

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Purpose

This policy is designed to offer students a transparent procedure for lodging complaints or appeals, detailing the specific steps to be undertaken to address and resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all parties involved. It guarantees that everyone implicated is fully informed about the actions taken and the final outcomes.

Despite LGI's commitment to delivering fair and satisfactory services to its students, there may be instances where grievances emerge, necessitating either an informal or formal resolution process. LGI treats all complaints and appeals as valuable feedback, seeing them as chances to enhance our services. Our aim is to resolve these issues fairly and efficiently, ensuring that resolutions are reached in a manner consistent with the principles of natural justice.

Definitions

A **complaint** is negative feedback about services or employees which has not been resolved locally. A complaint may be received by LGI in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person yet are generally made by learners and/or employers.

An **appeal** is an application by a learner for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding during training and/or assessment. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute. Appeals must be submitted to LGI within 28 days of the learner being informed of the decision or finding.

Policy

LGI recognises the right of any student, employee, or member of the public to make a complaint or lodge an appeal, and is committed to resolving such matters in accordance with this policy, ensuring a process free from prejudice, fear of reprisal, or victimisation. Individuals are entitled to formally present their complaints or appeals in writing, and LGI pledges to handle these situations with fairness, equity, and efficiency. We encourage all parties to approach the matter with an open mind and aim for resolution through discussion and conciliation.

In instances where resolution through direct discussion and conciliation proves unattainable, LGI acknowledges the importance of involving an appropriate external and independent mediator to facilitate between the disputing parties. This step allows all involved to formally present their cases in an impartial setting.

Confidentiality is paramount throughout the complaint and appeal process, with LGI dedicated to protecting the rights and privacy of all parties, ensuring a swift return to normalcy and, where applicable, a conducive learning environment.

The handling of complaints and appeals at LGI adheres strictly to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. This means that complainants or appellants are guaranteed a fair hearing, access to all pertinent information, and the opportunity to respond. Decisions are made impartially by individuals not influenced by the outcome, based on factual evidence, and considering only relevant factors.

This policy is readily accessible to all students and staff on the LGI website and within the Student Information Handbook, which also includes information on external agencies for further assistance. LGI commits to securely recording the handling and outcomes of all complaints and appeals, including the timelines involved. Feedback received through this process is used to review and, if necessary, revise LGI's procedures and practices to prevent a recurrence of the issue.

Process

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution of Complaints and Appeals as the First Step

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment that are the source of frustration or are in dispute should be resolved at the time, as they occur between the persons involved, where possible. This may include advice, discussions, and general mediation in relation to the issue.

Stage 2 - Formal Complaints and Appeals Process

Sometimes, it will not be possible and in these cases, you are encouraged to come forward and inform us of your concerns with the confidence that you will be treated fairly. LGI applies the following principles to its complaints and appeals.

2.1 Complaints or Appeals Submission by Student

- The student lodging the complaint or appeal must complete a complaint or appeal form which is available on the student portal
- All other parties can email their complaint or appeal directly to admin@languagelgroupinstitute.com
- All formal complaints must be lodged within **seven (7) calendar days** of the occurrence
- All appeals must be lodged within **seven (7) calendar days** of the date of assessment result notification to the student
- If the complaint or appeal is raised outside these timeframes, then the complaint or appeal will be considered only in exceptional or compelling circumstances

2.2 Acknowledgement of the Complaint or Appeal

- All complaints and appeal submissions will be acknowledged in writing within two (2) working days of receipt
- The CEO will either deal with any complaints or appeals personally or arrange for it to be dealt with by a Management Representative
- This process must commence within 48 hours from the time the CEO, or their delegate, receives written notification from the person making the complaint
- The CEO / Management Representative, must review the complaint and if required arrange a time for all parties to formally present their side / version of events. This should be arranged at separate times, ensuring neither party faces prejudice or fear of reprisal or victimisation

2.3 Resolution of Complaint or Appeal

- The CEO shall resolve the complaint or appeal or decide for further processing within fourteen (14) working days of the submission date and keep the complainant/appellant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint/appeal
- If there is any conflict of interest, e.g., if the complaint is about the CEO, then the complaint is referred to the Management Representative and vice versa
- Every appeal will be heard by a suitably qualified independent assessor or panel, who will be asked to make an independent assessment of the appeal application

- Complainants/appellants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies/ persons at any point of the complaint and appeals process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's/appellant's costs unless otherwise authorised
- If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, LGI must promptly implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action that is required, and advise the student of the outcome

Stage 3 – Nonresolution

3.1 Independent External Person

- Should the issue still not be resolved to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint, the RTO will make arrangements for an independent external person to resolve the issue. This may be the ombudsman specific to the area or a disputes resolutions specialist from the local magistrate's court
- All costs incurred for the third party review will be advised to the appellant
- All parties will be given the opportunity to formally present their case
- The time frame for this process may vary yet should take no longer than 14 days

3.2 Complaints to ASQA

If any party is still not happy with external mediation, they may lodge a complaint via the National Training Complaints Hotline on 13 38 73, or they may take their complaint to the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or other relevant body such as the relevant state department of Fair Trading.

For more information please refer to the following link: www.asqa.gov.au/complaints

You can use ASQA's online platform to make a paperless complaint via the following link www.asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au/

If preferred, please complete the 'Complaint about a Registered Training Organisation' form which can be found on the ASQA website www.asqa.gov.au or at this link

www.dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline/national-training-and-complaints-hotline-complaints-form

You can submit the form by emailing: complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au – Alternatively, you can print and fill out the form, and post it to:

Complaints Team

Australian Skills Quality Authority GPO Box 9928

Melbourne VIC 3001

Australia

www.asqa.gov.au

If you need help with the form, or if you are unsure whether ASQA can help with your complaint, please call the complaints team on 1300 701 801, or email complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au.

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Note:

- Where the RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the RTO will inform 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
- All documentation relating to complaints or appeals will be securely archived either with the student file or in the RTO's document management system for audit purposes
- The RTO's CEO is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the policy
- 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