



# Complaints and Appeals P&P

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## Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) 's approach to managing dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of staff, students, clients, and other members of the community, in relation to the provision of its courses. It provides a transparent approach for complaints and appeals to be addressed in a fair, efficient, and confidential manner.

This policy and procedure contribute to Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s compliance with the requirements of its registration as a training provider including Elements 1.1, 2.2, 2.7 & 3.2 of the AQTF as well as Guidelines 2.7 & 2.8 of the VRQA Guidelines.

## Definitions

**Appeal** means a request for a decision made by Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) to be reviewed.

**AQTF** means the AQTF Essential Standards of Continuing Registration 2010.

**Complaint** means a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria).

**Client** means persons who are past, current or prospective students of the RTO and or their employers and who are affected by decisions, actions or omissions by the RTO in relation to the provision of vocational education and training.

**Services** means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners. It does not include services such as student counselling, mediation or ICT support.

**Nationally Recognised Training** means training and assessment that leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework certification such a statement of attainment or qualification. This is also referred to as 'Accredited' training on Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s website and other promotional material.

**VRQA Guidelines** means the VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers 2016.



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VRQA means Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority, the state VET regulator and Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s registering body.

## Policy

### 1. Nature of complaints and appeals

- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
  - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
  - Any third-party providing Services on behalf of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria).
  - Any student or client of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria).
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s services and activities such as:
  - the application and enrolment process.
  - marketing information.
  - the quality of training and assessment provided.
  - training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements.
  - the way someone has been treated.
  - the actions of another student.
- An appeal is a request for a decision made by Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) to be reviewed. Decisions may be about:
  - course admissions.
  - refunds.
  - response to a complaint.
  - assessment outcomes / results.
  - other general decisions made by Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)

### 2. Principles of resolution

- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) ensures that complaints and appeals:
  - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
  - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
  - Can be made at no cost to the individual.
  - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.



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- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.
- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.

### 3. Timeframes for resolution

- When a formal complaint or appeal is lodged to the SSAA state office, it will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer. In matters where additional time is needed, the complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

### 4. Records of complaints and appeals

- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes on the *RTO Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the *RTO Privacy Policy and Procedure*. These records are kept separately to the register of complaints and are reviewed to identify areas of improvement in accordance with Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s *RTO Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure*.

### 5. Making a complaint or appeal

- If an issue is raised, it is recommended that the student try to resolve the issue informally and directly with the trainer/assessor or any person directly involved. This is the quickest and most efficient approach.
- If the issue is not resolved and the student is not happy with the outcome, the student is welcome to lodge a formal complaint.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or other written format and sent to Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s head office at Unit 3/26 Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill, 3128 attention to the CEO or submitted via email to [training@ssaavic.com.au](mailto:training@ssaavic.com.au).
- Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
  - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
  - Any evidence to support your complaint or appeal.
  - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
  - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- Your complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 7 days of receipt.



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### 6. Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some or all members of the management team of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
- Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task.

### 7. Independent parties

- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter.
- Where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter. Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria).
- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) is not a member on the VRQA approved dispute resolution and student welfare scheme, however, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) may also appoint the independent party to be involved in the resolution of a complaint or appeal where it is deemed necessary.
- Complainants and appellants can find an appropriate independent party by calling the Resolution Institute on 02 9251 3366 or by searching the following directory, according to their locality and area of concern:
  - <https://www.resolution.institute/australian-directory>
- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will provide complete cooperation with the independent party investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.
- The CEO (or delegate) will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

### 8. External complaint avenues

Complaints in relation to nationally recognised or 'accredited' training can also be made via the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- Email: [ntch@education.gov.au](mailto:ntch@education.gov.au)

For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage:

<https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>

- Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA):



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Complainants may also complain to Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s registering body, Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) in relation to nationally recognised training, or our 'accredited courses'.

VRQA can investigate complaints about Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s (nationally recognised training, or 'accredited courses only) in relation to:

- the quality of our training and assessment
- our marketing and advertising practices
- an alleged contravention by the RTO of this Act or the regulations
- an alleged contravention by the RTO of the RTO Standards.
- If your complaint does not fall within VRQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you directly contact the agency responsible as listed on the following website:  
<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/otheragencies.aspx>
- Please refer to the following webpage below before making a complaint to VRQA:  
<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/tovrqa.aspx>

For students:

- VRQA may not be able to investigate complaints if you do not include evidence that you have already exhausted our formal internal complaints process as above.

### 9. Publication

This policy and procedure will be published in the Student Handbook and on Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s website.

## Procedures

### 1. Complaints management

Procedure	Responsibility
<p><b>A. Receive and acknowledge complaint.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per policy, complaints are to be made in writing by the complainant, attention to the CEO.</li> <li>• The CEO should review all complaints upon receipt.</li> <li>• Acknowledge receipt of complaint in writing by sending a letter to complainant within 3 working days of receipt. Use <i>Complaint/ Appeal Acknowledgement Letter</i>.</li> <li>• Record details of the complaint on the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i>.</li> </ul>	CEO and Training Manager
<p><b>B. Investigate the complaint.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon receiving the complaint, the matter is to be investigated to ensure all relevant information is available and it is accurate and complete.</li> </ul>	Training Manager



