



Participant Handbook

A practical guide for all students



Australian Institute
of Food Safety®

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Introduction

ABOUT US

The Australian Institute of Food Safety (AIFS) is a Registered Training Organisation (No 41127) that delivers nationally recognised units of competency in the form of short courses. We are committed to delivering high quality nationally recognised training and providing exceptional support to all participants.

This Participant Handbook is designed to provide the necessary information to help prospective participants to make an informed decision, and to ensure current enrolled participants have access to all the information they need to support them throughout the duration of the course.

AIFS delivers training and assessment in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, and is responsible for ensuring that the quality of our services continually complies with these standards.

All nationally recognised Statements of Attainment issued by AIFS comply fully with Standard 3 of the standards.

Pre Enrolment

PRE ENROLMENT INFORMATION

AIFS will, prior to course enrolment, give participants all relevant information about the course curriculum, program of study, availability of learning resources and appropriate support services.

Participants will also be given details about the units of competency that can be attained through successful completion of the course.

As well as the course information, participants will be given accurate, relevant and up-to-date information about:

- The enrolment process
- Refund policy
- Privacy policy
- Assessment procedures
- Arrangements for national recognition (credit transfer)
- Arrangements for recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Our complaints procedure
- Our appeals procedure
- Available support services
- Fees and refunds

AIFS will ensure training and assessment occurs in accordance with the requirements of the training package, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and also, where appropriate, the state training guidelines.

Training and Assessment

COURSE DELIVERY

AIFS delivers nationally recognised units of competency in the form of online short courses.

Most course participants access the courses from their home or workplace and complete their training at a time that suits them.

Assessment is conducted using online assessment tools and third party observer reports. This means that participants need to ask their supervisor or someone else at their workplace to observe them performing certain tasks. AIFS assessors may, at their discretion, request additional evidence such as telephone interviews, videos or photographic evidence if insufficient evidence has been supplied during the normal course of assessment.

If participants have concerns about completing their course online, or the method of assessment (including their ability to have an observer report completed), they are encouraged to contact us in order to discuss their individual needs.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

National recognition is the recognition of learning achieved through formal education and training.

Under the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015, qualifications and statements of attainment (issued by any RTO) are to be accepted and recognised by all other RTOs.

National recognition allows the unit of competency previously achieved by a participant to be recognised when they are enrolling in a related course where those units can assist them in meeting the requirements for a qualification. It is important to note that national recognition is not recognition of prior learning (RPL).

To apply for National Recognition please visit www.foodsafety.com.au/forms and complete and submit the National Recognition application form.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is offered to course participants who believe that they can already meet the skills and knowledge requirements of the course through previous work experience and formal, non-formal and informal learning.

We assess this learning against the requirements of a unit of competency, in respect of outcomes to be achieved.

The following guidelines apply when requesting Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

- All participants are entitled to apply for recognition in a course or qualification in which they are currently enrolled.
- Participants may not apply for recognition for units of competency or qualifications which are not included in AIFS's scope of registration.
- Whilst participants may apply for recognition at any time, they are encouraged to apply before commencing a training program. This will reduce unnecessary training and guide the participant down a more efficient path to competence.

- Participants who are currently enrolled in a training program are eligible to apply for recognition in that program at no additional charge.
- Assessment via recognition is to apply the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence.
- Recognition may only be awarded for whole units of competency.

To apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) please visit www.foodsafety.com.au/forms and complete and submit the Recognition of Prior Learning application form.

STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT

Once participants have completed a nationally recognised course with AIFS, their assessment evidence will be considered by one of our qualified trainers and assessors.

A Statement of Attainment issued by AIFS will always include the following:

- The words “Statement of Attainment”
- Name and RTO code of AIFS (or associated trading name)
- Logo of AIFS (or associated trading name)
- Name of the person who achieved the competencies
- Date issued
- A list of all units of competency attained including the national code and full title for each
- Authorised signature (of Chief Executive Officer or Training Manager)
- The Nationally Recognised Training logo
- AIFS unique watermark
- The words ‘A statement of attainment is issued by a Registered Training Organisation when an individual has completed one or more accredited units’

Once deemed competent, a Statement of Attainment will be issued. The Statement of Attainment is typically issued electronically via email and, depending on the course selected, may also be printed on certificate paper and sent to the postal address selected by the participant.

TRAINERS AND ASSESSORS

At AIFS, our trainers and assessors have been selected due to their skills and qualifications in delivering quality nationally recognised training.

