



Complaints and Appeals

Purpose:	This policy ensures that Altus Training has a system in place so complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.
Reference:	ASQA – Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015; Standard 6, Clause 6.1 – 6.6 Phase of the Student Journey: Chapter 3 – Support and Progression
Who is responsible:	The General Manager is responsible for implementing and ensuring that this procedure is adhered to.
When:	Upon submission of a complaint or appeal.
Policy Standard Reference:	<p>Subject to Clause 6.6, to be compliant with Standard 6 the RTO must meet the following:</p> <p>Clause 6.1</p> <p>The RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or a learner of the RTO <p>Clause 6.2</p> <p>The RTO has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf.</p> <p>Clause 6.3</p> <p>The RTO's complaints policy and appeals policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process; are publicly available; set out the procedure for making a complaint or requesting an appeal; ensure complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable; and provide for review by an appropriate party independent of the RTO and the complainant or appellant, at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal, if the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal. <p>Clause 6.4</p> <p>Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter. <p>Clause 6.5</p> <p>The RTO:</p>



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	<p>a. securely maintains records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes; and b. identifies potential causes of complaints and appeals and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.</p> <p>Clause 6.6</p> <p>Where the RTO is an employer or a volunteer organisation whose learners solely consist of its employees or members, does not charge fees for the training and/or assessment, and does not have in place a specific complaints and appeals policy in accordance with Clauses 6.1 & 6.2, the organisation has a complaints and appeals policy which is sufficiently broad to cover the services provided by the RTO.</p>
<p>Policy Statement:</p>	<p>All students of Altus Training have the right to raise any complaint or appeal without fear of retribution or threat to continuation of service.</p> <p>All students will be provided with assistance in reporting complaints or appeals.</p> <p>All complaints or appeals will be treated seriously and will be responded to promptly and confidentially.</p> <p>A secure record will be kept of all complaints and appeals and maintained in the Altus Training Complaints and Appeals Register and student management system</p> <p>Altus Training recognises the right of all students to seek the assistance of an external organisation to resolve the complaint or appeal</p> <p>All complaints and appeals will be treated as opportunities for improvement and actioned a part of the Altus Training Continuous Improvement Register.</p>
<p>Process:</p>	<p>Altus Training have the following process in place to handle complaints and appeals involving the conduct of:</p> <p>a) The RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff b) A third party providing services on the RTOs behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff c) A learner of the RTO</p> <p>If students at any time need assistance in the complaints and appeals process they are encouraged to contact the RTO Coordinator for assistance. Complaints and appeals may also be lodged with ASQA however it is recommended that this policy is first undertaken to seek a suitable resolution.</p> <p>Altus Training will ensure that this policy is available to all students, staff and third parties at all times on the Altus website and our process referenced in our Student & Employer Handbook.</p> <p>COMPLAINTS</p> <p>Informal Complaints:</p> <p>Where possible all non-formal attempts shall be made to resolve an informal complaint. Altus encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Therefore, any student with a complaint is encouraged to raise the matter directly with the other party concerned to attempt to resolve the issue mutually or they can contact The RTO Coordinator.</p>



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	<p>Advice, discussions and general mediation may take place in relation to the issue and complainant/student complaint</p> <p>The RTO Coordinator will note the informal complaint on the Complaints and Appeals Register. The RTO Coordinator will determine and ensure that the appropriate action will be taken if necessary.</p> <p>Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but if the student wishes to place a formal complaint, then the following process must be followed below.</p> <p>Formal Complaints:</p> <p>Any student, potential student or 3rd party may submit a formal complaint to Altus with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated fairly with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process unless it is referred to a 3rd party. A formal complaint may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have a direct connection to Altus, its trainers/ assessors or other staff• involve a third party providing services on Altus’s behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff or• involve a student of Altus <p>A student can submit a formal complaint by completing the ‘Complaints and Appeals Form’ located on Altus’ website or they can obtain a copy by calling the RTO Coordinator on 1300 725 483.</p> <p>All formal complaints must be submitted to the RTO Coordinator and contain as many details as possible including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date complaint was submitted• Name of complainant• Nature of complaint• Date of the event which led to the complaint• Attachments (if applicable) <p>Once a complaint has been received, the complainant will be acknowledged in writing that the complaint has been received and the information will be inserted into the ‘Complaints and Appeals Register’ spreadsheet. This is monitored by the RTO Coordinator until resolved. The information to be inserted and retained on the register includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date the complaint was submitted• Name of complainant• Description of complaint• Determined resolution• Date of resolution <p>Once a formal complaint has been logged in the ‘Complaints and Appeals Register’, the following process will take place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The General Manager will be notified of the complaint and will be provided with all relevant documentation related to the matter.2. The RTO Coordinator and General Manager will confer and decide on the appropriate action in order to ensure a successful resolution is attained.3. The relevant staff member/s or contract trainer/assessors will be informed of the complaint and they will have the opportunity to present their side of the matter.
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4. Once a decision has been reached, The RTO Coordinator will notify all of the relevant parties involved of the decision and outcome which is to be concluded in writing within 20 working days from the date the complaint was first received. Within the notification of the outcome, the student will be advised that they have the right to appeal the decision made by Altus. Students will be referred to the appeals procedure as outlined below.
5. The RTO Coordinator will ensure that Altus will act immediately on any substantiated complaint. If the internal or external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, Altus must immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required and advise the student of the outcome.
6. The outcome will be placed on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' and copies of relevant documentation will be stored in the Student Management System.
7. The student has the right to be accompanied by any person of their choice during the complaints or appeals process.

