SLSQ Education Policy | RTO 2804

Title:	Complaints and Appeals	**Department:**	Education
Policy No:	RTO-PO-007	**Version:**	V2.1
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Revision Date:	2 years from date of approved date	**Approved by:**	Laura Bowart SLSQ Education CEO
		SRTO's:	2.7, 2.8, 4.1

Introduction

Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) Education is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) committed to delivering high-quality, relevant, and contemporary education and training. SLSQ Education operates in alignment with the core values of Surf Life Saving Queensland. SLSQ Education supports the development of skilled individuals through nationally recognised programs, courses, and qualifications.

Through ongoing commitment to regulatory compliance and educational excellence, SLSQ Education ensures that its training and assessment services uphold the highest standards of quality and integrity. SLSQ Education maintains compliance with all relevant Australian, State, and Territory legislation, and adheres to the following regulatory frameworks:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 - Federal Register of Legislation.
- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025.

OUR Core Values

Innovation Continually explore cutting edge technologies and systems as we work towards our beach and Clubs of the future.	**Safety** Prioritise and take responsibility for safety at all levels across the organisation, both on and off the beach.
Respect Treat each other with respect, value each other's contributions, and celebrate our people who strive for excellence.	**Community** We will not only protect the community we serve but we will reflect on the community we operate within and foster a welcoming culture.
Trust Ensure that trust and accountability are the cornerstones of our organisation through open and honest communication, and by always delivering on our commitments.	**Integrity** We will display the quality of honesty and having strong moral principles.

Scope

The policy applies to all SLSQ Education trainers and assessors and learners enrolled in SLSQ's nationally recognised training products and services.

Purpose

SLSQ Education manages and responds to concerns from stakeholders about services or decisions made. This includes responding to, reviewing, revision and providing an outcome to the satisfaction of the learner and the organisation. SLSQ Education is committed to and guided by principles of diversity, access, equity, fairness and ethical behaviour.

SLSQ Education strives to continuously:

- Manage an appeals management system which responds to decisions of SLSQ Education, third parties or any employed/contracted person. Where decisions adversely affect the learner, procedural fairness will be applied.
- Provide a process for applying, assessing and determining outcomes which are communicated to the stakeholders involved
- Document outcomes which also include direct communications with the learner/applicant. Outcomes of appeals are used by SLSQ Education to inform continuous improvement
- Advise on how to provide feedback and make complaints. This is publicly available and accessible through our online portal: aXcelerate and through direct contact with the SLSQ Education administration team.
- Operates with integrity and is accountable for delivery of quality services through sound governance.

Policy

SLSQ Education is committed to providing a fair, transparent, and accessible process for managing complaints and appeals. This policy ensures that all feedback, complaints, and appeals are handled promptly, impartially, and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice, thereby upholding the rights of learners, staff, and other stakeholders while supporting the continuous improvement of RTO services.

1. SLSQ Education recognises the right of learners, staff, and stakeholders to raise complaints or appeal decisions made by the RTO, its trainers, assessors, or third parties without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.
2. SLSQ Education is committed to fostering a culture that values feedback and resolves concerns in a respectful, equitable, and timely manner, ensuring procedural fairness and natural justice are applied at every stage of the process.
3. SLSQ Education ensures that all individuals involved in complaints and appeals processes are provided with clear information, guidelines, and support to understand their rights and responsibilities.
4. Staff and learners have the right to have their complaint or appeal heard impartially, with all relevant parties given a reasonable opportunity to present their case, and decisions made without bias.
5. All complaints and appeals will be treated seriously, handled confidentially where appropriate, and addressed in a prompt and objective manner in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. Matters will be managed in line with this policy and the associated Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
6. Any person found to have victimised or disadvantaged, another for making a complaint or appeal will be subject to counselling, disciplinary action, or other appropriate measures up to and including dismissal or cancellation of enrolment.
7. The effectiveness of SLSQ Education's complaints and appeals processes is regularly reviewed,

and related risks are identified and mitigated. Learners are advised of this policy prior to enrolment and commencement at course. Staff and third parties are advised of the policy on commencement of their engagement.

SLSQ Education will:

1. Complaints and Appeals Processes

SLSQ Education applies the following key requirements to ensure procedural fairness and natural justice:

- Complaints and appeals are managed by a person independent from the original decisionmaker where possible.
- All parties are provided with details of the issues raised and given a reasonable opportunity to respond before any decision is made.
- Decisions are based on relevant evidence and communicated in writing, including clear reasons for the outcome.
- Complainants and appellants are informed of the outcome, any actions taken, and their rights to internal review or external appeal (including to the Ombudsman).
- Records of all complaints and appeals, including how procedural fairness was applied, are maintained confidentially in accordance with the Records Management Policy.
- Timeframes are strictly adhered to:
    - formal complaints are acknowledged within five (5) business days
    - investigated within twenty-one (21) business days;
    - appeals against assessment decisions must be lodged within ten (10) business days of the result.

