



# Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

## Document Control

Changes to this document are controlled for Quality Assurance purposes. No changes may be completed without the approval of the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager.

Date	Version	Amendment	Authorised
21/05/2012	1.0	Consolidation of Procedures across SkillsPlus	CEO
19/11/2012	2.0	Clients can nominate an advocate	CEO
18/03/2014	3.0	Update due to change of DEEWR Contract to DSS/DOE	CEO
15/04/2014	4.0	Included additional complaint service	CEO
24/03/2015	5.0	Update of relevant job titles	CEO
07/09/2016	6.0	Change of JSA to jobactive, replacement of reference to COO with CEO	CEO
20/04/2018	1.0	Addition of appeals process details and introduction of RiskMan	NETM & VWWSM

## Reference Documents

Please see the following documents for more information:

Document Name	Version	Author
Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Form	1	NETM & VWWSM
RiskMan – recording of Compliments, Complaints or Appeals	1	NETM & VWWSM
Compliments, Complaints and Appeals Flow Chart	1	NETM & VWWSM

## Objective

SkillsPlus and BRACE is committed to creating a culture whereby feedback is encouraged, recognised and consistently captured.

This procedure has been created to inform employees of the procedure for job seekers and training participants (students) to lodge a complaint and the process of the complaint resolution.

This procedure aims to ensure SkillsPlus and BRACE maintains professionalism for job seekers and students to follow by ensuring that they:

- Maintain accurate documentation;
- Develop the skills and knowledge necessary to liaise with the job seeker or student to gain accurate information;
- Maintain fairness and equity regarding the complaint;
- Follow relevant external bodies' guidelines.

## Scope

This procedure relates to internal and external complaints, compliments or suggestions received from clients, employees, volunteers and other stakeholders.

It also outlines for the procedure for a job seeker or student to appeal a decision made by SkillsPlus or BRACE where they are not satisfied with the outcome.

## Authorities

The National Education and Training Manager and the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager are responsible for this Procedure.

## Definitions

A complaint is an expression of concern, dissatisfaction or frustration with the quality or delivery of service, a policy or procedure, or the conduct of another person.

An appeal is a request by a jobseeker or student to review a decision that has been made. This may include student assessment outcomes for example.

SkillsPlus and BRACE have a risk rating matrix to determine the severity of complaints that is consistent with the overarching Risk Management rating.

Complaints are to be rated as Minor or Major.

- Minor – no harm to client or consumer, no loss of service
- Major– harm to client, reduced efficiency or disruption of services, significant loss of reputation.

Risk ratings of Minor are to be actioned by the Program Manager unless there is a conflict of interest and therefore the respective Manager is to be informed and will manage the investigation.

Risk ratings of Major or complaints highlighting breaches of legislation, serious breaches of SkillsPlus and BRACE procedures or causing serious harm, are to be notified to the to the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager.

## Procedural Steps

### Raising the Complaint

Complaints can be lodged verbally, in writing or by using the Compliments, Complaints and Appeals form (available from reception, the website, employees or managers).

In the first instance, clients are encouraged to raise their concerns informally with their Employment Consultant or Trainer. Clients can nominate an advocate to assist on their behalf if they wish to do so.

If it cannot be resolved informally employees should encourage the client to put the complaint in writing using the Complaints and Compliments form. Once received all complaints should be forwarded to the relevant Manager:

- Corporate – Relevant Community Solutions or Endeavour Foundation Manager
- Employment Services – Regional Manager (Regional and Metro)
- Training Services – Program Manager (Regional and Metro)
- Youth Education Program – Program Manager
- NEIS – Program Manager
- SEE – SEE Co-ordinator

Complaints of a Major nature should be copied to the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager or both.

### **Investigation of the Complaint**

The person responsible for managing the resolution of the complaint is to identify the issues raised through careful review of the complaint and then determine who will initiate an investigation. The investigation must be conducted by a Manager or above and someone “removed” or not directly involved in the complaint within 7 days.

The following process for investigating a complaint is to occur:

- Contact the complainant by phone or in writing and determine the full nature of the complaint and the outcome sought (within 3 days);
- Identify the service area/employee/client/other stakeholder involved;
- Provide the relevant person with a copy of the complaint and request a meeting with them to verify the facts relating to the issues raised and to substantiate the complaint. Notes are to be taken of the meeting;
- Determine if there are any other persons involved that can assist in resolving the complaint and if so, conduct a further meeting and take notes;
- If a meeting is held with employees or witnesses notes should be based on the discussion held. Employees should be supported through this process and have access to a support person at these meetings.
- Information gathered from these preliminary investigations will form the basis of a draft response letter to be prepared by the investigating manager. This draft response is to address all the issues raised by the complainant.

