

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

INITIAL DATE:	16/11/2022
APPROVAL AUTHORITY:	Chief Executive Officer
DATE FOR REVIEW:	This policy is due for review two years from its date of last review or earlier if required by legislative or regulatory changes.
Version:	1.0

PURPOSE

IPWEA is committed to fair and ethical practice. As such all attempts will be made to ensure that complaints and appeals are dealt with quickly and fairly. All participants, staff, and clients of IPWEA are encouraged to first approach either their trainer or the Professional Development Manager to explore whether or not an informal resolution can be arrived at.

This policy is for all existing, previous, and prospective participants and/or corporate clients either participating in any course delivered by IPWEA or securing training for their staff. IPWEA as an organisation is committed to a continual cycle of improvement and as part of this commitment has processes in place to ensure that complaints and appeals should they arise be addressed in a timely manner and be considered when reviewing organisational improvements.

POLICY

This policy and procedure are to ensure that all current and prospective participants are enabled to make an informed choice by providing clear and factual information and honouring all commitments we make.

PROCEDURE

These procedures are designed to ensure a transparent process for complaints to be dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly.

Principles

The resolution of participants' complaints is based on the following principles:

- that the procedures used to review and resolve complaints or appeals are fair and must be seen to be fair,
- confidentiality will be respected for all parties unless the use of the information is authorised by law,
- that staff involved in resolving complaints or appeals will act fairly at all times and ensure that conclusions will be based on a fair hearing of each point of view,
- there will be no reprisals or any disadvantage arising as a result of a participant making a complaint in good faith,

- that complaints or appeals are handled in a timely manner with achievable deadlines specified for each stage in the resolution process,
- all stakeholders to the complaint including trainers and other relevant participants will be regularly informed of the progress of the complaint, and
- where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome proposed by the decision-maker, the participant is entitled to seek a review, either on procedural or substantive grounds, from a higher internal body or an appropriate external agency.

Stage 1 – Informal Complaint

When a participant has a complaint, they should first discuss the matter with the person concerned. A participant who believes that their complaint has not been adequately addressed through this informal process should contact the Professional Development Manager who will aim to resolve the issue. If a resolution is not found the Professional Development Manager will assist the participant to make a formal complaint.

IPWEA endeavours that in most cases the discussion of the concern or complaint with the relevant person will result in a prompt resolution of the matter which both parties will find acceptable.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the participant decides to lodge a formal complaint, they must do so in writing to the Professional Development Manager.

Once a complaint is received in writing the following will occur:

- a) Acknowledgement of receipt of the written complaint will be sent in writing within five (5) working days from its receipt and indicate when a resolution of the matter can be expected.
- b) If the Professional Development Manager has or perceives there to be a conflict of interest in their handling of the complaint they will refer the matter for investigation to another staff member, the participant is to be notified of the referral of the complaint to another staff member.
- c) The Professional Development Manager will independently review the complaint and attempt to find a resolution to the problem. IPWEA will act upon the subject of any complaint found to be substantiated.
- d) If the complaint is found to be frivolous or vexatious or no grounds or evidence can be found for it, those investigating the matter will not offer any resolution of the grievance.
- e) Those investigating the complaints must keep formal written records of the actions taken and notify the participant in writing of the outcome of the complaints process within fourteen (14) working days and document the reasons that resolution was or was not achieved.

Stage 3 – Appeals of Complaint Outcome

If, after Stage 2 of the process, the participant does not believe that the complaint has been adequately resolved, then he or she may appeal to the Chief Executive Officer who will attempt to resolve the complaint within five (5) working days.

If the participant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint they can contact:

- An independent mediation service
- The Department of Fair Trading

- Australian Skills and Quality Authority
- The Australian Consumer and Complaints Commission, or
- Australian Human Rights Commission

Withdrawal of Grievances or Appeals

A participant may withdraw a grievance or appeal at any time during the grievance resolution process and in this case the matter will be concluded and deemed to be resolved. If the original grievance or appeal was made in writing then the withdrawal must also be in writing to the staff member who is handling the matter at the time the withdrawal is being affected.

Appeals of an Assessment Decision

A participant may appeal an assessment decision if they feel the result is not correct or the process was not fair and valid. This appeal may relate to the assessment task, the assessment decision, the assessment environment and/or the actions of the assessor.

Stage 1 - When a participant wishes to lodge an assessment appeal, he or she should first discuss the matter with the assessor. A participant who believes that his or her complaint has not been adequately addressed through this informal process should contact the Professional Development Manager who will aim to resolve the issue. If a resolution is not found the Professional Development Manager will assist the participant to make a lodge a formal assessment appeal.

Stage 2 - If the participant decides to lodge a formal assessment appeal, they must do so in writing to the Professional Development Manager.

Where an appeal related to process, environment or assessor behaviour the matter will be investigated and a resolution sought within fourteen (14) working days.

In cases where the assessment decision is appealed another assessor will be allocated to remark the work. If the participant is still not satisfied with the assessment outcome an independent assessor will remark the work.

Stage 3 - If the participant is still not satisfied with the assessment decision, he or she can take the matter to Australian Skills and Quality Authority (ASQA) <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints>

Revision Date	Version	Summary of changes	Staff name