## IAP COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

Purpose

This Complaints and Appeals Policy and related procedure are designed to ensure that The Institute of Applied Psychology responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction. This policy outlines IAP’s approach to managing complaints and appeals and ensures that all clients, students, staff and other stakeholders are aware of the steps to take to have their dissatisfaction addressed appropriately.

This policy provides an avenue for all complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

This policy adheres to natural justice and procedural fairness requirements.

Definitions

Complaint – a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any service provided by IAP.

Appeal – a request to review a decision that has previously been made.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, prospective students, clients, staff and other stakeholders of IAP.

Policy

1. Complaints and appeals systems
   1. Despite all efforts of IAP to provide satisfactory services to its students, clients, and other persons, complaints and appeals may occasionally arise requiring formal resolution.
   2. IAP is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints and appeals system which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge. IAP aims to:

* Develop a culture that views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works;
* Set in place a complaints and appeals handling system that is client focused and helps IAP to prevent events that cause complaints and appeals from recurring;
* Ensure that any complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality;
* Ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a complaint or appeal is not discriminated against nor victimized;
* Ensure that there is a consistent response to complaints and appeals.
  1. Students and clients are encouraged, wherever possible, to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) concerned to deal with the issue before it becomes a formal complaint. IAP’s trainers and administration team are available to assist students to resolve their issues at this level.
  2. Complaints and appeals may be made be in relation to any of IAP’s services, activities and decisions such as:
* The application and enrolment process
* The quality of training and assessment provided
* Training and assessment matters, including student progress, assessment and outcomes
* Access to personal records
* Decisions made by IAP
* The way someone has been treated.
  1. All formal complaints and appeals and their outcomes will be processed by the RTO Manager. In addition, the RTO Manager will be regularly review and discuss with staff as an opportunity for improvement and reflection.
  2. All formal complaints and appeals will be responded to efficiently to ensure an effective resolution within a reasonable timeframe, usually twenty (20) days or as soon as practicable. However in some cases, particularly if the matter is complex, the resolution may take longer.
  3. Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, IAP will maintain the student’s enrolment while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.
  4. There is no cost to access the complaints and appeals process with IAP.
  5. A written record of all complaints and appeals handled under this policy and procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for a period of at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the complaint or appeal appropriate access to these records.

1. All records relating to complaints and appeals will be treated as confidential and will be covered by IAP’s Information Privacy Policy.
2. IAP will ensure that the process adheres to natural justice and procedural fairness at all times.
3. Making a complaint
   1. Formal complaints and appeals may be made in writing to the RTO Manager. All parties are encouraged to approach matters with an open view and to attempt to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation.
   2. The RTO Manager or their delegate will investigate complaints and a proposed resolution provided in writing within twenty working (20) days.
4. Making an appeal of an assessment decision
   1. A request for an appeal of an assessment decision may be made in writing to the RTO Manager Manager/other providing reasons why the assessment appeal is being made. Assessment appeals must be made within sixty (60) days of the original assessment decision being made.
   2. In the case of an assessment appeal, an internal review of the assessment will occur. As part of this process, where deemed necessary, IAP may appoint an independent, qualified assessor to review and make a decision on the assessment.
   3. Outcomes of an assessment appeal will be advised in writing within twenty working (20) days.
5. Internal appeal
   1. Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the result or conduct of IAP’s internal procedures for handling of a complaint, the student has the right to lodge an internal appeal of the decision. An appeal must be lodged within sixty (60) days of the decision being made.
   2. An internal appeal will prompt the Management Team to review the decision made in response to the original complaint. The complainant may be asked to provide further information by phone, in writing or in person.
   3. IAP acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to mediate where an appropriate outcome cannot be reached internally. Additionally, the complainant may request that an independent party be included in the appeals process. Upon request or the decision by IAP that this is required, IAP will organise an independent mediator to be included in the appeals process at its own cost.
   4. The outcome of the internal appeal will be advised in writing within twenty working (20) days.
6. External complaints and appeals
   1. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints and appeals process, the complainant can access an external complaints or appeals process at their own cost. Complainants must ensure they have accessed the internal processes first.
   2. Complainants have a number of external complaint or appeal options including:

* Consumer Affairs (NSW Fair Trading http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/)
* Administrative Appeals Tribunal (<http://www.aat.gov.au>)
* IAP’s registering body: ASQA
* Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). (<http://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint.html>)

Note: ASQA can only deal with complaints about:

* the information provided by an RTO about its course/s
* the delivery and assessment of training received
* the qualifications issued or to be issued.

5.3. IAP will provide complete cooperation with the organisation investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process. The RTO Manager will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of being notified of the recommendations.

1. Non-limitation of policy

This policy and related procedure do not replace or modify those or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and related procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia’s Consumer Protection laws. Also, this policy does not circumscribe an individual’s rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Related policies

* Quality Assurance Policy
* Information Privacy Policy

Related procedures and documents

* Quality Assurance Procedures

Document details

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