

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

Purpose

This policy describes the commitment of Skillinvest Limited (Skillinvest) to ensure an effective and confidential process for addressing and resolving student complaints and appeals.

Scope

This policy applies to all students of Skillinvest.

Responsible Parties

The Training Managers of Skillinvest and the Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, are responsible for the control and implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Appeal is a request for a review of the determination of a complaint.

Appeal against an assessment decision is a request for a review of an assessment result.

Complaint refers to dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by Skillinvest in relation to all training and assessment activities and processes.

Policy

1. General

Skillinvest understands that a situation may arise when a student wishes to lodge a complaint in relation to training and assessment services provided by Skillinvest, or to appeal against a decision (including assessment decisions).

1.1. Complaints

A complaint may arise in relation to:

- the conduct of a Skillinvest staff member or student
- student selection and enrolment process
- training delivery
- assessment
- issuance of results
- student services and amenities
- equal opportunity, including bullying, victimisation, harassment or discrimination
- the conduct of a third party providing services on behalf of Skillinvest

1.2. Appeals

An appeal may be lodged against a decision reached in the hearing of a complaint or against an assessment result.

2. Communication of Complaints and Appeals Process

Skillinvest will ensure that all students are made aware of, and have access to, the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

3. Management of Complaints and Appeals

Skillinvest will manage and respond to all complaints and appeals (including those against assessment decisions) in a professional and confidential manner and will ensure a fair, equitable and efficient investigation in its efforts to achieve a satisfactory result for all parties.

Skillinvest is committed to resolving the complaint and/or appeal in a timely manner. Skillinvest will ensure complaints and appeals are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.

Skillinvest will establish complaint and appeals committees to investigate and decide upon appropriate outcomes. Where Skillinvest is unable to resolve the complaint or appeal, the matter may be referred to an external mediator.

3.1. Complaints Register

Skillinvest will maintain a confidential register of all complaints and appeals.

4. Outcomes Review

The outcomes of complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager or Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, as required as part of the continuous improvement process.

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Purpose

This procedure describes the processes by which Skillinvest Limited (Skillinvest) will manage and respond to student complaints and appeals in an effective and confidential manner.

Scope

This procedure applies to all students of Skillinvest.

Responsible Parties

The Training Managers of Skillinvest and the Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, are responsible for the control and implementation of this procedure.

Definitions

Appeal is a request for a review of the determination of a complaint.

Appeal against an assessment decision is a request for a review of an assessment result.

Complaint refers to dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by Skillinvest in relation to all training and assessment activities and processes.

Procedure

1. General

A complaint, appeal against the outcome of a complaint or appeal against an assessment decision may be lodged by a student.

2. Communication of Complaints and Appeals Process

Upon enrolment, Skillinvest will ensure that all students are made aware of the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure via the issuance of the Student Handbook. Both prospective and continuing students will also have access to the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure via the Skillinvest website.

3. Complaints and Appeals

3.1. Complaints

Before lodging a complaint, the student is encouraged to try and settle any complaint directly with the person(s) concerned.

However, if talking directly to the person concerned does not assist the student or if such communication is not possible, then the student is to lodge a formal complaint. This must be done in writing to the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager or the Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
 - Skillinvest Regional, PO Box 930, Horsham 3402
 - Longerenong College, 229 Longerenong Road, Longerenong 3401
- By facsimile marked 'Confidential' to:
 - (03) 9792 5634 (Metro)
 - (03) 5381 1942 (Regional)
 - (03) 5362 2213 (Longerenong College)
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au

Within five (5) working days the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager or Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, will contact the student to acknowledge receipt of the student's complaint. The Training Manager or General Manager of Longerenong College will conduct a formal investigation in relation to the complaint.

The investigation will offer the complainant the right to be heard and may include interviews with other relevant persons and a review of documentation. The subject of the complaint will not be involved in the investigation process.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

3.2. Appeals

Should the student be unsatisfied with the complaint process, or the complaint remains unresolved, the student has the right to appeal.

