

Document Details	
Title	Complaints and Appeals Policy
Division	PeoplePlus Education TOID: 4011 TOID: 21912
Version	2.0
Date Approved	September 2016
Date for Review	January 2017
Document Author	Cheryl Crispo – IT Manager

Version History			
Version No:	Date	Purpose of Change	Issued by
1.0	17/3/2013	Revisions	
	31/5/2013		
	15/6/2015		
2.0	28/9/2016	Update from ICP branding	Cheryl Crispo

1 Scope

This Policy applies to both PeoplePlus Education (TOID 4011) and Australian Employment and Training Solutions (AETS) (TOID 21912) including all PeoplePlus staff; students and prospective students, member of the public.

From herein, both Training Organisations will be referred to as “PeoplePlus”.

2 Purpose

This Policy & Procedure has been designed to support the VET Quality Framework in ensuring that PeoplePlus provides a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned.

All complaints and appeals received by the PeoplePlus will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement.

3 Policy

It is the policy of the PeoplePlus that the complaints and appeals process outlined in this document is followed for all students participating in any course, previous students of PeoplePlus and members of the public.

4 Procedure

Despite all efforts of PeoplePlus 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, regarding academic or non-academic matters; to be resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties involved. This complaints and appeals process will be at no cost to the student.

4.1 Informal process

Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve the complaint. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue. Any staff 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.

4.2 General Complaints

- Any student, potential student, or third party may submit a formal complaint to PeoplePlus 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.
- A student wishing to submit a formal complaint can do so by completing the 'Compliments, Complaints and Comments Form' and state their case. This form can be accessed by contacting PeoplePlus, on our website at <http://peopleplusaustralia.com.au> (under Education); or by asking a staff member to download from our intranet system Cruse.
- The complainant can complete the form by themselves or with assistance from a staff member. (**Customer Compliments, Complaint or Comment Form**)
- The form can be submitted by:
 - Email to enrolments@peopleplusaustralia.com.au
 - Handing in person to reception at any of our branches
 - Posting to 1/533 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Note: All correspondence should be addressed to:

Attn: PeoplePlus - Complaints Department

- All formally submitted complaints or appeals are then read and submitted to the relevant staff member; either the State Training Coordinator; or the General Manager. It is their responsibility to deal with the complaint in the first instance. 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);
- As of 1st March 2013, once a formal complaint is received it is to be entered onto the Cruse Intranet "CA&I Reporting Register". (Prior to this date all complaints were documented in the PeoplePlus 'System Improvement Register'). The register is to be updated as follows:
 - Location of the complaint (ie where the training was held)
 - Date of complaint
 - Type of complaint (e.g. Public, Customer, Staff)
 - Type of client (e.g. student, staff member)
 - Description of complaint
 - Immediate action taken
 - Further action required
 - Supporting documents can be uploaded if applicable
 - Root-Cause analysis of complaint
 - Action required (tasks can be allocated to particular staff for follow-up)
 - Follow up (resolution), status and close-out date
- The relevant staff member handling the complaint will forward any complaints they are not authorised to resolve to the General Manager for follow-up and resolution. (e.g. if a staff member needs to be reprimanded, or a refund for a completed course is requested)

- The complainant will be contacted within 10 working days by the State Training Coordinator and/or General Manager, and will keep the complainant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint.
- A student may be assisted or accompanied by a support person regardless of the nature of the complaint throughout the process at all times.
- Once a decision has been reached the State Training Coordinator and/or General Manager, the complainant shall be informed of any decisions or outcomes that are concluded in writing. Within the notification of the outcome of the formal complaint the complainant 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 below for further detail.
- The State Training Coordinator and/or General Manager 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 'CA&I Reporting Register' by the relevant staff member and a hard copy in the students file.
- The RTO will ensure that it follows the principles of fairness and natural justice in dealing with all complaints
- The General Manager shall regularly access and read the register of complaints on the "CA&I Reporting Register" to ensure allocated tasks are followed up on by appropriate staff; and that systems and methods are improved as required to ensure the complaint is actioned and not repeated.

4.3 Appealing a Decision

All students have the right to appeal decisions made by PeoplePlus where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by PeoplePlus 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 PeoplePlus in the first instance.
- To activate the appeals process the student is to complete a '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. The complainant may complete this form by themselves or with help from relevant staff (or other parties).
- This form can be accessed by contacting PeoplePlus, on our website at <http://peopleplusaustralia.com.au> (under Education); or by asking a staff member to download from our intranet system Cruse. (**Appeals Form**)
- The General Manager 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 General Manager shall ensure that PeoplePlus 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:

4.4 General appeals

- Where a student has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint they are required to notify PeoplePlus 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 student administrations and the student administration manager shall ensure the details of the appeal are added to the 'CA&I Reporting Register'.
- The General Manager shall be notified and shall seek details 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 'CA&I Reporting 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 PeoplePlus if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

4.5 Assessment appeals

- Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment they are required to notify their assessor in the first instance. Where appropriate the assessor may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The 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 the General Manager and the appeal shall be entered into the 'CA&I Reporting Register'.
- The General Manager shall be notified and shall seek details from the 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 assessor appointed by PeoplePlus.
- The student shall be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision, and the 'CA&I 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 PeoplePlus if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

4.6 External Appeals

If a student is still dissatisfied with the decision of PeoplePlus, a student may wish to refer the matter to an external independent / third party mediator.

Appeals can relate to assessment decisions but they can also relate to other decisions, such as a decision to exclude a learner from a program. Clients should be encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through your complaint mechanisms. If they are not satisfied with the outcomes of these processes they can contact the:

Dispute Resolution Centre of Victoria
Dispute Assessment Officer
Level 4, 456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Ph: (03) 9603 8370
<http://disputes.vic.gov.au/>

If you require further information you may contact the Australian Skills Quality Authority (National VET Regulator) (ASQA).

Level 6 595 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Postal Address: GPO Box 9928, Melbourne, VIC, 3001
Ph: 1300 701 801
Email: enquiries@asqa.gov.au
Website: www.asqa.gov.au

Where a decision or outcome is in favour of the student the RTO shall follow the required action and recommendation from the third party mediator to satisfy the student's appeal as soon as practicable.

5 Relevant Links for related documents and standards:

- Australian Skills Quality Authority - **Standard 6 for Continuing Registration:**
 - "Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively"
 - <http://www.asqa.gov.au/users-guide-to-the-standards-for-registered-training-organisations-2015/about-the-standards-for-rtos/standard-six/standard-six.html>
 - * **Please Note:** as website pages often change, please check www.asqa.gov.au if the above link does not work; and search "student complaints".
- Education & Training Reform Act 2006: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/eatra2006273/
- Australian qualifications Framework (National Principles and Operational Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning) : www.aqf.edu.au