2. Complaints Management Process.

- Address and respond in writing to each complaint in an objective, equitable and impartial manner.
- Manage any receipted complaint in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.
- Apply reasonable steps to ensure that complainant/applicant submitting the complaint are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.
- Respond to conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived.
- Identify that complaints made about a staff member are handled by someone other than the person about whom the complaint is made, and
- Records will be made and retained as to how a complaint was made, including details as to whether the decision is undertaken by a person independent from the original decision-maker.

3. Communicating decision/outcome with the complainant/applicant

SLSQ Education will provide the person making the complaint with the following information:

- the outcome of the complaint and any action taken
- the reason/s for the decision
- the remedy or resolution/s that SLSQ Education has proposed or put in place, and
- options for internal or external review. (refer to the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.)

4. Maintain formal record of complaints

SLSQ Education will record details of complaints it has received. The information recorded will include:

- contact information of the person making the complaint
- issues raised by the person making the complaint
- the outcome/s they are seeking and
- any other relevant information.

5. Time frames for management, processing and finalisation of a complaint

SLSQ Education will acknowledge Formal Complaints within five (5) business days of receipt.

- Investigations will be concluded with an outcome within twenty-one (21) business days of SLSQ Education receiving the complaint.
- SLSQ Education staff receiving informal complaints will be responsible for resolving these in a timely manner or referring these to a relevant staff member to address. Alternatively, the learner can be advised as to how to access and complete the SLSQ Education Formal Complaint Form.
- If a Complainant is not satisfied with SLSQ Education's decision, the Complainant must apply to SLSQ Education in writing within twenty-eight (28) business days of receiving that decision requesting an Internal Review.
- If, following the Internal Review, the Complainant remains unsatisfied with the resolution, the Complaint may be referred to an External Independent to conduct an Independent Review, advising SLSQ Education and the Complainant of the outcome.
- Alternatively, the Complainant may be referred to the Ombudsman for a resolution.
- There is no cost or charge for a complaint to be made and managed
- However, if the learner wishes to engage someone to assist in their complaint, that charge is to be paid by and will be the sole responsibility of the learner.
- If a learner disagrees with an assessment outcome, the learner should communicate with the Assessor to discuss.
- If a learner enrolled in a nationally accredited VET qualification, wishes to appeal an assessment outcome, this must be made within ten (10) business days of the date of the assessment judgement.

Principles

SLSQ Education provides access to Complaints and Appeals Policy on its website, and it is again referenced in the Learner Handbook. The Learner Handbook is available to learners, after completion of their enrolment.

- Learners are informed of this policy prior to their enrolment and then advised to access and read it, at the commencement of their course.
- Complainant/applicant is provided (in writing) with details of any decisions and/or actions taken as part of the complaint/appeal process.
- SLSQ Education maintains appropriate records of complaints and appeals and ensures all records are treated as confidential.

Legislative Framework | Instruments

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (Instrument 2025) and specifically VET Student Support **(Quality Area 2)** Feedback, complaints and appeals standards 2.7, 2.8 and Governance **(Quality Area 4)** Leadership and accountability Standard 4.1. This mandates that RTOs has a system in place to manage and address feedback, complaints and concerns. This includes an effective appeals process, and the RTO operates with integrity and is accountable for the delivery of quality services.

National vocational Education and Training Regulator Act (2011)
Australian VET Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS),
Information Privacy Act 2009 (IP).
SLSQ Education Code of Conduct
SLSQ Education Training and Assessment Policy
SLSQ Education Academic Integrity Policy
SLSQ Education Complaints and Appeals | Form
SLSQ Education Records Management Policy
SLSQ adopts the SLSA Privacy Policy relating to privacy | Policy 6.02 Privacy

Responsibilities | Communication

The Head of Education and Quality and Compliance Officer are responsible for overseeing and ensuring the policy is implemented appropriately. This includes delegation authority to designated SLSQ officers, as required.

This policy will be communicated to officers who are responsible for, or engaged in the design, delivery, assessment and validation processes on behalf of SLSQ Education.

Terms and Definitions (relevant to this Policy)

Term	Definition
Assessment appeal	Formal and documented application completed and submitted by learner/applicant, where decision is not accepted or agreed to.
Complaint	Documented expression of dissatisfaction or grievance, typically directed towards an organisation or individual about a product, service, experience or outcome.
Complainant/applicant	Individual initiating and leading a process to express dissatisfaction or grievance about a service, product, experience of outcome.
Complaints register	List of complaints recorded within the organisation and is an ongoing record of processes and outcomes.
Formal complaint	Documented and detailed information reflecting dissatisfaction or grievance and is submitted on the organisation's formal Complaints Form.
Independent review	Engagement of a third party to assess/review/determine a final outcome or decision.

Key Contacts

SLSQ Education Quality and Compliance Officer	QualityandCompliance@lifesaving.com.au
SLSQ Education Enquiries	RTO@lifesaving.com.au

Policy Ownership

Policy Owner	Head of Education
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Maintenance Owner	RTO Quality and Compliance Officer