COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. POLICY

This policy/procedure supports the RTO to provide a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned effectively and efficiently. All complaints and appeals received by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. (SCAA SWTI) will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.

SCAA SWTI strives to ensure that each student is satisfied with their learning experience and outcome. In the unlikely event that this is not the case, all students have access to rigorous, fair and timely complaint and appeal processes outlined below. Any complaints or appeals will be reviewed as part of the continuous improvement process and where corrective action has been highlighted, it will be implemented as a priority.

Despite all efforts of SCAA SWTI to provide satisfactory services to its students, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. The following procedures provide students the opportunity to have any issues relating to a substantiated complaint or appeal resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties involved. This complaints and appeals process will be at no cost to the student (unless referred to a third party; see procedure for more details).

2. PROCEDURE

The complaints and appeals policy and procedure and applicable form is made available to all students and potential students by directly contacting the RTO, through the RTO's website, and within the student information handbook.

2.1 GENERAL COMPLAINTS

Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the issue. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue and the student's issue. Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a student has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed:

- Any student, potential student, or third party may submit a formal complaint to SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process unless it is referred to a third party.

- Complainants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies / persons at any point of the complaint and appeals process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's costs unless authorised by the Executive Officer.

- Any person wishing to submit a formal complaint or appeal can do so by completing the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' and state their case providing as many details as possible. This form can be obtained by contacting Student Administration at the RTO, or through the RTO website.

- All formally submitted complaints or appeals are submitted to directly to the Executive Officer. Complaints are to include the following information:
  - Submission date of complaint
  - Name of complainant;
  - Nature of complaint;
  - Date of the event which lead to the complaint
  - Attachments (if applicable)

- Once a formal complaint is received it is to be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' which is monitored by the Executive Officer regularly. The information to be contained and updated within the register is as follows:
  - Submission date of complaint
  - Name of complainant
  - Description of complaint / appeal
  - Determined Resolution
  - Date of Resolution

- A student may be assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the issue or complaint throughout the process at all times.

- The Executive Officer then refers the matter to the appropriate staff to resolve, or make a decision on the complaint within 10 working days and keeps the complainant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint.

- Once a decision has been reached the Executive Officer shall be required to inform all parties involved of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing. Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the students shall also be notified that they have the right of appeal. To appeal a decision the RTO must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal. Students are referred to the appeals procedure.

- The Executive Officer shall ensure that the RTO 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 student, the registered provider must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required, and advise the student of the outcome.

- Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' by Administration staff and on the student's file.

2.2 APPEALING A DECISION

All students have the right to appeal decisions made by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. may include:

- Assessments conducted
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student's enrolment
- Or any other conclusion / decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. in the first instance

- To activate the appeals process the student is to complete a 'Complaints and Appeals Form' which is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the student feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained and help and support with this process can be gained from Administration.

- The Executive Officer 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 Executive Officer shall ensure that SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. 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 student has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. in writing within 20 working days of the grounds of their appeal. Any supporting documentation should also be attached to the appeal.

- The appeal shall be lodged through the Executive Officer and they shall ensure the details of the appeal are added to the 'Complaints and Appeals Register'.

- The Executive Officer shall seek, if required, further information regarding the initial documentation of the complaint and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.

- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. The student shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. 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 this is still not to the student's satisfaction, the student shall formally lodge an appeal by submitting a written letter outlining their reasons for the appeal. They shall lodge this with student administrations department and the appeal shall be entered into the 'Complaints and Appeals Register.'

- The Executive Officer shall be notified and shall 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 SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc.

- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. The student shall also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

External Appeals

If not satisfied with the decision in stage 2, the complainant may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process, by the body appointed by Skills Right Now for that purpose.

The details of this external body are as follows:

Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria

Contact details are:

Dispute Assessment Officer
Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria
Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 9603 8370
http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/

South Australia

If your complaint is about your education course or tutor, you can contact the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) to submit a complaint.

TEQSA does not respond directly to complaints. It will record your complaint as part of its quality assurance and compliance.

2.3 FURTHER INFORMATION

If a client (student or other client) is still dissatisfied with the decision of the RTO, they may wish to seek legal advice or place a complaint about the RTO to ASQA directly.

If, after the RTO's internal complaints and appeals processes have been completed, and you still believe the RTO is breaching or has breached its legal requirements, you can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the Complaint about a training organisation operating under ASQA's jurisdiction form. Except in exceptional circumstances the student must attach evidence to their complaint form showing:

- that they have followed the RTO's formal complaints procedure, and
- the RTO's response.

2.4 DELAYS IN COMPLAINTS/APPEALS

In the unusual circumstance where SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. considers more than sixty (60) calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. will inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than sixty (60) calendar days are required. In line with the importance that SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. places on open and transparent processes and communication, the complainant or appellant will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

2.5 RECORD, REVIEW AND FEEDBACK

Both the complaints and appeals policies of SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. highlight the importance of accurate documentation through the maintenance of records of all processes and outcomes.

All complaints and appeals will be reviewed regularly at SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. Continuous improvement procedures may be actioned when the complaint/appeal procedure results in identification of factors appropriate for improvement to internal operations. When the initial causative factor of the complaint identifies a problem with current SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. policies and / or procedures, the continuous improvement procedure will ensure changes are made to prevent reoccurrence of the problem.

All those lodging complaints and/or appeals will be issued with a Complaint or Appeal Feedback Form.