Appeals must be lodged within seven (7) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the complaint. This application must set out the grounds of appeal, including any supporting evidence. Students must put appeals in writing and forward to the relevant Skillinvest General Manager or the General Manager of Longerenong College for resolution, in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
 - Skillinvest Regional, PO Box 930 Horsham 3400
 - Longerenong College, 229 Longerenong Road, Longerenong 3401
- By facsimile marked 'Confidential' to:
 - (03) 9792 5634 (Metro)
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 - (03) 5362 2213 (Longerenong College)
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au

Within (7) working days the General Manager will contact the student to acknowledge receipt of the written appeal.

An appeals committee will be formed, which will comprise at least three of the following people:

- a Trainer/Teacher with the expertise in the area concerned
- a student enrolled in the area concerned
- the General Manager
- a representative of the student's employer
- a representative of students enrolled with Skillinvest
- a representative of Trainers/Teachers at Skillinvest
- the Team Leader

If appropriate, additional participants may include:

- an advocate of a student with a disability
- an interpreter where required

The appeals committee will offer the appellant the right to be heard. The appeals committee will also conduct investigation of the matter including: reviewing any interviews/documents forming part of the initial complaint investigation; and any additional interviews and/or review of documents that the Committee sees fit. The subject of the appeal will not be involved in any investigation process prior to the appeals committee hearing.

Skillinvest will ensure all discussions, investigations and findings relating to the appeal are documented and the appellant/complainant provided with a written statement of the outcome, including reasons for the decision, within five (5) working days of the decision being made.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

3.3. Appeals against Assessment Decisions

The student has the right to appeal against an assessment decision made by Skillinvest. An appeal must be made in writing to the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager or the Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, in one of the following ways:

- By mail marked 'Confidential' to:
 - Skillinvest Metro, PO Box 234, Dandenong 3175
 - Skillinvest Regional, PO Box 930 Horsham 3400
 - Longerenong College, 229 Longerenong Road, Longerenong 3401
- By facsimile marked 'Confidential' to:
 - (03) 9792 5634 (Metro)
 - (03) 5381 1942 (Regional)
 - (03) 5362 2213 (Longerenong College)
- By email marked 'Confidential' to:
 - feedback@skillinvest.com.au

If the student lodges an appeal against an assessment decision, they may have the opportunity to be reassessed. An appeal against an assessment decision will initiate a formal hearing in which the student will have the right to be heard. The Skillinvest Training Manager or Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College will examine the relevant evidence and make a determination.

A decision will be made regarding the appeal against the assessment decision as soon as practicable. Once a decision has been reached, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome within (5) working days.

Should an outcome not be reached within sixty (60) days, the student will be provided with written reasons for the delay, and the expected timeframe for a decision. Skillinvest will keep the student up to date with progress.

3.4. External Mediation

Where a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved through discussion, conciliation or via the appeals committee, Skillinvest acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties. In this instance, Skillinvest will provide students with the details of external authorities that they may approach with respect to the issues if required.

Where all internal avenues have been exhausted and the matter remains unresolved, Skillinvest (in negotiation with the student) will seek the input of an external independent mediator. Skillinvest's mediator of choice will be from the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria, a part of the Victorian Department of Justice. Where the student chooses to seek support or advice from alternative sources, they will be required to meet any costs in doing so.

3.5. Complaints Register

A register of all Complaints and Appeals lodged is maintained confidentially by the relevant Skillinvest General Manager and the Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, and includes:

- Names of relevant parties
- The complaint being made / decision being appealed
- Outcome of the Complaint / Appeal (including reasons, in the case of an Appeal)
- The name and position of the person/s making the decision

4. Outcomes Review

The outcomes of complaints and appeals will be reviewed by the relevant Skillinvest Training Manager or Manager of Academic Programs, Longerenong College, as required as part of the continuous improvement process. Where relevant, recommended actions will be recorded and actioned via the continuous improvement register.