Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy Statement

Customer service is a cornerstone of Meerilinga's commitment to its workers, clients, and learners. This policy and processes cover MTC services provided across all Meerilinga locations and modes of delivery.

Meerilinga Training College (MTC) provides all learners with a formal complaints and appeals process, which draws on a commitment to all parties, understanding their rights and responsibilities in the resolution of complaints and appeals which are brought before the College.

When implementing this policy and processes, Meerilinga endeavours to follow the principles of fairness and justice at every stage of the process. Meerilinga will not discriminate against any individual wanting to lodge and pursue a complaint or appeal.

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy and processes is to ensure that all complaints and appeals are dealt with in a constructive and timely manner. It outlines the process for dealing with formal complaints and appeals against an assessment outcome awarded in any unit of competence.

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTO's) 2015* state
Standard 6. Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.

6.1 The RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of:

a) *the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;*

b) *a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or*

c) *a learner of the RTO.*

6.2 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.

6.3 The RTO's complaints policy and appeals policy:

a) *ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process;*

b) *are publicly available;*

c) *set out the procedure for making a complaint or requesting an appeal;*

d) *ensure complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable; and*

e) *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.*

6.4. Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO:

a) informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and

b) regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

6.5 The RTO:

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.

Scope

This policy and processes provide guidance on the resolution of complaints and appeals made against the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) by learners, stakeholders or workers. It relates to all operations of MTC, which falls within the responsibility or control of Meerilinga.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- Appeals in relation to employment matters. Please refer to the relevant human resources policy.
- Complaints about other matters not related to MTC.

Policy Review

Biennial or from time to time the organisation may make changes to this policy to improve the effectiveness of its operation and customer service.

Policy Reviewed	**29 March 2024**	**By**	**Advisor Policy and Compliance**
Approved By	**Chief Executive Officer**		
Previous Review	**2 October 2022**		

Implementation

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

This Complaints and Appeals Policy is available to learners on the *MTC website*, together with it being outlined in the Learner Guide. Learners are made aware of the Complaints and Appeals Policy through induction and training.

Types of complaints or appeals may include but not limited to:

- Complaints
  - Course advice and enrolment
  - Suspension and/or cancellation of enrolment
  - Service delivery
  - Marketing and promotional activity
  - Personal safety
  - Customer service and administration
  - Issue of results, certificates, statements of attainment
  - Learning resources
  - Fees and charges and
  - Equity and access, discrimination, harassment and bullying

- Appeals
  - Assessment process and decision
  - Candidate progress and academic progress decisions

Where possible, individuals are encouraged to resolve concerns or difficulties directly with the person(s) involved before it becomes a formal complaint or appeal with Meerilinga Training College (MTC).

All MTC workers involved in the complaints and appeals process will ensure that the complainant and appellant's right to privacy is protected at all times.

No costs are associated with lodging a formal complaint or appeal that is resolved internally by Meerilinga members.

Complaints

Meerilinga is committed to providing the best possible environment in which to study or work. MTC understands that on occasion, there may be instances of dissatisfaction and acknowledges that the cause(s) must be addressed and rectified promptly.

MTC will manage any complaints, whether from learners, clients or staff in an effective and timely manner, typically resolving all complaints within 30 days of receipt of complaint.

Appeals

Every learner has the right to make a formal appeal in the event they believe that an assessment or administrative decision was made in error and whether that decision was made by MTC, its trainers, assessors or other workers.

Meerilinga endeavours to treat all appeal requests with equal weighting and due consideration. It is anticipated that, except in unusual circumstances, the process of managing the appeal will be complete within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Appeals can arise when a learner is not satisfied with a decision that has been made. Learners have the right to have the appeal investigated in a timely manner and to receive written confirmation of the result of the appeal.

MTC appeals process facilitates request for a review of any decisions and may be:

i. Against the result of an assessment
ii. A complaint about an academic or administrative matter
iii. A complaint resulting from a situation of perceived inequitable treatment
iv. Against disciplinary action.

The process ensures that the decision maker is independent of the decision being reviewed (for example, an assessor does not consider or decide an appeal against an assessment decision they made).

Before making a formal appeal, the learner should ask for verbal clarification of the issue from the trainer/assessor. This informal approach does not lessen the rights of the learner in any way to make a formal appeal at a later date.

All appeals received will be treated in a manner respectful of the privacy of the person making the appeal – only those persons directly named in the appeal documents or who are charged with responsibility for investigating the matter will be involved in investigating or determining the validity of the appeal.

In the case of an appeal against termination of enrolment for unsatisfactory academic progress, if the appeal is dismissed, the termination of enrolment will take effect from the end of the study period in which the appeal process is finalised.

Resolution

The MTC Advisor has oversight and is responsible for managing the resolution of any formal complaints or learner appeals in an effective and timely manner, endeavouring to resolve all complaints and appeals within 30 days.

- Each complaint or appeal and its outcomes will be recorded in writing.
- MTC will act upon any substantiated complaints or appeals.

Where more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, MTC Advisor or delegate will:

- Inform the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days is required, and
- Regularly update the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.

All complaints and appeals are recorded on the MTC Complaints & Appeals Register. Identified causes of complaints or appeals may result in a continuous improvement activity where corrective action is taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

Where a matter is not able to be resolved, MTC will advise the complainant or appellant of an external independent dispute resolution scheme where they can seek further information.