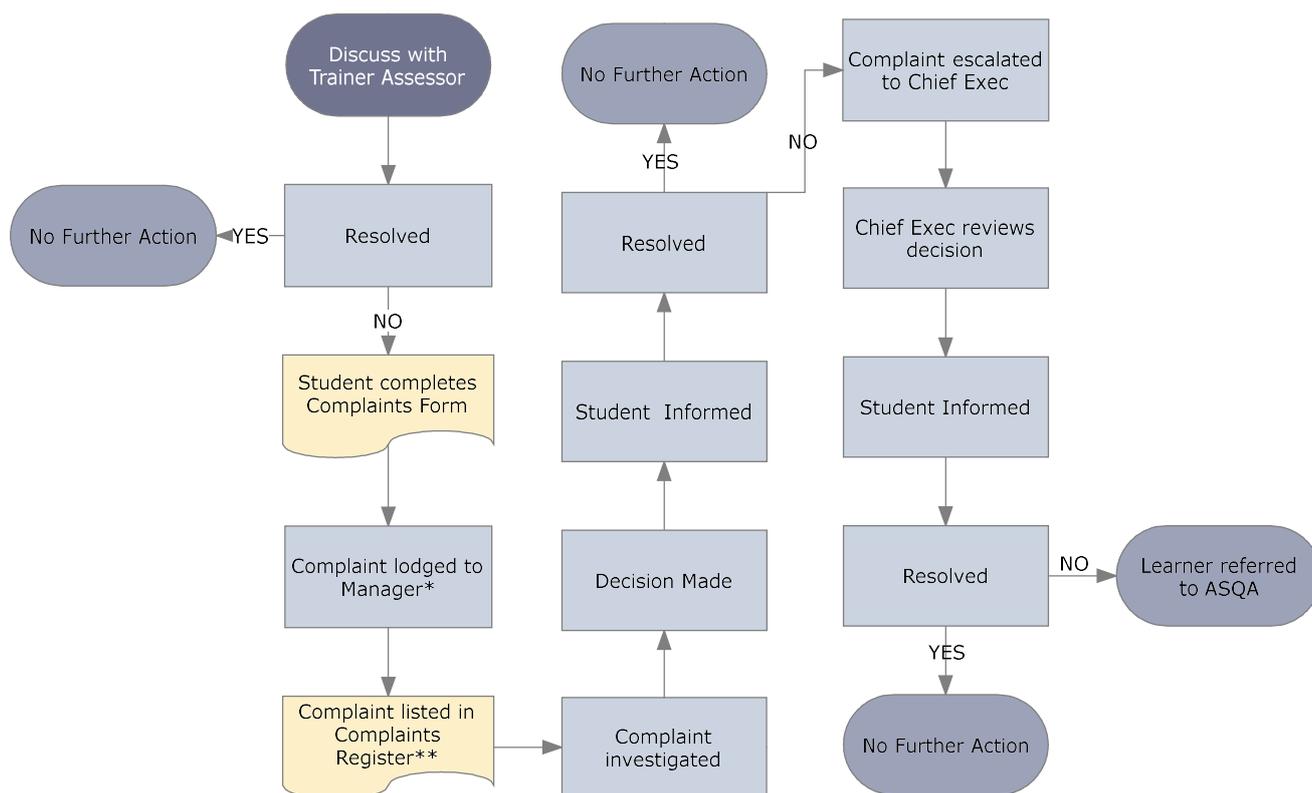
As per the Employee Handbook, employees are encouraged to raise any issues or concerns with a manager of their choice if it is not appropriate to raise with the person at the centre of the complaint.

5.4 Providing transparency regarding how complaints and feedback are handled and what complainants can expect.

Aggrieved persons shall be informed of the appropriate steps in the complaints and appeals process, and where a mutually acceptable outcome or resolution through an appropriate consultative process cannot be reached, our organisation shall direct the client to the appropriate legal entity where they can seek further assistance.

TTA's Complaints and Appeals Policy is readily available and accessible on the TTA website, reference in our student information booklet, and our Employee Handbook, and an overview of the process is discussed during our pre-enrolment interviews.

COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOWCHART



A person who feels aggrieved in relation to educational studies undertaken or services provided by TTA and seeks information on the appropriate steps to follow should firstly:

- Raise matters of concern with their immediate Trainer and Assessor and seek resolution through a consultative process aimed at meeting a mutually acceptable outcome before a formal written complaint is raised.
- All matters raised shall be recorded in the VETtrak Student Management System. Evidence of interactions are retained in the **L:\Complaints** folder. This will serve as a record should the complaint progress to a formal written complaint.
- All Trainers and Assessors will exercise their delegations and seek to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. If a complaint cannot be handled within their delegated authority, they will immediately refer the issue with an appropriate recommendation to the next or appropriate management level for consideration and final decision.
- Where a matter cannot be resolved informally through initial discussion and all attempts to resolve the issue have failed at the discussion level, the student shall be requested to provide details about their complaint in a written format, which may include the student:
 - Completing a copy of the Complaints Form (provided upon request)
 - Submitting a letter in writing or via email to privacy@tacticaltraining.edu.au

