

### 3. Complaints and Appeals Procedures

Governing policy:	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
Associated Documentation	Record of Student Complaints and Appeals Continuous Improvement Log 2018-19 Standard VET Funding Contract Skills First Program- Clause 12 and Clause 1.6 of Schedule 1 2018 Skills First Quality Charter	
Records:	Nil	
Definitions:	Nil	
Approval date: 7/12/2018	Implementation Date: 7/12/2018	Approved by: CEO
Next review date: 7/12/2019		

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## Complaints - Procedure

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The complaints and appeals policy and procedure discusses the actions that are required to be taken in the event of a student concern, complaint or appeal. Parker Brent aim to provide a constructive resolution for all parties in an effective and timely manner where possible. The policy applies to students, staff, third parties and external parties where there are instances of hardship, concern or distress or where an appeal is required against an assessment decision or against a complaint outcome. A complaint from Parker Brent students, staff or external parties can be made about:

- any training product or services
- a trainer/assessor or a particular staff member
- a third party that provided training services on Parker Brent's behalf
- a student
- an academic issue where the current, past or prospective student feels they are being disadvantaged in the training product or service they are undertaking, have undertaken or would like to undertake

The Complainant/Appellant are entitled to access this complaints and appeals procedure regardless of the venue location where the complaint or appeal has arisen, the mode in which they are studying or place of residence (Victoria only). This policy and procedure is made available on the Parker Brent website, Student Handbook and information is provided to staff and students at induction.

Parker Brent staff and trainers are advised of the Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure upon commencement of employment during their induction.

Parker Brent will ensure that:

- any complaints and appeals are responded to promptly, with minimum distress and maximum protection to all parties.
- all complaints and appeals will be managed in an ethical and fair manner to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes for all parties through negotiation and/or mediation
- any complaints and appeals will be reviewed in order to improve current policies and practices as well as obtain an insight into levels of student satisfaction
- any complaints and appeals will be handled in a professional manner and will be respected for privacy and confidentiality where possible
- information to the complainant/appellant is provided in a non-threatening way but providing the 'record of student complaints and appeals form' accessible via the Parker Brent website
- all students will have a safe and supportive learning and working environment
- all parties will act respectfully and in a courteous manner where the rights and responsibilities of all parties are recognised

- all parties are encouraged to discuss their complaint or appeal with a Parker Brent staff member before undertaking a formal complaints and appeals procedure
- all parties will not be discriminated against regardless of the outcome of the complaint or appeal
- all students raising a complaint must do so as soon as possible after the issue has occurred and to provide complete and factual information so that the complaint can be dealt with in an appropriate manner
- all staff will address all concerns, complaints and appeals in line with relevant legislation as well as Parker Brent policies and procedures as mentioned below and operate in a fair and unbiased manner to all students
- all staff will maintain confidentiality in regards to all complaints raised

	Action	Action by	By when	Notes
1	In the event of a student wishing to lodge an appeal or complaint, an approach, either formal or informal, will initially need to be made by the student (or a nominated representative chosen by the student) to their trainer/assessor, or other Parker Brent staff member	Student	24 hours	<p>Parker Brent will always attempt to resolve any issues, complaints and/or appeals via discussion and negotiation with a Parker Brent Trainer/Assessor (Skills First Teacher) or with a Parker Brent staff member.</p> <p>Parker Brent aims to ensure that learners and stakeholders complaints are dealt with efficiently, effectively, transparently and fairly. All students are made aware of the Complaints and Appeals procedure on the Parker Brent website.</p> <p>Parker Brent will endeavour to resolve any concerns, complaints or appeals through an informal process of discussion and negotiation. This is between either the student, client, staff, third party or external party and the relevant staff member of Parker Brent. Where an informal process fails to achieve a resolution, the procedure for submitting a formal complaint or appeal is outlined below.</p> <p>Any formal complaint should be forwarded in writing to the CEO of Parker Brent using the 'Record of Student Complaints and Appeals' form available on the Parker Brent website. The Complaints and Appeals form along with any supporting evidence should also be submitted to <a href="mailto:student@parkerbrent.com.au">student@parkerbrent.com.au</a></p> <p>The Training Manager will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 2 business days to confirm receipt of the 'record of student complaints and appeals' form as well as any supporting evidence provided.</p>