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Procedure	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further details from the complainant, respondent or other involved parties may be requested during this stage. This may be in writing, over the phone, or face-to-face.</li> <li>• If the matter is in relation to a third-party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO, the third party should be involved in the resolution of the complaint.</li> <li>• The CEO will review the information and decide on an appropriate response. Where deemed necessary by the CEO, the matter may be reviewed by other members of the management team to arrive at an appropriate resolution.</li> <li>• Note: The complaint must be completely resolved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the original complaint. If the matter is particularly complex and it is going to take longer to resolve, the complainant is to be advised in writing along with reasons for the extra time. They must be provided with updates on progress on a weekly basis thereafter until the matter is resolved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C. Advise of the outcome and update records.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a written response to the complainant outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The RTO’s understanding of the complaint.</li> <li>– The steps taken to investigate and resolve the complaint.</li> <li>– Decisions made about resolution, with reasons for the decisions made.</li> <li>– Areas that have been identified as possible causes of the complaint and improvements to be recommended.</li> <li>– Their right to access the appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i> so it includes the outcome of the complaint.</li> <li>• Update the <i>Continuous Improvement Register</i> if applicable for any improvements to be made as an outcome.</li> <li>• Keep a copy of the complaint and supporting documents in the Complaints file and in the student or staff file (where relevant).</li> </ul>	Training Manager
<p><b>D. Review complaints.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the complaints process and its outcome at the next management meeting to consider whether there are any improvements to be made to prevent recurrence. (Refer to CG3 for procedure).</li> </ul>	Senior Leadership Team



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### 2. Appeals management

Procedure	Responsibility
<p><b>A. Receive and acknowledge appeals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, acknowledge receipt of appeal in writing by sending a letter to appellant within 3 working days of receipt to ensure appellant receives it within 7 days. Use <i>Complaint/Appeal Acknowledgement Letter</i>.</li> <li>Record details of appeal on the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i>.</li> </ul>	CEO or delegate
<p><b>B. Respond to assessment appeals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the case of appeals against assessment decisions, the original assessment decision will be reviewed by having an assessor independent of the original decision mark the assessment task again.</li> <li>The assessment decision made during the appeals process will be considered the actual assessment outcome for the task.</li> <li>Advise the student of the outcome of the appeal as per point G below.</li> </ul>	Training Manager, Training Manager or their delegate
<p><b>C. Respond to appeals against non-academic decisions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon receiving the appeal, the matter is to be investigated to identify the original decision made and the reasons for the decision.</li> <li>Further details from the appellant, respondent, the person who made the original decision, or other involved parties may be requested during this stage. This may be in writing, over the phone, or face-to-face.</li> <li>The appellant may request for an independent party (mediator) to be involved in the process. Where this is requested by the appellant, they will bear the costs associated. Additionally, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) may decide to call upon an independent mediator to assist to resolve the issue where a decision cannot be reached internally. This will be at Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s cost.</li> <li>Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria)'s Senior Leadership Team will review all relevant information and decide on an appropriate response.</li> <li>Note: The appeal must be resolved within 60 calendar days of receipt of the original appeal. If the matter is particularly complex and it is going to take longer to resolve, the appellant must be advised in writing along with reasons for the extra time. They must be provided with progress updates on a weekly basis thereafter until the matter is resolved.</li> </ul>	Senior Leadership Team
<p><b>D. Advise appellant of the outcome and update records.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a written response to the appellant outlining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RTO's understanding of the reasons for the appeal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Senior Leadership Team



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Procedure	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The steps taken to investigate and resolve the appeal.</li> <li>– Decisions made about resolution and reasons for the decisions.</li> <li>– Areas that have been identified as possible causes of the appeal and improvements to be recommended.</li> <li>• Update the <i>Complaints and Appeals Register</i> so it includes the outcome of the appeal.</li> <li>• Complaints and Appeals Register details must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The name of the person who made the complaint.</li> <li>○ The date on which the complaint was made.</li> <li>○ The date on which the complaint was resolved or closed (if applicable)</li> <li>○ A reference to the RTO's complete records relating to the complaint.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Update the <i>Continuous Improvement Register</i> if applicable for any improvements to be made as an outcome.</li> <li>• Keep a copy of the appeal and supporting documents in the Appeals file and in the student or staff file (where relevant).</li> <li>• Provide access to make the register of complaints and records relating to the complaint during business hours at the principal office of the RTO for inspection by a person authorised by the Authority.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>E. Review appeals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the appeal and its outcome at the next management meeting to consider whether there are any improvements to be made to prevent recurrence.</li> </ul>	Senior Leadership Team

### 3. Reviews by independent party

Procedure	Responsibility
<p><b>A. Appoint and cooperate with mediator/ independent party.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complainant or appellant may request that an independent party is involved in resolution of the matter. The independent party may use the RTO's selected mediator or may seek their own at their cost.</li> <li>• The CEO may also decide that an independent party is required to resolve particularly complex matters or in situations where there may be bias.</li> <li>• Locate an independent mediator via the resolution institute (<a href="https://www.resolution.institute/australian-directory">https://www.resolution.institute/australian-directory</a>) to arrange mediation/ review.</li> <li>• Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will co-operate fully in the process of the external party reviewing and investigating matter. This will include</li> </ul>	Staff as required





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Procedure	Responsibility
<p>providing access to the relevant information surrounding the complaint or appeal and the internal complaints records when permitted to do so by law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff must cooperate in such instances and to give an accurate account of the events as they understand them.</li> </ul>	

#### 4. External complaint or appeal

Procedure	Responsibility
<p><b>A. External complaint or appeal.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If dissatisfied with the internal processes, the complainant/appellant may initiate an external complaint or appeal.</li> <li>If requested, Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (Victoria) will respond as necessary.</li> <li>All records will be kept on file.</li> <li>Fully co-operate with external party to respond to the complaint as required.</li> </ul>	Staff as required
<p><b>B. Review external complaints or appeals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the external process and its outcome at the next management meeting to consider whether there are any improvements to be made to prevent recurrence.</li> </ul>	Senior Leadership Team

#### Document Control

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