Complaints and Appeals Policy

Specialised Skills | RTO 46344 | Version 4.0

Purpose and scope

This policy explains how Specialised Skills takes in and deals with feedback, complaints and appeals. A complaint is when someone is unhappy with a service or with how they were treated. An appeal is when someone asks for a decision to be looked at again. This policy is for students, applicants, employers and anyone else who is affected by what Specialised Skills does. It also covers anyone who works for Specialised Skills as a third party.

Policy

1. Principles

1.1 Specialised Skills deals with complaints and appeals fairly, quickly and in confidence. It does not charge for them.

1.2 Everyone involved is treated fairly. Each person is told what the issue is, and they can have their say. The decision is made by someone who was not part of the matter, and who has no bias.

1.3 No one is treated badly because they made a complaint or an appeal. A student keeps going with their training and assessment while it is sorted out, unless this would not be safe.

1.4 The website and the Student Handbook tell people how to give feedback, complain or appeal. People can get help, for example to write a complaint, from an interpreter, or from a support person.

2. Feedback and complaints

2.1 A person can give feedback or complain about Specialised Skills, its owners or trainers, a third party or another student.

2.2 They can complain in person, by phone, by email or on the Complaints and Appeals Form. It helps to try to sort it out informally first, but they do not have to.

2.3 Within 48 hours, Specialised Skills tells the person in writing that it has their complaint. Within 7 business days after that, it gives them a decision in writing, with the reasons. If it needs more time, it tells them why and keeps them up to date.

2.4 The owner who is not involved deals with the complaint. If both owners are involved, or it cannot be dealt with fairly, the independent reviewer in section 4 deals with it.

2.5 If a third party working for Specialised Skills gets a complaint, it must pass it on.

3. Appeals

3.1 A student can appeal any decision that affects them badly. This includes decisions made by Specialised Skills, or by someone acting for it, such as:

a. assessment results
b. RPL and credit transfer outcomes
c. enrolment and refund decisions
d. misconduct decisions.

3.2 The student must appeal in writing within 7 business days after they are told about the decision. If they are late but have a good reason, the appeal may still be accepted.

3.3 Someone who was not part of the first decision looks at the appeal. For an assessment, this person must hold the unit. They may ask the student to be assessed again.

3.4 For high risk work licence units, an independent SafeWork NSW accredited assessor does any new assessment. Specialised Skills arranges this when it is needed, and follows the SafeWork NSW conditions.

3.5 Within 48 hours, Specialised Skills tells the student in writing that it has their appeal. The student gets the outcome and the reasons in writing within 7 business days after that.

4. Independent review and other options

4.1 If a person is not happy with the outcome of an appeal, they can ask for an independent review.

4.2 Specialised Skills chooses the independent reviewer when a review is needed. The reviewer comes from another RTO that is not a competitor. Both that RTO and the reviewer must:

a. be independent of Specialised Skills. They share no owners or managers with it. They have no close personal relationships or big business deals that could stop them being fair

b. have had no part in the matter. This includes giving advice on the first complaint, the decision or the work that is being challenged.

4.3 The reviewer must have experience in looking into complaints, weighing up evidence and giving everyone a fair hearing (procedural fairness). Being an RTO manager is not enough on its own. If the appeal is about an assessment, the reviewer must also hold the training and assessment credential and the unit. If it is about a licence assessment, an independent SafeWork NSW accredited assessor is arranged when needed.

4.4 Each review is set up in writing. This sets out:

a. what is being reviewed

b. the records and evidence the reviewer can see

c. how the person and Specialised Skills can each have their say

d. how long it will take

e. that the reviewer will give their findings in writing

f. how Specialised Skills will act on the findings.

4.5 The review is free for the student. Specialised Skills pays any cost.

4.6 Specialised Skills acts on what the independent reviewer finds.

4.7 If a complaint is not sorted out, people can also use free mediation through Community Justice Centres NSW. Or they can contact an outside organisation, such as the National Training Complaints Hotline, ASQA, NSW Fair Trading or SafeWork NSW. These are listed in the Student Handbook.

5. Records and improvement

5.1 The owners record each complaint and appeal in the Complaints and Appeals Register, with what was done and the outcome. They keep the records safe. They only share information with people who need it to sort out the matter, or when the law says they must.

5.2 The owners look at complaints, appeals and feedback at each monthly compliance check and yearly internal audit. They fix the causes and record this in the Continuous Improvement Register.

Policy information

Responsibilities: The owners approve and review this policy. Both owners receive and record complaints and appeals. The owner not involved, or an independent person, decides each matter.

Related documents: Complaints and Appeals Procedure; Complaints and Appeals Form; Complaints and Appeals Register; Student Handbook; Training and Assessment Policy; RPL and Credit Transfer Policy; Fee Administration and Refund Policy; Respect and Behaviour Policy; Privacy Policy; Continuous Improvement Policy.

Legislative and regulatory requirements: Standards for RTOs 2025 (Outcome Standards 2.7, 2.8 and 4.4); Privacy Act 1988; Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW); Australian Consumer Law; SafeWork NSW conditions for high risk work licence assessment.

Document control: Version 4.0, approved by Greg Cusack on 2 November 2026. Replaces version 3.0 (approved 26 October 2026). Changes: appeal time limit runs from when the student is told about the decision (3.2); appeals are acknowledged within 48 hours and the outcome follows within 7 business days, the same as complaints (3.5). Next review: 18 October 2027.