We ensure that all of our trainers and assessors have:

- Demonstrated competencies at least to the level of those being delivered;
- Demonstrated achievement of at least Certificate IV from the Training Package for Training and Education, or demonstrated the equivalent competencies;
- Industry experience that is current and relevant to the particular course or modules that they are involved in delivering and assessing.

Access, Equity and Anti-Discrimination

ACCESS AND EQUITY

AIFS will ensure that the participant application and selection process is explicit and defensible and complies with access and equity principles.

All staff and clients are treated with equal merit and offered equal availability of all activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the following groups of people:

- People with a disability;
- Indigenous People;
- Women;
- People from non-English speaking background; and
- People in rural and remote areas.

Participants that believe they require assistance in any area of their training, need to lodge a request via email or telephone.

AIFS is fully committed to providing all available assistance to participants in order to help them complete their training satisfactorily.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

At AIFS we are committed to ensuring that the training and assessment environment for our participants is fair, and free from discrimination and harassment.

Discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. In the event that discrimination and harassment is found to have occurred, disciplinary action will be taken against any employee or participant who breaches this policy. Suspected criminal behaviour will be reported to police authorities immediately.

By implementing this policy we strive to achieve the following objectives:

- Create a training and assessment environment which is free from discrimination and harassment and where all employees, contractors and participants are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- Provide an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice;
- Treat all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
- Guarantee protection from any victimisation or reprisals;
- Promote a productive and cohesive training environment;
- Encourage the reporting of behaviour which breaches this Discrimination and Harassment Policy; and
- Promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

If participants believe that they have not been treated fairly, or have been subjected to discrimination or harassment, they should contact the Chief Executive Officer of AIFS to report this immediately.

Training Safety

Whilst AIFS delivers online training, it is important that we provide a safe and healthy workplace for our staff, contractors, visitors and any students that may visit our physical location(s) by having a planned and systematic approach to the management of work health and safety.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITY

Participants of courses delivered by AIFS are responsible for:

- Complying with relevant AIFS health and safety policies and procedures;
- Obeying any reasonable instruction aimed at protecting their health and safety in the workplace;
- Using any equipment provided to protect their health and safety in the workplace;
- Assisting in the identification and assessment of hazards and implementation of hazard control measures;
- Reporting any incident or hazard in the workplace to their manager and following all relevant Workplace Health & Safety procedures;
- Considering and providing feedback on any matters which may affect their health and safety;
- Not being affected by alcohol or non-prescribed (illicit) drugs whilst at work or study.

COMPUTER SAFETY

The following computer safety guidelines are provided to assist participants completing online courses with AIFS:

- Extended periods of work with computers can result in general fatigue and eye strain. Repetitive tasks and incorrect posture will result in consistent aches and pains.
- Current work health and safety guidelines indicate that people working for long periods at computers should organise their work so as to allow a five to ten minute rest every hour. This rest should include a change of position and stretching exercises as appropriate.
- Posture can be improved by adjusting chair height so that the operator's feet are comfortably placed on the floor (or footrest) and your arms are at an approximately 90-degree angle.
- The screen should be positioned to avoid reflection from lights and windows and at a suitable distance so that it can be easily read.

Unique Student Identifier (USI)

From 1 January 2015 participants undertaking nationally recognised training delivered by a registered training organisation have needed to have a Unique Student Identifier (USI). This includes, but is not limited to, studying short courses at private training organisations such as AIFS, completing an apprenticeship or skill set, certificate or diploma course.

A USI gives participants access to an online USI account which is made up of ten numbers and letters. It will look similar to this: **3AW88YH9U5**.

A USI account will contain all of the participants nationally recognised training records and results from 1 January 2015 onwards. Results from 2015 will be available in the USI account in 2016. When applying for a job or enrolling in further study, participants will often need to provide their training records and results. One of the main benefits of the USI is the easy access participants will have to training records and results throughout their life. Participants can access their USI account online from a computer, tablet or smart phone anywhere and anytime.

DO YOU NEED A USI?

Participants will need a USI when enrolling or re-enrolling in training from 1 January 2015 if the participant is a:

- student enrolling in nationally recognised training for the first time, for example studying at a public or private training organisation, completing an apprenticeship or skill set, certificate or diploma course;
- school student completing nationally recognised training; or
- student continuing with nationally recognised training.

A participant is a continuing student if they are a student who has already started a course in a previous year (and not yet completed it) and will continue studying after 1 January 2015.