Formal Appeals:

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome from the formal complaint, then they have the right to appeal the decision made by Altus where reasonable grounds can be established.

The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by Altus may include:

- Assessment conducted
- Deferral, suspension or cancellation decisions made in relation to a student's enrolment
- Or any other conclusion/decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with by Altus in the first instance

To activate the appeals process, the student must submit an 'appeal application' by completing the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' located on Altus' website or they can obtain a copy by calling the RTO Coordinator on 1300 725 483

The student is required to provide a summary of the grounds that the appeal is based on and the reason why they feel that initial decision made is unfair within 10 working days from the time they received the outcome for their initial complaint. Help and support with this process can be gained from the RTO Coordinator.

Once the appeal has been received, the complainant will be acknowledged in writing that the appeal has been received and the following process will take place:

1. The RTO Coordinator and General Manager will determine the validity of the appeal and where necessary, organise a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempt to seek resolution where appropriate.
2. The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 15 working days from the date that the appeal was lodged.
3. The RTO Coordinator will ensure that Altus acts on any substantiated appeal immediately.
4. The General Manager and RTO Coordinator will review the initial documentation of the complaint and shall make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.



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5. The student will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of the appeal of the outcome with reasons for the decision. The 'Complaints and Appeals Register' will be updated. The student will also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

ASSESSMENTS

Informal Assessment Appeals:

If 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 made. The assessor will be required to complete a written report regarding the re-assessment outlining the reasons why assessment was or was not granted.

Formal Assessment Appeals:

If the informal assessment appeals process is still not to the student's satisfaction, the individual can formally lodge an appeal by completing and submitting the 'Complaints and Appeals Form' to the RTO Coordinator which can be downloaded from Altus' website or the student can obtain a copy by ringing the office 1300 725 483.

The student submitting the appeal will be acknowledged in writing and the RTO Coordinator will enter the information in the Complaints and Appeals Register and obtain details from the assessor and any other parties involved.

A decision will be made regarding the appeal which will either indicate that the assessment decision remains as is or, details of a possible re-assessment by a 'third party'. The third party will be another assessor appointed by Altus.

The student will be notified by writing within 20 working days from the initial lodgement of their appeal regarding the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' updated. The student will also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

External Appeals

If the student is still dissatisfied regarding the outcome/decision made that Altus has provided, they may wish to refer the matter to an external/independent/third party mediator at their own expense.

Appeals can relate to assessment decisions and they can also relate to other matters such as the decision to exclude a student from a training program. Students should and are encouraged to resolve complaints and appeals through the Altus complaint mechanism prior to consulting external parties.

If the student is not satisfied by the complaints and appeal outcome, they can contact the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria or similar external organisation to resolve the complaint or appeal.

This final stage will be addressed within 30 days.



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	<p>Outcomes from further mediation in relation to a grievance will be implemented immediately.</p> <p>Extensions</p> <p>If more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, The RTO Coordinator will inform the individual in writing, including reasons why more than 60 days are required and regularly update the individual on the progress of the matter.</p> <p>In most cases this would not be necessary as the timeframes identified in the above processes keep well under 60 days. It may need to happen if an appeal was to reach an external stage.</p> <p>Record Management</p> <p>1. <i>Electronic records:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The complaints and appeals register and forms are maintained on the RTO drive and student management system b. Confidentiality is maintained as limited staff have access to the RTO drive (password protected) and student management system, and all student / client information is only released as per Altus’ privacy and confidentiality policy. All staff employed by Altus will be required to apply themselves to the written procedures and safeguard confidential and personal information according to the Privacy Act 1988. <p>2. <i>Hard copy records:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Confidentiality is maintained and matters relating to a complaint or appeal are stored on the student management system. b. Contents of files are not discarded unless the state and national storage requirements for retention, archiving and retrieval of information have been met. <p>Corrective Action</p> <p>The complaints and appeals register is reviewed as part of the Quarterly Quality Assurance Meetings to identify any further corrective action needed and any changes to procedures or practices required.</p> <p>In the instance that Altus receives complaints and or appeals which demonstrate a pattern or trend, the General Manager and RTO Coordinator will take the appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.</p> <p>The form of corrective action applied will be determined on a case by case basis where there are continuing trends, patterns and causes.</p> <p>Note: Clause 6.6 is not applicable to Altus.</p>
<p>Relevant Documents:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published policy on Altus’ website • Student and Employer Handbook • RTO-SF803-AU Complaints and Appeals Form



RTO-PC816-AU

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Policy Review and Update			
Version	Date	Contact Name	Contact Details
1.0	November 2015	Karina Parkin	Karina.parkin@altustraffic.com.au
1.1	November 2017	Fiona McLean	Fiona.mclean@altustraining.com.au
1.2	July 2018	Sinéad Mader	Sinead.mader@altustraining.com.au