

Purpose

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

In such instances, Advance invites feedback from the dissatisfied party so that a resolution can be found and as an opportunity to consolidate the feedback into a review and continuous improvement of Advance policies and practices.

Advance will address any complaint in a fair, constructive and timely manner. The complainant has the right for their complaint to be heard and for an impartial decision to be made, at no cost to them. Complainants have the right to appeal a decision.

Scope

This policy and associated procedures supports Advance to provide a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned. All complaints and appeals received by Advance will be viewed as an opportunity for improvement. This policy applies to all learners, prospective learners and other stakeholders of Advance.

Policy

Students 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.

This policy ensures that:

- each formal complaint, grievance, appeal and its outcome is recorded in writing;
- the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their 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; and
- 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/or
- 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; and/or
- 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

- a) Advance encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Any student with a complaint is encouraged to firstly raise the matter directly with the other party concerned. A meeting should be requested, by the student, at which time the matter in dispute can be raised and a resolution sought. All complaints must be raised within 21 days of the matter occurring and a response must be provided to the student within 14 days of the meeting. The Advance staff member who resolved the complaint must provide a written summary of the complaint and resolution to the RTO Manager within seven (7) days.
- b) The RTO Manager shall record all details of the matter in the Complaints and Appeals Register and outline identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

2. Register the complaint with the RTO Manager

- a) Should the matter remain unresolved, the student may choose to register the complaint with the RTO Manager. The complaint may be lodged in writing using the Complaints and Appeals form or an appointment can be made with the RTO Manager to lodge the complaint in person (all complaints must be raised within 21 days of the matter occurring).
- b) The RTO Manager will take action to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to resolve the complaint and will formally retain evidence for audit and review purposes. A letter will be sent to the student 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 student within 14 days of the meeting (or receipt of Complaints and Appeals form).
- c) Where Advance considers that more than 60 days will be required to finalise a complaint, the RTO Manager will notify the complainant in writing advising the reasons why, and a suggested revised time frame for resolution. The RTO Manager will also regularly communicate updates of progress on the matter to all parties involved.
- d) The RTO Manager will record all details of the matter in the Complaints and Appeals Register and present identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

3. Action for substantiated complaints

- a) Where a complaint is substantiated, the RTO Manager will take appropriate action (within 14 days) to ensure similar situations do not arise again. Examples of actions may include, but are not limited to, appropriate staff management actions, review of policy and/or procedure or similar.
- b) The RTO Manager will record all details of the matter on the Complaints and Appeals Register which will be presented at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

4. 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 student feels it necessary to do so. The appropriate funding body will consider the issue and recommend a resolution. All funding bodies encourage complaints, and their possible resolutions, to be firstly addressed by the relevant training organisation (Advance). If relevant, the contact details of the funding body will be provided to the student.

5. 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 a reputable source at no cost to the student) to review the dispute and suggest an amicable solution.

6. Resolution by an external authority

Should the matter remain unresolved or not to the satisfaction of the student, he/she, at their own cost, may wish to take the matter to, or seek the advice of, an external authority that is skilled in dispute resolution processes, e.g. the National Training Complaints Hotline - Ph. 133 873.

Appeals Process

1. Raise the appeal directly with the Advance staff member involved

- a) Students 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 and Appeals Process.
- b) Advance encourages open communication and an environment of trust. Any student 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 student, at which time the matter in dispute can be raised and a resolution sought. Where a student chooses to access this process, Advance will maintain their enrolment while the appeals process is ongoing.
- c) Appeals against assessment decisions and other academic matters must be made within 21 days of the original decision being made and a response must be provided to the student within 14 days of the meeting.
- d) The Advance staff member who resolved the matter must provide a written summary of the appeal to the RTO Manager within seven (7) days of resolution.
- e) The RTO Manager shall record all details of the matter in the Complaints and Appeals Register and present identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

2. Register the Appeal with the RTO Manager

- a) Should the matter remain unresolved, the student may choose to lodge the appeal with the RTO Manager. The appeal may be registered in writing on the Complaints and Appeals form or an appointment can be made with the RTO Manager to lodge the appeal in person. All appeals must be lodged within 21 days of the original decision being made and the RTO Manager must acknowledge receipt of an appeal in writing within five (5) days of receipt. Where a student chooses to access this process Advance will maintain their enrolment while the appeals process is ongoing.

- b) The RTO Manager will take action to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to resolve the appeal and will formally retain evidence for audit and review purposes. A letter will be sent to the student 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 student within 14 days of the meeting, or receipt of the Complaints and Appeals form.
- c) The RTO Manager shall record all details of the matter in the Complaints and Appeals Register and present identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

3. Action for substantiated complaints

- a) Where a complaint is substantiated, the RTO Manager will take appropriate action, within 14 days, to ensure similar situations do not arise again. Examples of actions include, but are not limited to, appropriate staff management actions, review of training and assessment strategies, policy and/or procedure or similar.
- b) The RTO Manager shall record all details of the matter in the Complaints and Appeals Register and present identified areas for improvement at the next scheduled Leadership Meeting.

4. 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 student 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 students will be notified of the funding body's contact details if this is relevant.

5. 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 a reputable source at no cost to the student) to review the appeal and suggest an amicable solution.

6. Resolution by an external authority

Should the matter remain unresolved or not to the satisfaction of the student, he/she, at their own cost, may wish to take the matter to, or seek the advice of, an external authority that is skilled in dispute resolution processes, e.g. the National Training Complaints Hotline - Ph. 133 873.

Reference Documents

Complaints and Appeals Form (ACC66)