- Formal complaints will be actioned by a member of the management team at TTA, and they shall be responsible for:
 - Recording the complaint or appeal in the Complaints Register.
 - Investigating the complaint or appeal.
 - Provide a response to the complainant, detailing the actions that shall be taken or other decisions made in relation to the complaint.
 - Recording the outcome of the complaint in the Complaints Register.
- The manager responsible for actioning the complaint is required to make every effort to facilitate a mutually agreeable outcome.
- Where it is necessary to do so, unresolved complaints may be escalated to the attention of the CEO.
- Where the student is still not satisfied with the decision of the RTO they will be referred to the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) where complaints can be submitted by completing an online form at:

Website: <https://asqaportal.asqa.gov.au/Make-a-Report/>

Telephone: **1300 701 801**

An avenue for complaints procedures has been developed for this purpose.

For workplace complaints, employees are informed that upon receipt of a formal complaint TTA will take action to separate them from the alleged bully or harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite them to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. They have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by their confidential helper or another work colleague of their choice and they must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation are expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

5.5 Addressing complaints within a reasonable timeframe.

TTA will address all complaints received promptly. It is the intention of TTA that all complaints will be resolved within 60 days of receipt or sooner. Where timeframes are not being met (because the complaint is taking longer to resolve than anticipated) TTA will maintain regular contact with the complainant including to explain any delays.

On conclusion of a workplace investigation which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting, a report of the findings and of the investigator's decision will be sent, in writing, to them and to the alleged bully or harasser.

5.6 Ensuring procedural fairness.

It is the policy of TTA to ensure:

- the complaint is handled by an unbiased person.
- processes for assessing and resolving the complaint are clear and accessible to all parties.
- both the complainant and the subject of the complaint are given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information.
- similar complaints are treated in a consistent manner to ensure fairness and reliability in the resolution process.
- the privacy of complainants and the confidentiality of information included in a complaint.

Appeals Management

In the event a student objects to actions taken or decisions made by TTA Trainers and Assessors in conducting assessment services, they have the right to lodge an appeal. They also have the right to lodge an appeal against competency decisions made if:

- they believe that the outcome is invalid.
- they feel that the process was invalid, inappropriate or unfair.

5.7 Ensuring those affected by the decision are aware of the Appeals Management process.

- The student has the right to a review process against assessment decisions where it is in the belief of the student that competency has been achieved but not awarded.
- After receiving notification of an unsuccessful outcome from an assessment a student may submit, in writing, a request for an appeal/review of the assessment. This request must be made within 20 business days of receiving notification of an unsuccessful outcomes.
- The student has a right to a fair assessment and to be treated as an active partner in the assessment process.
- Students may have a support person present throughout the appeal/review.
- The student has the right to see the written records of the assessment (under the terms set out in Section 6 of this policy document).
- The student may access personal records relating to competency assessment at any time within 6 months of the competency decision by making a request through the Trainer and

Assessor. If records are being held offsite in secure storage, a period of up to 10 business days must be allowed for retrieval of the student file.

- Assessment records are not a matter of public record and are to remain strictly confidential between the student and authorised personnel.

5.8 Providing transparency regarding how appeals will be managed and what appellants can expect.

Assessment Appeals System

Before making a formal appeal, students are to discuss the matter with their original Trainer and Assessor to reach an agreement. The Trainer and Assessor will undertake a review of the original assessment decision.

The Trainer and Assessor will identify, examine and judge evidence of competence contributing to the final assessment decision.

- If the student is unsatisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the Trainer and Assessor, the student will be requested to provide details about their appeal of assessment in a written format, which may include the student:
 - Completing a copy of the Assessment Appeal Form (provided upon request).
 - Submitting a letter in writing or via email to privacy@tacticaltraining.edu.au
- Formal appeals will be actioned by a member of the management team at TTA. Upon receiving a formal appeal application, TTA will attempt to resolve the issue by:
 - Upholding the appeal.
 - Rejecting the appeal.
 - Recommending further evidence gathering by either party.
- If the client is dissatisfied with the final assessment decision, the client may request a review application by the CEO. In response to the review application, the CEO may:
 - Interview any of the people involved (e.g., the student and the Trainer and Assessor).
 - Request another assessor to review the process.
 - Schedule another assessment.
 - Uphold or dismiss the application at any stage.
- If it has been determined that the student has achieved competency, the client's assessment records will be upgraded and placed in the student's file

- Where it is deemed a student is not yet competent; and this is the final decision as part of the review application; the student may then consult with the ASQA, to have the matter considered for further action if required.

5.9 Ensuring appeals are considered within a reasonable timeframe.

TTA will address all appeal requests promptly. It is the intention of TTA that all appeals will be resolved within 60 days of receipt or sooner. To prevent prolonged uncertainty and stress for the student, timely resolution is crucial for maintaining trust and confidence in TTAs assessment processes.

5.10 Ensuring procedural fairness.

It is the policy of TTA to ensure:

- the appeal is heard by an unbiased person that was not involved in the making of the original decision.
- the appellant is given an opportunity to be heard and to provide relevant information.
- protection of the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved. Sensitive handling of information ensures that students feel safe and supported when lodging an appeal.