The draft response letter is to be approved by the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager, prior to the letter being sent out.

Complaints must be resolved within seven (7) business days (where possible).

Complaints rated as Major are to be resolved with a formal response being forwarded within 28 days from the date of receipt. The complainant will be kept informed of progress during the complaint

investigation process by the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager. These Managers will provide oversight of all Major complaints.

## **APPEALS**

Jobseekers or students who are unhappy with a decision made by SkillsPlus or BRACE or the outcome of a complaint can appeal. Under the appeal SkillsPlus and BRACE will review the process undertaken to arrive at the decision and the decision itself.

The following will be taken into account:

- Was the decision made fair or the complaint resolution handled fairly?
- Was it dealt with at the appropriate level in the organisation?
- Was it made in a timely manner?
- Were relevant parties kept informed and privacy maintained?
- Have ethical, contractual, regulatory and legislative requirements been upheld and considered?
- Does the decision or outcome support the maintenance of high quality training and or employment services and reflect industry expectations?

Appeals will be reviewed by Managers not involved in the original decisions or resolutions and will be escalated where necessary and where possible a response will be provided to the appealing party within 14 days.

If the complainant is still not happy with the outcome, Managers should advise them that they could utilise other mechanisms for resolving their issue such as via DSS, CRRS, Dispute Settlement Centre and the National Training Complaints hotline.

### **Details:**

Department of Social Services Feedback Coordination Team

1800 634 035

Email [complaints@dss.gov.au](mailto:complaints@dss.gov.au)

Complaints Resolution and Referral Service (CRRS)

Tel 1800 880 052

Email [hotline@workfocus.com](mailto:hotline@workfocus.com)

A service that helps people with disability sort out complaints about disability employment.

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

SkillsPlus reference D8401/2009

Tel 1300 372 888

Email [dscv@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:dscv@justice.vic.gov.au)

A free mediation service for not for profit organisations

National Training Complaints Hotline (Skilling Australia)

Tel 13 38 73

Email [NTHC@education.gov.au](mailto:NTHC@education.gov.au)

Department of Jobs and Small Business

National Customer Service Line

Tel: 1800 805 260

Email [nationalcustomerservice@jobs.gov.au](mailto:nationalcustomerservice@jobs.gov.au)

A free service for Employment Services participants in jobactive, DES and TTW.

Skills Victoria Training System (SVTS)

Email: [vtg.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vtg.feedback@edumail.vic.gov.au)

A Department of Education and Early Childhood Development service

### **Complaints Monitoring and Reporting**

All compliments, complaints and appeals are to be recorded in RiskMan.

Managers are required to keep records of all correspondence, conversations and meetings with the complainant on file.

Once a satisfactory resolution has been achieved all documentation should be placed on the participant's file or stored in a secure location, if it is a member of the public. The matter should be recorded as closed on the register. A request for improvement form should be raised if corrective action is required.

Where the complaint is substantiated, the relevant Manager must take appropriate action to ensure the situation does not arise again. Examples of actions may include (but are not limited to) appropriate employees' performance counselling, review of assessment or procedure.

National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager is responsible for ensuring that corrective actions are implemented and to monitor the effectiveness of the action.

Complaints not closed off at the end of the month will be followed up through the National Education and Training Manager or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager office (this excludes complaints less than 7 days old). The National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager will ensure final sign off on all closed complaints.

The National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager will provide advice to the Board on complaints and compliments at each meeting.

### **Compliments Monitoring and Reporting**

All compliments or feedback received in writing should be acknowledged in writing within 7 business days. Compliments will be forwarded to the Marketing Department for use in marketing materials and promotion of SkillsPlus services as appropriate. Compliments will also be used in Board reporting and in recognising employees through the Employee/Program Recognition process.

### **Employee Training and Development in the management of compliments, complaints and appeals.**

New employees will be provided with information on Complaints Management through the Corporate Online Induction.

Employees' knowledge and skills on compliments, complaints and appeals procedures will be monitored through employees' appraisals and audits.

### **Privacy**

SkillsPlus and BRACE are bound by the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Complaints made regarding Privacy acts or practices may be investigated by the Information Commissioner who has power to award compensation against SkillsPlus and BRACE in appropriate circumstances, as well as a further range of enforcement powers and other remedies available.

**Note:**

**ALL COMPLAINTS lodged are to be signed off by the National Education and Training Manager and or the Victorian Workforce Solutions Manager, before closure.**