

Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

Smartskill is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs) 2025. As such, Smartskill is required to have policy and processes in place to manage and respond to complaints or grievances involving the conduct of staff, contractors, third party providers who deliver training and assessment for Smartskill.

This policy is based on providing and maintaining training and assessment services that are fair and reasonable and afford a forum where issues or inadequacies can be raised and resolved. This process provides opportunity for complaints to be recorded, acknowledged and dealt with in a fair, efficient and effective manner.

The object of this policy is to ensure that Smartskill staff act in a professional manner at all times. This policy provides students with a clear process to register a complaint. It ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

2. Policy Statement

Smartskill acknowledges the students' right to lodge a complaint when they are dissatisfied with the provision of training and /or assessment services from Smartskill. Smartskill will ensure that students have access to a fair and equitable process for expressing complaints, and that the complaint will be managed with courtesy, respect and impartiality.

In doing so, Smartskill:

- a) has written procedures in place for collecting and managing complaints in a constructive and timely manner;
- b) ensures that these procedures are communicated to all staff, contractors, third party providers and students;
- c) ensures that all necessary documentation and processes are in place to enable students to submit a complaint;
- d) ensures that each complaint and its outcome is recorded in writing; and
- e) ensures that customer complaints and their outcomes are used for continuous improvement.

3. Definitions

3.2 The following words and expressions have the following specific meaning, as in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025.

Third party means any party that provides training and assessment services on behalf of the RTO under a TPA (Third Party agreement) and does not include a contractor or RTO staff.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 Principles

In managing complaints, Smartskill will ensure that:

- a) The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint process.
- b) The complaints policy is publicly available in the student handbook and on the website.
- c) There is a procedure for making a complaint.
- d) Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively and confidentially.
- e) Complaints will be resolved on an individual case basis, as they arise.
- f) All students have the right to express a concern or problem and/or lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the training and assessment services that they have been provided, or the behavioural conduct of another student.
- g) All complaints are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.
- h) The complaint resolution procedure is based on the understanding that no action will be taken without consulting the complainant and respondent, using a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation.
- i) The rights of the complainant and respondent will be acknowledged and protected throughout the complaint resolution process, including the conduct of separate interviews initially.
- j) In the interest of confidentiality, the number of people involved in the resolution process will be kept to a minimum.
- k) Final decisions will be made by the Director of Smartskill or an independent party to the complaint (if required).
- l) The complaint resolution procedure emphasises mediation and education while acknowledging that in some instances formal procedures and disciplinary action may be required.
- m) If the complaints process fails to resolve the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint the matter will be referred to an independent person for review, at the request of the complainant. All costs incurred for the independent person review will be advised to the complainant.
- n) If the complaint will take in excess of sixty (60) calendar days to finalise, Smartskill will inform the complainant in writing providing the reasons for the time delay. The complainant will also be provided with regular updates on the progress of the complaint.
- o) Victimisation of complainants, respondents or anyone one else involved in the complaint resolution process will not be tolerated.
- p) All complaints will be handled in confidence and will not affect or bias the progress of the student in any current of future training.

4.2 Types of Complaints

A complaint may be raised regarding:

- a) Smartskill staff or contractors.
- b) A third party provider working on behalf of Smartskill.
- c) A student of Smartskill.

5. Smartskill Responsibilities

The Director of Smartskill is the Complaints Resolution Officer. The Director may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint if necessary.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that all staff, contractors and students are aware of this policy and that complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the terms of this policy.

6. Process

6.1 Complaints

If a student has a complaint, they are encouraged to speak immediately with their immediate trainer and assessor to resolve the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied that the issue has been resolved, they will be provided a Complaints form. This form must be completed by the student and lodged with Smartskill via electronic or physical means to commence the formal complaint. Smartskill will then investigate the complaint and advise the complainant of the outcome.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may write to the Director, setting out in detail the issue of concern. This may lead to occasions where an industry-training representative may be invited to act as an objective party in order to negotiate a satisfactory resolution.

6.2 Complaints Process

All complaints shall follow the below process:

- a) Complaints are to be made in writing within seven (7) calendar days of the incident
- b) Formal complaints must be lodged using the Complaints Form.
- c) A submitted complaint form will constitute a formal complaint from the student. Further detail of the complaint can be provided by the student verbally.
- d) The Director of Smartskill must be informed immediately once a complaint is received.
- e) The Director of Smartskill may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint.
- f) In the case of a complaint, the Director of Smartskill will initiate a transparent, participative investigation to identify the issues.
- g) Complaints will be processed in accordance with the complaints flowchart - Annex A.
- h) Complaints, where possible, are to be resolved within fourteen (14) calendar days of the initial application.
- i) In all cases the final conclusion will be assessed by the Director of Smartskill.

- j) The student will be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint, within seven (7) days of resolution.
- k) If the outcome is not to the satisfaction of the student, they may seek an appointment with the Director of Smartskill.
- l) If the student is not satisfied with the decision made by the Director of Smartskill, they have the option to seek assistance from the Department of Trade, Employment and Training (DTET), the Queensland Training Ombudsman, or a complaints agency if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint.

7. Access & Equity

The Smartskill Access and Equity Policy applies. (See Access and Equity Policy)

8. Records Management

Records of all complaints and their outcomes are maintained securely. Records of complaints include:

- a) How the complaint was dealt with;
- b) The outcome of the complaint;
- c) The timeframes for resolution of the complaint;
- d) The potential causes of the complaint; and
- e) The steps taken to resolve the complaint.

All documentation are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

9. Monitoring and Improvement

All complaints practices are monitored by the Director of Smartskill and will be discussed at Management Review Meetings with areas for improvement identified and acted upon. (See Continuous Improvement Policy)

ANNEX A: Complaints Process