If the person making the appeal is not satisfied with the outcome, TTA will arrange for the person to seek review by an independent third party at no or low cost to the appellant. This forms part of the appeals management system, and the details of this avenue will be communicated to appellants.

The Key actions and intent of this policy is to:

- Continue to develop, implement, and review a fair, efficient, and effective complaints and appeals procedure in accordance with the **Standards**.
- Ensure that TTA staff members and students are informed of and follow the procedures in place to resolve or mitigate issues as they arise.
- Take corrective action to deal with the identified causes of complaints to avoid future reoccurrences of the same issues.
- Monitor and improve the system where required.

6. RECORD KEEPING AND ACCESS

TTA shall maintain a record of all complaints and appeals in the **Complaints Register**.

All associated documentation shall be archived in student files for the minimum period as defined in the **Compliance Standards**.

Copies of associated documentation may be retained by TTA with the Complaints Register for an irresolute period at the discretion of TTA.

Requests for access to assessment records are to be submitted in writing to TTA. All personal records contained in student files are protected under the provisions of the TTA's Privacy Policy and Procedure, in accordance with the **Privacy Act 1988**, including the **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)** as outlined in the **Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012**.

Access to the original or file copy documents will be granted under the following circumstances only:

- The person requesting access and viewing the records is the person to whom the file relates.
- Access will be provided under the strict supervision of a designated TTA staff member.
- Original of copies of records held by TTA are not to be removed, taken, retained, damaged in any way or destroyed by persons accessing the record, and
- In accordance with **Outcome Standards** and **Compliance Standards**.

7. POLICY PROMOTION

Access to this Policy is provided:

- To staff members, including Trainers and Assessors, via the Public Drive on the Server.
- To students in hard copy format, upon request to the TTA Customer Care team.
- To students and other clients of TTA through publication in Terms & Conditions on www.tacticaltraining.edu.au/information/terms-and-conditions

Terms of this policy are promoted in student information, including the Student Handbook and verbally throughout student's pre-enrolment interview.

8. REVIEW OF POLICY

TTA will review the *Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure* every 12 months or on an as needs basis (whichever occurs first).

Printed and electronic versions of this document are uncontrolled. The controlled copy is held at the office of Tactical Training (Australia) Pty Ltd by the Compliance Manager.

9. ENDORSEMENT

Prepared by: Compliance Manager

Approved by: Chief Executive Officer

Date of effect: 01 July 2025

Next review date: July 2026

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ASSESSMENT APPEAL INFORMATION

Tactical Training (Australia) Pty Ltd (TTA) provides students with a formal appeals process, which draws on a commitment to all parties understanding their rights and responsibilities in the assessment process.

If you object to actions taken or decisions made by TTA Trainers and Assessors in conducting assessment services, you have the right to lodge an appeal.

You also have the right to lodge an appeal against competency decisions made if:

- You believe that the outcome is invalid; or
- You feel that the process was invalid, inappropriate or unfair.

Request for appeal/review of the assessment must be made within 20 business days of receiving notification of an unsuccessful outcome. All stages of the appeals process will be documented by TTA in an Assessment Appeals Report and this shall be provided to the parties involved on request.

Step 1

Before making a formal appeal, discuss the matter with the original Trainer and Assessor to reach an agreement.

Step 2

If you are still unhappy, you may then lodge a formal appeal by providing details about the appeal in a written format, which may include:

- Completing a copy of the Assessment Appeal Form (provided upon request)
- Submitting a letter in writing or via email to privacy@tacticaltraining.edu.au

Step 3

Formal appeals will be actioned by a member of the management team at TTA. Upon receiving a formal appeal, TTA will try to resolve the issue by discussing the appeal and assessment process with the Trainer and Assessor responsible for the assessment decision. A third party may also be invited to review the matter and provide independent advice or recommendations. On completion of investigating the facts and reviewing all avenues for resolution, a decision shall be made to

- Uphold the appeal
- Reject the appeal
- Recommend further evidence gathering by either party, or
- Complete further assessment by another workplace assessor shall be determined.

Step 4

If you are still unhappy with the outcome of the appeal you will be advised to contact the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority:

Telephone: **1300 701 801**

Email: enquiries@asqa.gov.au

Website: <http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-a-complaint---domestic-students/make-a-complaint---domestic-students1.html>

ASSESSMENT APPEAL FORM

Applicant name:

Address:

Telephone numbers:

Course Name:

Please identify in the table below the units of competency that are the subject of your appeal:

National Code(s)	Title(s)	Date Assessed

Trainer and Assessor's name:

Witness name:

Please detail the grounds for your appeal in the space provided below and ensure that you describe the alleged faults in the assessment process:

Details of grounds for appeal:

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date received: _____ Received by: _____

Appeal review date: _____ Decision: **UPHELD** **REJECTED**

SUBMIT TO: Tactical Training (Australia) Pty Ltd, Unit 3 / 190 Glynburn Road, Tranmere SA 5073
Ph: (08) 8331 1620 **Email:** privacy@tacticaltraining.edu.au

(Attach additional pages if extra space required for writing)