

Management of Candidate Complaints and Appeals Policy

Surf Life Saving Western Australia Inc. (SLSWA) is committed to providing a learning environment in which complaints and appeals are responded to promptly, with minimum distress and maximum protection to all parties. SLSWA views candidates' complaints and appeals as providing an opportunity to review and improve its policies and practices, and also to gain insight into student's levels of satisfaction.

Responsibilities of managers, staff and candidates

The SLSWA Training and Education Coordinator and/ or other designated staff at SLSWA are responsible for responding appropriately to complaints or appeals and managing resolution processes.

All candidates, staff, trainers & assessors have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a productive, safe and equitable study environment at SLSWA. In particular students, staff, trainers & assessor have a responsibility to:

- Participate in the complaint resolution process in good faith
- Cooperate fully in an investigation process
- Assist the complaint handler in reaching satisfactory resolution wherever possible
- Avoid complaining about the same matter to several different units or individuals at the same time
- Avoid making complaints or counter complaints with mischievous or malicious intent

Accountability for candidate's complaints

A key principle in the SLSWA resolution process is that complaints or appeals are resolved wherever possible at the **lowest appropriate** level of management. A good guiding principle is for candidates to consider who would be the person most likely to have the relevant information to assist them in resolving their concerns.

- In the initial instance, a complaint may be taken to the course trainer/assessor.
- Depending on the nature of the complaint the Training and Education Coordinator may resolve the issue directly and notify the General Manager of the complaint for monitoring.
- All candidates have the option of making a formal written complaint to the General Manager of Lifesaving and Training. However, if the complaint has not previously been considered at the appropriate level of management, the General Manager of Lifesaving and Training will seek advice from the Training and Education Coordinator before responding to the complaint.

How to make a complaint

A complaint to a person in authority must be in writing. Procedural fairness unusually requires that the complainant must be willing to be identified unless the matter involves allegations of corruption or maladministration.

- If the complaint is about a staff member, the complaint should be made to the Training and Education Coordinator.
- If the complaint is about a fellow candidate or trainer/assessor, the complaint should be made to the Trainer
 - If the Trainer is unable to resolve the complaint it is then escalated to the Training and Education Coordinator.
- If the complaint relates to the quality of service SLSWA delivers the complaint should be made to the General Manager of Lifesaving and Training.

Outcomes and documentation of the complaint resolution process.

Candidates will receive written advice of the outcome of their complaint or appeal.

All documentation relating to complaints will be kept strictly confidential. The policy is set out to assist SLSSWA to monitor and improve the quality of service and programs that are offered.

Procedure for lodging a complaint

Step	Actions	Responsibility
1.	The candidate wishes to lodge a formal written complaint. Candidate to submit a complaint to the Training and Education Coordinator.	Candidate Training and Education Coordinator
2.	Complaint acknowledged in writing within 5 days	Candidate Training and Education Coordinator
3.	Training and Education Coordinator to review the complaint and inform all parties involved in the allegations	Training and Education Coordinator
4.	Training and Education Coordinator to provide those involved an opportunity to present their side of the matter	Training and Education Coordinator Candidate General Manager Lifesaving and Training
5.	Training and Education Coordinator to advise the candidate in writing of the outcome within 30 days of receiving the complaint	Training and Education Coordinator
6.	If issue not resolved General Manager of Lifesaving and Training to provide the candidate with details of the VET Regulator.	General Manager Lifesaving and Training
7.	General Manager Lifesaving and Training to seek feedback from the candidate once the process is complete to gain further guidance as to the continuous improvement of the process.	Candidate General Manager Lifesaving and Training
8.	General Manager Lifesaving and Training to document and retain all correspondence and outcomes of the complaint process and refer to the continuous improvement processes	General Manager Lifesaving and Training

Appeals

An appeal may be made if a candidate feels that the education or assessment process is unjust. SLSWA seeks to resolve appeals at the lowest level possible. A student may seek to resolve an assessment appeal with their trainer/assessor through discussion at the time of assessment. If the appeal is unable to be resolved at this time, students may appeal to the Training and Education Coordinator. Appeals are to be made to SLSWA in writing within 21 days of assessment decision which is subject of the appeal.

All finalised appeals will be reviewed as part of the continuous improvement process and discussed at the quarterly Review Meetings in order to highlight any recurring or significant issues.

Principles for managing appeals at SLSWA

SLSWA process for handling candidate appeals is based on confidentiality, impartiality, procedural fairness, protection from victimisation and prompt resolution.

- Where appropriate appeals will be resolved at the lowest level of management. However, SLSWA recognised that some appeals are most appropriately dealt with at a more senior level.
- Candidates may choose to be reassessed at no cost during the course they are enrolled in. If the appeal is unable to be resolved at this time the candidate must notify the Training Education Coordinator of the course they were enrolled in.
- If the appeal is unable to be resolved at the initial course the candidate was enrolled in the SLSWA Training and Education Coordinator will arrange for the candidate to attend a second course and be assessed by another SLSWA assessor. This will be at no cost to the candidate.
- In the event that the candidate's second assessment does not resolve the appeal the candidate wishes to lodge a complaint, the Procedure for lodging a complaint will be initiated.

A complaint, if not resolved informally, must be lodged in writing no later than 14 days from the date of the incident considered to have caused the complaint. All decisions will be communicated in writing to the student.

All finalised complaints received will be reviewed and discussed at the quarterly Review Meetings in order to highlight any recurring or significant issues.

Notes

1. *Where applicable employers will be advised to following the complaints procedure for avenues to make complaints*
2. *All candidates are provided with SLSWA terms and conditions prior to enrolment which details the process for dealing with complaints and appeals*
3. *SLSWA ensures that all complaints and appeals are managed fairly, efficiently and effectively*
4. *SLSWA acknowledges that all feedback, both positive and negative is a critical component of our continuous improvement strategy*

5. *The candidate will be kept informed, in writing of the progress of the complaint or appeal. If it should take longer than sixty days. SLSWA will provide the candidate with written reasons*
6. *At any point in the complaint handling process, mediation can be arranged if agreed to by the parties involved*
7. *A candidate with literacy difficulties can request assistance from another person to complete their written complaint. An independent SLSWA staff member can be made available if requested by the candidate to assist with the writing of the appeal required.*