Complaints and Appeals PP22

Purpose
This Complaints and Appeals Policy and related procedure are designed to ensure that Advance responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction. This policy outlines Advance’s approach to managing complaints and appeals and ensures that all learners and other stakeholders are aware of the steps to take to have their dissatisfaction addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

Scope
This policy applies to all learners, prospective learners and other stakeholders of Advance.

Policy
Advance is committed to developing and maintaining an effective, timely, fair and equitable complaints and appeals system which is easily accessible and offered to complainants at no charge. Participants may raise any matters of concern relating to training delivery and assessment, the quality of the teaching, the assessment process, assessment outcomes, amenities, discrimination and other issues, which may arise.

Advance will deal with complaints, grievances and appeals in a constructive and timely manner. It is our policy to ensure that:

- Each formal complaint, grievance, appeal and its outcome is recorded in writing;
- The complainant has an opportunity to formally present his or her case;
- The complainant is given a written statement of the outcomes, including reasons for this decision.
- Action is taken to rectify and/or prevent a reoccurrence subject of any substantiated complaint.
- Complaints and appeals are viewed as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works
- The views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a complaint or appeal is not discriminated against nor victimised

Definitions
Complaint – a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any service provided by Advance.

Types of Complaints
A complaint may include but is not limited to:

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

Appeal – a request to review a decision related to an assessment or other academic matter

Types of Appeals
An appeal may include but is not limited to:

- Assessment process and decision
- Candidate progress and academic progress decisions
- Deferral, suspension, or cancellation decisions made in relation to the student’s enrolment
Procedures

Complaints Process

1. Raise the complaint directly with the person involved
Advance encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Any participant with a complaint is encouraged to firstly raise the matter directly with the other party concerned. A meeting should be requested, by the participant, at which time the matter in dispute can be raised and a resolution sought. All complaints must be raised within 21 calendar days of the matter occurring and a response must be provided to the participant within 14 calendar days of the meeting. The Advance staff member who resolved the complaint must provide a written summary of the complaint and resolution to the General Manager within 7 calendar days. The General Manager shall record all details of the matter in the complaints register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Manager’s Meeting.

Register the complaint with the General Manager
Should the matter remain unresolved, the participant may choose to register the complaint with the General Manager. The complaint may be lodged in writing on PF55 Complaints and Appeals form or an appointment can be made with the General Manager to lodge the complaint in person (all complaints must be raised within 21 calendar days of the matter occurring). The General Manager will take action to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to resolve the complaint and to formally record it and file it. A letter will be sent to the participant informing them of the steps taken to resolve the issue and a final written statement (including reasons for the decision) will be sent to the participant within 14 calendar days of the meeting (or receipt of PF55 Complaints and Appeals form.) Where Advance considers that more than 60 calendar days will be required to finalise a complaint, the General Manager will notify the complainant in writing advising the reasons why, and a suggested revised time frame for resolution. The General Manager will also regularly communicate updates with progress on the matter to all parties involved. The General Manager shall record all details of the matter in the complaints register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Manager’s Meeting.

Action for substantiated complaints
Where a complaint is substantiated, the General Manager will take appropriate action (within 14 calendar days) to ensure similar situations do not arise again. Examples of actions include (but not limited to) appropriate staff management actions, review of policy and/or procedure or similar. The General Manager shall record all details of the matter on the complaints register and table this at the Manager’s Meeting.

Register the complaint/appeal with the relevant funding body (if relevant)
Some training programs are funded by Government departments who encourage complaints to be brought to their attention if the participant feels it necessary to do so. The appropriate funding body will consider the issue and recommend a resolution. All funding bodies encourage complaints to be firstly brought to the attention of and resolution sought by the relevant training organisation (Advance). All participants will be notified of the funding body’s contact details if this is relevant.

Resolution by arbitration
Should the complaint remain unresolved following the steps taken above, the CEO of Advance may appoint an independent arbiter (professional arbiter selected from the Yellow Pages at no cost to the participant) to review the dispute and suggest an amicable solution.
Resolution by an external authority
Should the matter remain unresolved or not to the satisfaction of the participant, he/she may wish to take the matter to, or seek the advice of, an external authority that is skilled in dispute resolution processes (all costs to be borne by the participant). E.g. The National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.

Appeals Process

1. Raise the appeal directly with the Advance staff member involved
Participants have the right to make an appeal against assessment and other academic decisions made by Advance staff. Appeals against decisions of a non-academic nature are to be made by following the Advance Complaints Process. Advance encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Any participant with a concern about an assessment or other academic judgement is encouraged to firstly raise the matter directly with the other party concerned. A meeting should be requested, by the participant, at which time the matter in dispute can be raised and a resolution sought. Where a participant chooses to access this process Advance will maintain their enrolment while the appeals process is ongoing.
Appeals against assessment decisions and other academic matters must be made within 21 calendar days of the original decision being made and a response must be provided to the participant within 14 calendar days of the meeting. The Advance staff member who resolved the matter must provide a written summary of the appeal to the General Manager within 7 calendar days of resolution. The General Manager shall record all details of the matter in the appeals register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Manager’s Meeting.

Register the Appeal with the General Manager
Should the matter remain unresolved, the participant may choose to lodge the appeal with the General Manager. The appeal may be registered in writing on PF55 Complaints and Appeals form or an appointment can be made with the General Manager to lodge the appeal in person (all appeals must be lodged within 21 calendar days of the original decision being made and the General Manager must acknowledge receipt of an appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of receipt). Where a participant chooses to access this process Advance will maintain their enrolment while the appeals process is ongoing.
The General Manager will take action to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to resolve the appeal and to formally record it and file it. A letter will be sent to the participant informing them of the steps taken to resolve the issue and a final written statement (including reasons for the decision) will be sent to the participant within 14 calendar days of the meeting (or receipt of PF55 Complaints and Appeals form.). The General Manager shall record all details of the matter in the appeals register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Manager’s Meeting.

Action for substantiated complaints
Where a complaint is substantiated, the General Manager will take appropriate action (within 14 calendar days) to ensure similar situations do not arise again. Examples of actions include (but not limited to) appropriate staff management actions, review of training and assessment strategies, policy and/or procedure or similar.
The General Manager shall record all details of the matter in the appeals register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Manager’s Meeting.

Register the appeal with the relevant funding body (if relevant)
Some training programs are funded by Government departments who encourage appeals to be brought to their attention if the participant feels it necessary to do so. The appropriate funding body will consider the issue and
recommend a resolution. All funding bodies encourage appeals to be firstly brought to the attention of and resolution sought by the relevant training organisation (Advance). All participants will be notified of the funding body’s contact details if this is relevant.

Resolution by arbitration
Should the appeal remain unresolved following the steps taken above, the CEO of Advance may appoint an independent arbiter (professional arbiter selected from the Yellow Pages at no cost to the participant) to review the appeal and suggest an amicable solution.

Resolution by an external authority
Should the matter remain unresolved or not to the satisfaction of the participant, he/she may wish to take the matter to, or seek the advice of, an external authority that is skilled in dispute resolution processes (all costs to be borne by the participant). E.g. The National Training Complaints Hotline on 1800 000 674.