

Quality Manual Policy – QPOL22

Complaints and Appeals

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Authorised By:	General Manager
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Objective

Synergy Education Group confirms its commitment to meeting the ASQA standards relating to addressing Complaints and Appeals received from student and clients.

Purpose

Synergy Education Group (SEG) is committed to ensuring that we deliver a fair and equitable service to all of our clients. If at any time during your dealings with us you have any concerns about training, assessment or service we encourage you to:

For participants

1. In the first instance, participants are encouraged to discuss the complaint, appeal, concern or grievance with the trainer of the course in which they are enrolled. SEG will provide open dialogue with the trainer should the student not have the opportunity to discuss on the day of training.
2. Failing satisfactory resolution of the grievance with the trainer, the student may lodge a written complaint or appeal with the RTO Coordinator via email to info@synergy.edu.au.

For clients

Where a complaint is raised by anyone other than a student about the policies, procedures, services or products offered by SEG, the person may lodge a written complaint with the RTO Coordinator via email to info@synergy.edu.au

Depending on the circumstances of each individual case, SEG may need to inform any person who is the subject of an investigation or allegation, or whose interests are likely to be affected adversely by a decision.

A person making a complaint or seeking appeal may, at any point during the complaint or appeals process, engage a support person or advocate.

At any time during a complaint or appeals process, SEG reserves the right to refer the matter for expert legal advice.

The complaint or appeal will be dealt with in a timely manner and will acknowledge receipt of a complaint or appeal within seven (7) business days of receipt.

SEG aims to investigate and finalise a complaint or appeal within thirty (30) working days of acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint or appeal. Where the investigation and/or finalisation of the complaint or appeal is expected to exceed thirty (30) days, SEG will inform the complainant in writing, including the reason(s) for extension, and regularly update them on the progress of the matter.

Complaints proceedings must be commenced within one year of the alleged event in question.

Appeals must be received within 14 days of the decision being received by the student.

You can request a copy of our complaints and appeals policy by contacting the Education and Training Manager at info@synergy.edu.au

Synergy Education Group (SEG) is committed to ensuring that we deliver a fair and equitable service to all of our clients. A Complaints procedure is available to all persons wishing to make a complaint, appeal or any other manner of objection in relation to the conduct of SEG. The complaints procedure will address both formal and informal complaints. All formal complaints will be submitted in writing to Synergy Education Group management and will be heard and addressed within fifteen (15) working days of receipt. If at any time during your dealings with us you have any concerns about training, assessment or service we encourage you to:

For participants

1. In the first instance, participants are encouraged to discuss the complaint, appeal, concern or grievance with the trainer of the course in which they attended. SEG will provide open dialogue with the trainer should the student not have the opportunity to discuss on the day of training.
2. Failing satisfactory resolution of the grievance with the trainer, the student may lodge a written complaint or appeal with the Education and Training Manager via email to info@synergy.edu.au.

For clients

Where a complaint is raised by anyone other than a student about the policies, procedures, services or products offered by SEG, the person may lodge a written complaint with the Education and Training Manager via email to info@synergy.edu.au.

SEG management will maintain a Complaints Register to document the course of action and resolution of all formal complaints. All complaints substantiated by the complaint's procedure will be reviewed as part of the Synergy Education Group continuous improvement procedure.

It is the responsibility of SEG management to ensure adherence to the complaint procedure and that resolution is sought in all reasonable circumstances. This includes informing and assisting Students with the complaint's procedure and supply of complaint forms.

If the Student is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint after following and exhausting the Complaints Procedure, the "National Guideline for Complaints" directs them to seek further assistance from the Disputes Settlement Centre, whose details are listed below:

Disputes Settlement Centre

A Division of the Department of Justice

4 / 456 Lonsdale St GPO Box 4113
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Free Call: 1300 372 888

Email: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au

A copy of the National Guideline for Complaints is available from Synergy Education Group management.

This process will be reviewed to align with the national guidelines for complaints.

The Chief Executive Officer may arrange for the complaint to be considered by an appropriate independent third-party or the student may refer the complaint to the National VET Regulator (ASQA). In some cases, ASQA may not be the appropriate body to handle a complaint. ASQA can only deal with complaints about:

- The information provided to the student by an RTO about the course/s they are interested in;
- The delivery and assessment of the training the student has received; and
- The qualifications the student have or have not been issued.

