



**TRAINING**

**Policy**

# Participant Complaints

## Policy & Procedure

Document Control			
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<b>Authorised:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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## **ASSUMPTIONS**

The Housing Industry Association Ltd (HIA) is a registered training organisation. HIA Training is a division of the HIA delivering accredited training and assessment services under the regulation of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

Where the words “we”, “our” or “us” have been used in this document they can be assumed to mean the above legal or departmental name.

Our policies exist to provide guidance on the behaviour, obligations, responsibilities and culture of our business.

## **PURPOSE**

This policy provides guidance on the fair, equitable and accountable processing of participant (student) complaints. Adherence to this policy will ensure that all complaints are handled consistently, in a timely manner and are adequately documented.

## **POLICY**

We understand that from time to time a person may be unhappy with a product or service that we have provided and they have a right to have their complaint heard.

We will handle all complaints with respect for the rights of the individual and without bias.

## **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to our participants.

## **DELEGATION**

This Policy and associated Procedure is owned by the CEO of Housing Industry Association.

Responsibility for ensuring adherence to this Policy and Procedure has been delegated to the General Manager HIA Training.

## **PRINCIPLES**

The following principles apply to this Policy:

- All participants have the right to raise any complaints or grievances without fear of retribution or threat to continuation of service.
- All complaints will be given due consideration with the primary objective of the complaints process being to find an immediate solution which is agreed to by all parties.
- Complaints handling and resolution process is participant focused and helps us to prevent complaints from recurring.
- Every effort is made to ensure that complaints are resolved promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and complete confidentiality.
- The views of each complainant are respected and all parties to a complaint are free from discrimination and victimisation.
- We recognise and support the right of the participant to seek the assistance of an external organisation to resolve the complaint.
- Written records will be kept of all complaints and maintained in the participant's file and the Complaints Register.
- If any complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the process they may then choose to take the complaint further by contacting the Australian Skills Quality Authority.
- Understanding and resolving complaints provides an opportunity to improve our training and assessment services.

### ***Definition of a Complaint***

A complaint can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with their engagement with any aspect of our services, including:

- Our operations, such as enrolment and administrative processes and learning management,
- Our staff, such as trainers/assessors and support staff,
- The learning environment, including the behaviour of other learners,
- The quality of training or assessment provided,
- Any service provided by a third party we have engaged, such as training resources and facilities.

A complaint is not about an assessment result. Participants who wish to have an assessment decision reviewed should refer to the Assessment Appeals section of the Participant Handbook.

## PROCEDURE

We encourage all parties to resolve concerns or difficulties directly to avoid escalation to a formal complaint.

### *How to lodge a complaint*

Where a participant lodges a formal complaint, their enrolment will be maintained throughout the process. There is no cost to the participant to lodge a complaint.

All complaints must be submitted to HIA in writing and email is the preferred method of lodgement. The email address is [training@hia.com.au](mailto:training@hia.com.au) and the email should include the following information:

- Participants details including name, address, phone number and email address
- Course name and course start date
- Description of the complaint
- Any information in relation to what the participant has done to resolve the complaint
- What resolution the participant is seeking

The Regional Training Manager will contact the participant within two (2) business days of receipt of the complaint to acknowledge receipt in writing.

The Regional Training Manager will record the details in the Complaints Register and notify any persons identified in the complaint.

The Regional Training Manager will appoint a person who was not involved in the original decision or interaction to consult with the participant and other relevant parties if necessary. Where possible, such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews so that the participant has an opportunity to formally present their case. Any discussion held between the parties will be minuted and the minutes will be kept on file along with details of the complaint.

Complainants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies and/or person at any point of the complaint process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's cost.

Once the Regional Training Manager receives a report on the consultation proceedings, a decision will be made regarding the complaint. The participant will be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint, including details of any steps to be taken to address the complaint and reasons for the decision.

We will then endeavour to resolve the complaint within twenty (20) working days and provide the participant with a written statement of the outcome, including details of steps to be taken to address the complaint and reasons for the decision.

Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the Complainant shall also be notified that they have the right to appeal. To appeal a decision HIA Training must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal. Complaints are referred to the Appeals Procedure.

If the complaints process is going to take more than 60 calendar days to process, then HIA Training will notify the complainant in writing as to the reasons why. HIA Training will regularly update the complainant on the progress of the matter in a pre-agreed format, i.e. email, text, letter, phone call.

The Regional Training Manager will act immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the Complainant, HIA Training will act immediately to implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required, and advise the Complainant of the outcome.

All stages of the complaint process will be documented in VETtrak and in the participant's file. Any complaint received that is not from a participant will be stored in the Complaints Folder maintained by HIA Training.

Outcomes of the complaints will be documented on the Continuous Improvement Register for committee review.

Final outcomes of the complaint will be recorded in the Complaints Register.

### **External Appeals**

If not satisfied with the decision in either the formal complaint or appeals process, the Complainant may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process.

The Complainant can contact any of the independent bodies for example:

- National Training Complaints Hotline - <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>
- Disability Discrimination Service [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)
- State Ombudsman (Victoria) [www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au)
- Dispute Settlement Centre of their respective region/state such as:
  - Victoria - <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>
  - Queensland - <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediation-and-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-out-of-court/dispute-resolution-centres/>

If a Complainant (Candidate or third party) is still dissatisfied with the decision of HIA Training, they may wish to seek legal advice or place a complaint about HIA Training to ASQA directly.

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Tel: 1300 701 801 [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints/complaints.html>