

Contents

Purpose	1
Definitions	1
Policy	2
For students:	4
Document Control	5

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline National First aid’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.

2 DEFINITIONS

ASQA means Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET regulator and the RTO’s registering body

Appeal means a request for a decision made by National First Aid to be reviewed

DET means Department of Education and Training

Complaint means a person’s formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by National First Aid.

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) 2018 from the VET Quality Framework

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Nature of complaints and appeals

- 3.1 In National First Aid responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
- i. The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - ii. Any third-party providing Services on behalf of National First Aid and including education agents.
 - iii. Any student or client of National First Aid.
- 3.2 Complaints may be made in relation to any of National First Aid's services and activities such as:
- i. the application and enrolment process
 - ii. marketing information
 - iii. the quality of training and assessment provided
 - iv. training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements
 - v. the way someone has been treated
 - vi. the actions of another student
- 3.3 An appeal is a request for a decision made by National First Aid to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:
- i. course admissions
 - ii. refund assessments
 - iii. response to a complaint
 - iv. assessment outcomes / results
 - v. other general decisions made by National First Aid

Principles of resolution

- 3.4 National First Aid is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, National First Aid ensures that complaints and appeals:
- i. Are responded to in a professional, consistent and transparent manner.
 - ii. Are responded to promptly, fairly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - iii. Can be made at no cost to the individual.
 - iv. 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.
- 3.5 National First Aid will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- 3.6 There are no charges for students to submit, a complaint or appeal to National First Aid, or to seek information or advice about doing so.
- 3.7 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.

Making a complaint of appeal

- 3.8 Complaints about an incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- 3.9 Complaints and appeals should be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or other written format and sent to National First Aid's head office attention to the Managing Director.
- 3.10 When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable National First Aid to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - i. The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - ii. Any evidence you must support your complaint or appeal.
 - iii. Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
 - iv. Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.

Timeframes for resolution

- 3.11 The complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing within 3 business days.
- 3.12 The complaints and appeals process will commence within 10 business days of receipt of the application. Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer.
- 3.13 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 that the matter is resolved.

Disclosure of information

- 3.14 Some or all members of the management team of National First Aid will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
- 3.15 Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- 3.16 Where a third-party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO is involved, they will also be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- 3.17 Each party involved in the complaint or appeal may have a support person of their choice present at meetings scheduled to resolve the issue.
- 3.18 In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task. The complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the outcome of the process and the reasons for the findings made.
- 3.19 The enrolment status of student will be handled as follows:
 - i. Choose to access this policy and procedure, National First Aid will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is ongoing.

Independent parties

- 3.20 National First Aid 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 National First Aid.
- 3.21 The independent party recommended by National First Aid is Resolution Institute through student mediation scheme paid by National First Aid as per <https://www.resolution.institute/membership-information/table-of-fees> weblink which updated time to time, however complainants and appellants are able to use their own external party at their own cost. Students will not incur costs in accessing the external appeals process under the student mediation scheme of resolution institute.
- 3.22 National First Aid will provide complete cooperation with the external mediator investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.
- 3.23 The Managing Director will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation, and any recommendations being actioned by National First Aid.

External complaint avenues

- 3.24 Complaints can also be made via the following avenues:

National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.

Email: ntch@education.gov.au

Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to National First Aid's registering body, Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). ASQA can investigate complaints about National First Aid in relation to:

- i. the quality of our training and assessment
- ii. our marketing and advertising practices

For students:

- i. ASQA may not be able to investigate complaint if you do not include evidence that you have already exhausted our formal internal complaints process as above.
- ii. If your complaint does not fall within ASQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you directly contact the agency responsible as listed on the relevant webpage below. Please refer to the relevant webpage below before making a complaint to ASQA:

Domestic students: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-domestic-students/before-you-make-complaint>

For other stakeholders: Information about the process and information you should provide is available here: <https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/make-complaint-other-stakeholders>

Records of complaints and appeals

- 3.25 National First Aid will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes and reasons for the outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the Privacy Policy and Procedures.

Publication

- 3.26 This policy and procedure will be published in the Student Handbook and on National First Aid's website.

4 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Document No. & Name:	SM3 Complaints & Appeals Policy
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