Making a complaint to ASQA

To make a complaint, students are to complete the Complaint about a registered training organisation form located on the ASQA website.

The student can also submit the form by emailing: complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au. If the student wishes to submit the complaint in hard copy they can print and fill out the form, and post it to:

Complaints Team
Australian skills Quality Authority GPO Box 9928
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Staff are to provide assistance to students during the complaint handling process. If student's require additional help they may call the ASQA complaints team on 1300 701 801, or email complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au

Appeals

The Synergy Education Group appeals process is concerned with a Student's right to request change to decisions or processes of an official nature, usually in relation to academic or procedural matters.

In the case of a Student's appeal against specific assessment decisions, the Student should first discuss the decision/s with the relevant trainer or assessor and request re-evaluation. The trainer or assessor will hear the Student's appeal, make fair judgment to the best of their ability as to whether change/s are required, then discuss their final decision with the Student.

If the Student is still dissatisfied with the trainer or assessor's decision, they have the right to take the appeal to the Synergy Education Group Chief Executive Officer. The formal notice of appeal is required to comply with the following principles upon submission to Synergy Education Group:

- The notice of appeal should be in writing, addressed to Synergy Education Group for referral to the Chief Executive Officer and submitted within twenty-eight (28) days of notification of the outcome of the trainer or assessors re-evaluation process.
- The notice of appeal must be submitted within the specified time frame otherwise the original result will stand.
- The Chief Executive Officer is to arrange for a re-assessment of the student as soon as possible. The student is also to be offered the opportunity to undertake additional training before this re-assessment. The reassessment is to be conducted by a different than conducted the initial assessment. The student may be offered up to 3 re- assessments at no cost.
- If a Student's appeal needs to be deferred due to emergency circumstances, such as in the case of serious illness or injury, a medical certificate supporting the case must be forwarded to Synergy Education Group. The notice of deferral must be submitted within three (3) working days of the conclusion date displayed on the medical certificate.

It is the responsibility of SEG management to ensure adherence to the appeal procedure and that resolution is sought in all reasonable circumstances. This includes informing and assisting Students with the appeal procedure and supply of appeal forms.

If the Student is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint after following and exhausting the Appeals Procedure, the "National Guideline for Complaints" directs them to seek further assistance from the Disputes Settlement Centre, whose details are listed below:

Disputes Settlement Centre

A Division of the Department of Justice

4 / 456 Lonsdale St GPO Box 4113
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Free Call: 1300 372 888

Email: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au

A copy of the National Guideline for Complaints is available from SEG management.

Complaints/Appeals Procedure

All persons wishing to make a complaint, appeal or any other manner of objection in relation to the conduct of Synergy Education Group have access to the following procedure: **Informal complaint:**

- An initial complaint or appeal will involve the Student communicating directly with Synergy Education Group verbally or by other appropriate means. Synergy Education Group will make a decision, discuss their judgement with the Student and record the outcome of the complaint or appeal.
- Students dissatisfied with the outcome of the Synergy Education Group's decision may initiate the formal complaint procedure.

Formal complaint / appeal

- It is normal procedure that all formal complaints proceed only after the initial informal complaint or appeal procedure has been finalised.
- The formal complaint or appeal is to be submitted in writing, and the procedure and outcome recorded by Synergy Education Group management.
- On receipt of a formal complaint, SEG will convene the complaint committee to hear the complaint. The complaint committee will consist of a panel with no previous involvement or vested interest in the outcome of the particular complaint or appeal.
- Members of the committee should include:
 - Synergy Education Group
 - A Synergy Education Group staff member
 - A person independent of Synergy Education Group
- The complainant / appellant shall be given an opportunity to present the case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation.
 - Staff member/s involved shall be given an opportunity to present their case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation.
 - The complaint committee will reach a decision on the complaint or appeal after consideration
 - The complaint committee will inform all parties involved of the outcome in writing within five (5) working days of making the decision.

All complaints and appeals will be reviewed at monthly management meetings. Continuous improvement procedures may be actioned when the complaint procedure results in an identified improvement to internal operations.