

1. Purpose

National Food Institute is committed to providing quality training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs 2015). As such, National Food Institute is required to have a policy and processes in place to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of staff, learners and third party training and assessment providers who provide services on behalf of National Food Institute.

This policy is based on providing and maintaining training and assessment services that are fair and reasonable and afford a forum where issues or inadequacies can be raised and resolved. This process provides opportunity for complaints to be recorded, acknowledged and dealt with in a fair, efficient and effective manner.

The object of this policy is to ensure that National Food Institute staff act in a professional manner at all times. This policy provides clients with a clear process to register a complaint. It ensures all parties involved are kept informed of the resulting actions and outcomes.

2. Policy Statement

National Food Institute acknowledges the clients' right to lodge a complaint when they are dissatisfied with the training and /or assessment services and experiences that they have been provided by National Food Institute.

National Food Institute will ensure that clients have access to a fair and equitable process for expressing complaints, and that National Food Institute will manage the complaint with fairness and equity.

In doing so, National Food Institute:

- a) has written procedures in place for collecting and managing complaints in a constructive and timely manner;
- b) ensures that these procedures are communicated to all staff, third party partners and clients;
- c) ensures that all necessary documentation and resources are in place to enable clients to submit a complaint;
- d) ensures that each complaint and its outcome is recorded in writing; and
- e) ensures that customer complaints and their outcomes are fed into continuous improvement initiatives.

3. Definitions

3.1 The following words and expressions have the following specific meaning, as in the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

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Third party means any party that provides services on behalf of the RTO but does not include a contract of employment between an RTO and its employee.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 Principles

In managing complaints, National Food Institute will ensure that:

- a) The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint process.
- b) The complaints policy is publicly available.
- c) There is a procedure for making a complaint.
- d) Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, impartially, sensitively and confidentially.
- e) Complaints will be resolved on an individual case basis, as they arise.
- f) All clients have the right to express a concern or problem and/or lodge a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the training and assessment services that they have been provided (including through a third party) or the behavioural conduct of another learner.
- g) All complaints are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable.
- h) The complaint resolution procedure is based on the understanding that no action will be taken without consulting the complainant and respondent, using a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation.
- i) The rights of the complainant and respondent will be acknowledged and protected throughout the complaint resolution process, including the conduct of separate interviews initially.
- j) In the interest of confidentiality, the number of people involved in the resolution process will be kept to a minimum.
- k) Final decisions will be made by the CEO National Food Institute or an independent party to the complaint.
- l) The complaint resolution procedure emphasises mediation and education while acknowledging that in some instances formal procedures and disciplinary action may be required.
- m) If the complaints process fails to resolve the complaint or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint the matter will be referred to an independent third party for review, at the request of the complainant. All costs incurred for the third-party review will be advised to the complainant.
- n) If the complaint will take more than 60 calendar days to finalise National Food Institute will inform the complainant in writing providing the reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. The complainant will also be provided with regular updates on the progress of the complaint.
- o) Victimisation of complainants, respondents or anyone one else involved in the complaint resolution process will not be tolerated.

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- p) All complaints will be handled as Staff-In-Confidence and will not affect or bias the progress of the client in any current or future training.

4.2 Types of Complaints

A complaint may include allegations involving the conduct of:

- a) National Food Institute, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- b) A third party providing services on behalf of National Food Institute, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- c) A learner of National Food Institute.

5. National Food Institute Responsibilities

The CEO of National Food Institute is the Complaints Resolution Officer and Consumer Protection Officer. The CEO may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint if necessary.

Contact details:

Ross Freeman
126 Ayr Street
Doncaster Victoria 3108
Ph: 03 9850 7546

Details concerning the scope of the Complaints Policy are to be clearly displayed throughout the organisation and contained within the Staff Induction Process, Client Handbook and National Food Institute website.

6. Process

6.1 Complaints

If a client has a complaint, they are encouraged to speak immediately with the trainer/assessor to resolve the issue. If the complainant is not satisfied that the issue has been resolved they will be asked to complete a Complaints Form, to lodge a formal complaint. National Food Institute will then investigate the complaint and advise the complainant of the outcome.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they may write to the CEO, setting out in detail the issue of concern. This may lead to occasions where an industry-training representative may be invited to act as an objective party in order to negotiate a satisfactory resolution.

6.2 Complaints Process

All complaints shall follow the below process:

- a) Complaints are to be made in writing within 7 calendar days of the incident using the Complaints Form.

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- b) A submitted complaint form will constitute a formal complaint from the client. Further detail of the complaint can be provided by the client verbally.
- c) The CEO National Food Institute must be informed of receipt of all complaints immediately.
- d) The CEO National Food Institute may delegate responsibility for the resolution of the complaint.
- e) In the case of a complaint, the CEO National Food Institute will initiate a transparent, participative investigation to identify the issues.
- f) Complaints will be processed in accordance with the Complaints flowchart - Annex A.
- g) Complaints, where possible, are to be resolved within 14 calendar days of the initial application.
- h) In all cases the conclusion will be assessed by the CEO National Food Institute.
- i) The Client will be advised in writing of the outcome of their complaint, within seven (7) days of resolution.
- j) If the outcome is not to the satisfaction of the Client, they may seek an appointment with the CEO National Food Institute.
- k) If the client is not satisfied with the decision, they have the option to seek outside assistance (External Arbitration) to pursue the complaint.

