

Dickens Assessment and Training Services takes all forms of complaints extremely seriously. When a student complains, Dickens Assessment and Training Services takes a positive and pro-active approach to the issue and sees a complaint as an opportunity to improve its services. We openly encourage positive and negative feedback via email to [info@dat-services.com.au](mailto:info@dat-services.com.au) or phone your local branch.

## Complaints Policy

We have a complaints policy and procedure to manage and respond to complaints and allegations involving the conduct of:

1. the RTO, our trainers, assessors and other staff
  2. any third party services we may employ on our RTO's behalf
  3. our students.
- Complaints received will be given due consideration, with full attention to details. The objective will be to find an immediate solution, and an amicable settlement for all parties concerned
  - Any resolution to any dispute between aggrieved parties will be addressed in an open and trusting environment
  - We shall ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are upheld which means that we shall listen to you and allow you to fairly put your point of view to us.
  - We shall allow our clients to have access to our staff and be able to express any concerns, so we can all stop minor issues from becoming more serious.
  - We shall ensure that the decision maker is as far as practicable, independent from the decision being reviewed.
  - All matters will be resolved with reference to the Win-Win principles of dispute resolution
  - If any student is unsatisfied with the outcome of and complaints or refunds outcomes, you may of course exercise your right to take your complaint or grievance further to the Australian Skills Quality Authority.
  - All complaints shall be acknowledged to the complainant in writing within 7 days of receipt, however where a resolution will take greater than 60 days to facilitate and resolve, we shall keep our clients advised in writing of progress and any reasons for such a delay.

## Appealing a Decision

All complainants have the right to appeal decisions made by Dickens Assessment and Training Services where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a complainant may appeal a decision made by Dickens Assessment and Training Services may include:

- Assessments conducted
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment
- Any other conclusion / decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by Dickens Assessment and Training Services in the first instance.

The Complainant may complete our ['Complaints and Appeals Form'](#) (available from our office) which is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon and a clear explanation as to the reason the

complainant feels the decision is unfair. Help and support with this process can be gained from Dickens Assessment and Training Services' Administration Department.

The CEO shall then determine the validity of the appeal and organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.

The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.

The CEO shall ensure that Dickens Assessment and Training Services acts on any substantiated appeal.

Where an appeal has been lodged, it will be defined into one of the following categories and the appropriate procedures followed:

### **General appeals**

- Where a complainant has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify the CEO at Dickens Assessment and Training Services in writing within 20 working days of the grounds of their appeal. Any supporting documentation should also be attached to the appeal.
- The CEO shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal. The complainant will be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decisions.
- The complainant will be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The complainant is required to notify Dickens Assessment and Training Services if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

### **Assessment appeals**

- Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment, they are required to notify their Trainer & Assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate the Trainer & Assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The Trainer & Assessor shall complete a written report regarding the re-assessment outlining the reasons why assessment was or was not granted.
- If the Student is not satisfied with this decision, the student may lodge a formal appeal by submitting a written letter or email to the CEO outlining their reasons for the appeal. The CEO will seek details from the Trainer & Assessor involved and any other relevant parties. A decision shall be made regarding the appeal either indicating the assessment decision stands or details of a possible re-assessment by a 'third party'. The third party shall be another Trainer & Assessor appointed by Dickens Assessment and Training Services.
- The student will be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision and be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the result. The student is required to notify Dickens Assessment and Training Services if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

## **External Appeals and Further Information**

### **External Appeals:**

In addition to the above internal processes, if a student enrolled with Dickens Assessment and Training Services is still dissatisfied with the decision of the RTO, they may wish to seek legal advice or submit an application with an external dispute resolution process by a relevant body appointed for this purpose. (See below for contact details).

Where Dickens Assessment and Training Services is informed that the student has accessed external appeals processes we will comply with the findings of the external appeals process and where a decision or outcome is in favour of the complainant, Dickens Assessment and Training Services shall follow the required action and recommendation from the relevant external appeals organisation to satisfy the student's grievance as

soon as practicable.

The decision of the independent mediator is final and any further action the student wishes to take is outside the RTO's policies and procedures. The student shall be referred to the appropriate government agencies and this information can be gained from the CEO.

New South Wales Based Students:

The Community Justice Centre is a free dispute resolution and mediation service funded by the New South Wales Government and may be able to assist resolve any outstanding complaint or issue with the complaint handling process. Further details and office locations for this service are available from <http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/>

Queensland Based Students:

The Dispute Resolution Centre is a free dispute resolution and mediation service funded by the Queensland Government and may be able to assist resolve any outstanding complaint or issue with the complaint handling process. Further details and office locations for this service are available from <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediation-and-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-out-of-court>

**Further information**

If, after the RTO's internal complaints and appeals processes have been completed, you still believe the RTO is breaching or has breached its legal requirements, you can submit a complaint to the Australia Skill Quality Authority – [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

ASQA's processes require you to identify yourself to ASQA as a complainant, although you may request that your identity is kept confidential throughout any investigation that ASQA undertakes.