				<p>The Training Manager will forward to the CEO if required. The complaint will be recorded in the complaints and appeals folder stored in the Parker Brent office as well as in the 'Register of Complaints and Appeals' which is kept electronically by the Training Manager. This register will be used to keep track of responses and correspondence between the student and Parker Brent staff. The Training Administration Assistant will ensure that student complaints are also stored in the respective student files.</p> <p>The parties involved in the allegations of a complaint or appeal will be advised (where appropriate). The relevant staff member will investigate the complaint or appeal within 20 working days of the date being submitted by the complainant/appellant and request any further clarification and documentation from all relevant parties to resolve the matter. This may involve face to face meetings or interviews or any other action that is deemed suitable by Parker Brent as required.</p> <p>At the time of the meeting, either party is able to have a third party support such as a family member, friend, or other professional support person that can be present however, this is at the cost of the party engaging the third party support. All discussions and meetings with all parties are documented appropriately. After a complaint or appeal has been investigated, the relevant staff member and manager may decide to dismiss the complaint or appeal or take further action. If further action is required or if the complaint or appeal is resolved, Parker Brent will notify the complainant within 14 working days outlining the reasons for the decision and an appropriate action.</p>
2	All attempts will be made by Parker Brent to resolve the complaint internally with all parties involved	Parker Brent Representative	Within 48 hours	<p>The complaint is reviewed and possible outcomes discussed with the student.</p> <p>Where an agreed outcome is reached, this is documented on the 'Record of Student Complaints and Appeals' form and signed off by both the CEO and Student and a copy will be given to the student, a copy placed on the student's file and the original will be kept in the complaints and appeals folder.</p>

3	If, however, the complaint cannot be resolved internally, the matter will be referred to an independent third party	CEO	Within 14 days	<p>Where a decision cannot be made within 60 days the complainant/appellant will be informed in writing of the reason why and will receive a written update on the matter when a resolution is reached by the relevant staff member. Each team at Parker Brent is required to report complaints and appeals to the Training Manager and/or CEO.</p> <p>If the complainant/appellant is still not satisfied with the resolution or outcome, they have a right to appeal to an external agency and Parker Brent will make arrangements accordingly. The matter will be referred to:</p> <p>Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria        4/456 Lonsdale St        Melbourne VIC 3000        Tel: 1300 372 888</p> <p>Parker Brent will allow the client to be represented by a third party in any subsequent discussion. This is at the cost of the party who engages the additional assistance. There are no fees for the review of a decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ From January 2015, students are able make a complaint via the National Training Complaints Hotline 133 873 or</li> <li>○ Make a complaint to the VRQA by completing online complaints forms, completing the printable complaint form and post/fax to the VRQA or writing a letter and post/fax to the VRQA</li> <li>○ Complaints to the VRQA must be made in writing. If, for reason of disability you cannot make a complaint in writing, you can make a complaint by phone or in person.</li> </ul> <p>The external agency will be requested by Parker Brent to provide written notice of their decision and reason as to how the decision was formed. The written notice will be presented to the complainant/appellant and Parker Brent. Where a decision cannot be made within 60 days, the complainant/appellant will be informed in writing of the reason.</p>
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				Parker Brent will cooperate with the external agencies resolution and as part of its continuous improvement, will implement recommendations arising from any external review.
4	The outcome is agreed, recorded and acted upon	CEO	Upon a decision being agreed	<p>The agreed outcome is documented on the 'Record of Student Complaints and Appeals' form and signed off by both the CEO and Student. A copy is to be given to the student, a copy placed on the student's file and the original kept in the complaints and appeals folder as well as in the 'Register of Complaints and Appeals' which is kept electronically by the Training Manager.</p> <p>Parker Brent acknowledge and respect the privacy of individuals and complies with the Privacy Act 1988 including the Australian Privacy Principles in respect of the collection, use and disclosure of personal information from individuals. The record of all complaints and appeals and outcomes of these complaints and appeals are kept for a period of 7 years. All students are able to access their personal information at PB under the Freedom of Information Act 1982.</p>

Guiding notes: **Action** should be logical, task-based & sequential; **Action by** is the person responsible for carrying out the task; **By when** ought to be specific in terms of when the action should be carried out; and the **Notes** column is for additional information that might be useful

## Appeals - Procedure

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	Action	Action by	By when	Notes
1	If a student wishes to appeal their assessment result, they may first discuss the issue with the trainer/assessor or another staff member at Parker Brent.	Trainer/Training Manager CEO		If the student would like to proceed further with the request after discussions with the trainer/assessor, a formal request must be made in writing outlining the reason(s) for the appeal using the 'Record of Student Complaints and Appeals' form. This must be forwarded to the Training Team within 14 days of the student receiving their assessment results.
2	Each appeal will be heard by an independent person or panel.	CEO		Every effort is made to ensure a satisfactory outcome for both the student and Parker Brent.  Each person has an opportunity to formally present his or her case and is given a written statement of the appeal outcomes, including reasons for the decision.
3	Should the outcome not be acceptable to the student, they will be informed, in writing, of the opportunity to lodge a complaint with the VRQA.	CEO		

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