6.3 Resolution by External Arbitration

Should the matter remain unresolved, the student is encouraged to contact an external arbiter for consideration and due intervention, as necessary, to reach an objective solution to the matter in dispute.

The senior management may also decide that contacting an external arbiter is the best course of action.

Details of a suitable independent arbiter are:

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV)
Level 4 456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: (03) 9603 8370
Fax: (03) 9603 8355
www.disputes.vic.gov.au/

(Refer to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria website for regional office locations)

6.4 Resolution by External Authority

Should the matter remain unresolved, the student may seek the advice of the independent registering body for NFI: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). ASQA is experienced in dispute resolution processes involving RTOs and has the power to take appropriate action:

ASQA
Level 6 595 Collins Street
Melbourne VICTORIA 3000

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NFI Complaints Policy



Postal Address:

GPO Box 9928 Melbourne

VICTORIA 3001

Phone: 1300 701 801

7. Access & Equity

The National Food Institute Access & Equity Policy applies. (See Access & Equity Policy)

8. Records Management

Records of all complaints and their outcomes are maintained securely.

Records of complaints include:

- a) How the complaint was dealt with;
- b) The outcome of the complaint;
- c) The timeframes for resolution of the complaint;
- d) The potential causes of the complaint; and
- e) The steps taken to resolve the complaint.

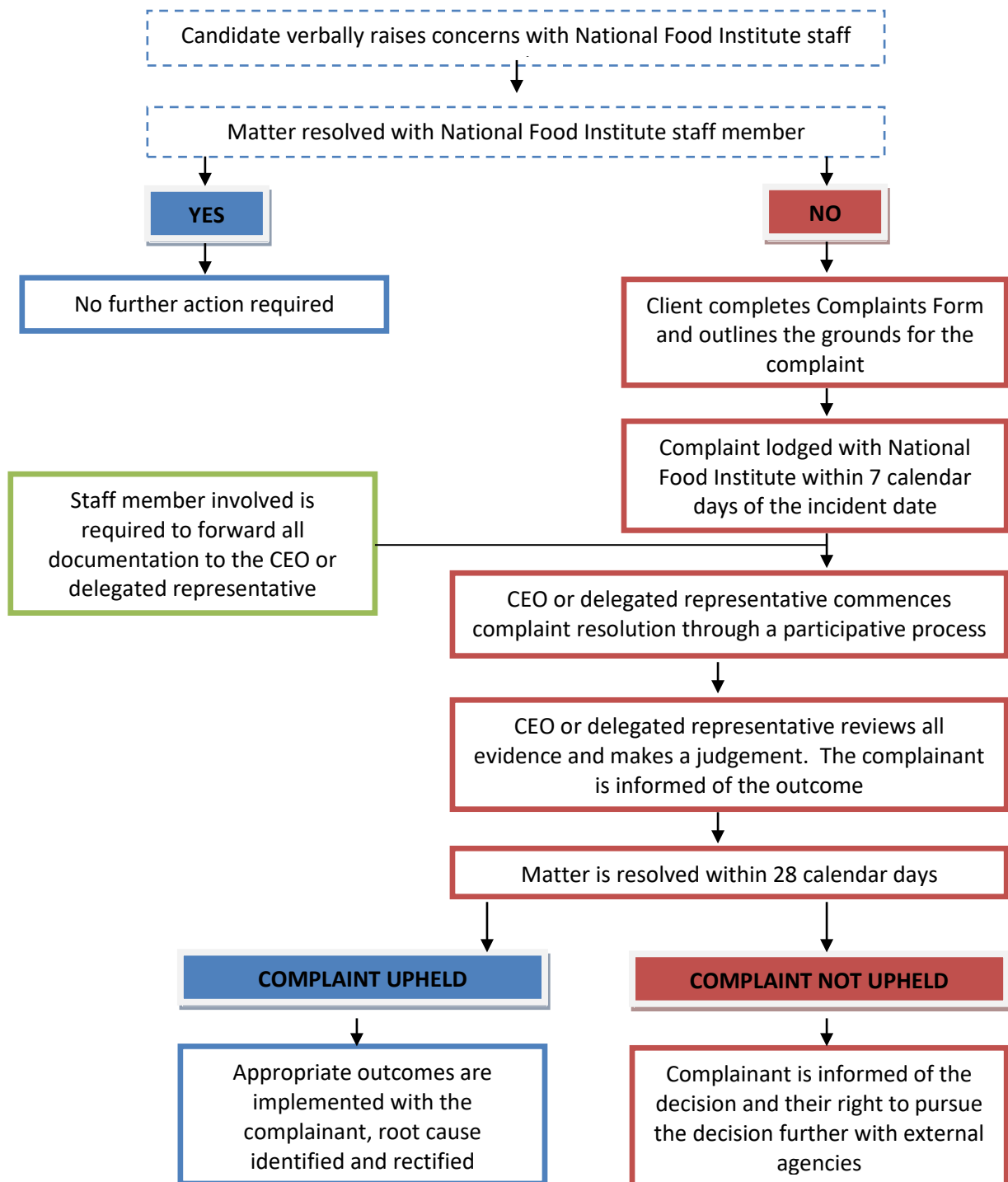
All documentation from the complaints processes are maintained in accordance with Records Management Policy. (See Records Management Policy)

9. Monitoring and Improvement

All complaints practices are monitored by the Quality and Compliance Manager National Food Institute and will be discussed at Management Review Meetings with areas for improvement identified and acted upon. (See Continuous Improvement Policy)

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ANNEX A: Complaints Process



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