Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Document details	
Purpose	To set out the steps to make a complaint or appeal, and how Specialised Skills deals with it.
Applies to	Students, applicants, employers and anyone else who makes a complaint or appeal to Specialised Skills.

Roles: both owners do all **Owner** steps (taking in, recording and closing). The **Reviewer** is the owner who is not involved in the matter, or an independent person.

STUDENT Yellow rows are the steps the student (or other complainant) completes.

Step	Who	What to do	Record
A. Complaints			
1	**STUDENT**	Talk to the trainer, or contact Specialised Skills by phone, email or in person. Ask for help if you need it.	Notes or email
2	Owner	If it is simple, try to sort it out straight away, and record it.	Register
3	**STUDENT**	If it is not sorted out, send your complaint in writing, by email or on the form. Say what happened, who was involved and what you would like to happen.	Email or form
4	Owner	Within 48 hours, tell the person in writing that you have it. Record it in the register. Pass it to the Reviewer: the owner who is not involved. If both owners are involved, use an independent reviewer from another RTO (see step 12).	Acknowledgement; register
5	Reviewer	Look into it. Hear from the person who complained and anyone they complained about. Tell them the details and let them have their say. Check records and talk to witnesses. Keep it private.	Notes
6	Reviewer	Decide. Give the outcome in writing within 7 business days after the complaint was acknowledged. Include the reasons, what will be done, and that they can appeal the decision (part B). If it will take longer, say why and keep them up to date.	Outcome letter
B. Appeals			
7	**STUDENT**	Appeal in writing within 7 business days after you are told about the decision. Say which decision it is and why it should change. Send any evidence you have. If you are late, tell us why. The appeal may still be accepted.	Email or form
8	Owner	Within 48 hours, tell the student in writing that you have it. Record it in the register. Pass it to a Reviewer who was not part of the decision.	Acknowledgement; register

Step	Who	What to do	Record
9	Reviewer	Look at the decision and the evidence. • Assessment: a reviewer who holds the unit checks the evidence. They may ask for the student to be assessed again. • Licence units: an independent SafeWork NSW accredited assessor does any new assessment. Arrange this when it is needed.	Review notes
10	Reviewer	Give the outcome in writing within 7 business days after the appeal was acknowledged. If the student is right, change the decision and update the records, including Vettrak. If not, give the reasons and what they can do next. Say they can ask for an independent review.	Outcome letter; Vettrak
C. Independent review and closing			
11	**STUDENT**	If you are not happy, ask for an independent review. It is free. You can also contact one of the organisations listed below.	Email
12	Owner	Set up the independent review. The student does not pay. • Choose a reviewer from another RTO that is not a competitor. Check that the RTO and the reviewer are independent. This means no shared owners or managers, no close personal relationships and no big business deals with Specialised Skills. Check they had no part in the matter. • Check the reviewer has experience in looking into complaints, weighing up evidence and giving everyone a fair hearing. If it is about an assessment, check they hold the training and assessment credential and the unit. • Agree in writing what they will review, what evidence they can see and how both sides have their say. Also agree how long it will take, that findings will be in writing, and how Specialised Skills will act on them. • Give the reviewer the records. Act on what they find, and tell the person in writing.	Written arrangement; review report
13	Owner	Close the matter in the register. Save the records in the student's file. Record any change you make in the Continuous Improvement Register.	Register; CI Register

Other organisations students can contact

Give these details with every outcome letter. Most of them ask the person to try the Specialised Skills process first.

Organisation	Phone	Email or online
Community Justice Centres NSW (free mediation)	1800 990 777	Online form: dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-justice-centres
National Training Complaints Hotline (any training complaint)	13 38 73	Online form: dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline
Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	1300 701 801	Online report form: asqa.gov.au
NSW Fair Trading (fees, refunds, consumer rights)	13 32 20	Online form: nsw.gov.au/fair-trading
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (privacy)	1300 363 992	enquiries@oaic.gov.au
Anti-Discrimination NSW	1800 670 812	adbcontact@justice.nsw.gov.au
SafeWork NSW (safety, licences, White Card)	13 10 50	Online enquiry form: safework.nsw.gov.au

Interpreter: TIS National, 131 450.

When things change

Situation	Action
Complaint about both owners	An independent reviewer from another RTO, chosen at the time, handles it.
Complaint about another student	Hear both sides. Manage behaviour using the Respect and Behaviour Policy.
Safety risk, or concern for a person under 18	Act straight away. Call 000 if anyone is in danger. Report child safety concerns to the Child Protection Helpline (132 111). Tell SafeWork NSW about any notifiable incident.
Privacy or discrimination issue	Follow the Privacy Policy, including for a data breach. Give the person the details for the OAIC or Anti-Discrimination NSW.
Complainant wishes to stay anonymous	Accept this. Explain that it may limit what can be looked into.
Appeal about a licence assessment	When it is needed, arrange an independent SafeWork NSW accredited assessor who did not train or assess the student. The student can also contact SafeWork NSW.

Procedure information

Responsibility: The owners approve this procedure and make sure it is followed.

Related documents: Complaints and Appeals Policy; Complaints and Appeals Form; Complaints and Appeals Register; Student Handbook; Training and Assessment Policy; Respect and Behaviour Policy; Privacy Policy; Continuous Improvement Register; Filing guide.

Requirements: Standards for RTOs 2025 (Outcome Standards 2.7, 2.8 and 4.4); Privacy Act 1988; 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: complaint and appeal outcomes are due 7 business days after the acknowledgement (steps 6 and 10); a complaint outcome letter explains how to appeal (step 6); the appeal time limit runs from when the student is told about the decision (step 7). These match Policy v4.0 and the Student Handbook. Next review: 18 October 2027.

Student summary

How to make a complaint or appeal a decision.