Once a USI had been created the participant will need to provide it to each training organisation they study with so that training outcomes can be linked and the participant is able to:

- view and update details in their USI account;
- give their training organisation permission to view and/or update their USI account;
- give their training organisation view access to their transcript;
- control access to their transcript; and
- view online and download their training records and results in the form of a transcript which will help them with job applications and enrolment in further training.

HOW TO GET A USI

It is free and easy for participants to create their own USI online.

Step 1

Have at least one and preferably two forms of ID ready from the list below:

- Driver's Licence
- Medicare Card
- Australian Passport
- Visa (with Non-Australian Passport) for international students
- Birth Certificate (Australian)
- Certificate Of Registration By Descent
- Citizenship Certificate
- Immi Card

IMPORTANT: To make sure all training records are kept together, the USI will be linked to the participants name as it appears on the form of ID that was used to create the USI. The personal details entered when creating a USI must match exactly with those on the form of ID.

Step 2

Have personal contact details ready (e.g. email address, or mobile number, or address).

Step 3

Visit the USI website at usi.gov.au.

Step 4

Select the 'Create a USI' link and follow the steps.

Step 5

Agree to the Terms and Conditions.

Step 6

Follow the instructions to create a USI – it should only take a few minutes. Upon completion, the USI will be displayed on the screen. It will also be sent to the preferred method of contact.

Step 7

Write down the USI and keep it somewhere handy and safe.

For more information on the Unique Student Identifier, please visit the USI website at usi.gov.au or contact the Department of Education and Training at usi@industry.gov.au

Privacy and Access to Information

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

At AIFS we acknowledge that participants need access to their records in order to monitor their progress and participation.

Records that may be accessed include:

- Enrolment administrative records
- Assessment evidence
- Details of awarded units of competency

Participants can access a copy of their records by contacting us by email or telephone. Please note that a number of questions will be asked to confirm identity before any records are provided.

PRIVACY POLICY

AIFS fully complies with the Australia Privacy Principles. The following policy details how personal information received by AIFS will be dealt with.

Information Protection

AIFS must not do anything, or engage in any practice, that contravenes any information protection principles contained in the Privacy Act. In particular AIFS declares that it will:

- Not collect personal information unless:
 - the information is collected for a lawful purpose that is directly related to a function or activity of AIFS, AND
 - the collection of the information is reasonably necessary for that purpose;
- Not collect personal information by any unlawful means;
- Collect the information directly from the individual;
- Make the individual to whom the information relates aware of:
 - the fact that the information is being collected, AND
 - the purposes for which the information is being collected, AND
 - the intended recipients of the information, AND
 - whether the supply of the information by the individual is required by law or is voluntary, and any consequences for the individual if the information (or any part of it) is not provided, AND
 - the existence of any right of access to, and correction of, the information, AND
 - the name and address of the entity that is collecting the information and the entity that is to hold the information
- Ensure that any information collected is relevant to that purpose, is not excessive, and is accurate, up to date and complete, and that the collection of the information does not intrude on the personal affairs of the individual;

- Ensure that the information is kept for no longer than is necessary, that the information is disposed of securely, that the information is protected against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure, etc.;
- Ensure that everything possible is done to prevent unauthorised use or disclosure of the information;
- Help an individual to ascertain whether AIFS holds personal information relating to them, and, if so, the nature of that information, its purpose, and their entitlement to gain access to the information;
- Provide the individual with access to the information;
- Make appropriate amendments (whether by way of corrections, deletions or additions) to ensure that the personal information is accurate, and relevant, up to date, complete and not misleading;
- Attach to the information, in such a manner as is capable of being read with the information, any statement provided by that individual of any amendment sought;
- Notify recipients of that information of the amendments made;
- Not use the information without ensuring that the information is relevant, accurate, up to date, complete and not misleading;
- Not use the information for a purpose other than that for which it was collected unless:
 - the individual to whom the information relates has consented to the use of the information for that other purpose, OR
 - the other purpose for which the information is used is directly related to the purpose for which the information was collected, OR
 - the use of the information for that other purpose is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the individual to whom the information relates or of another person;
- Not disclose unless the disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or another person;
- Ensure that, if personal information is disclosed to a person or body that is a public sector agency, that agency does not use or disclose the information for a purpose other than the purpose for which the information was given to it;
- Not disclose personal information relating to:
 - an individual's ethnic or racial origin; OR
 - political opinions; OR
 - religious or philosophical beliefs; OR
 - trade union membership; OR
 - health or sexual activities;

unless required to do so by law or for the purposes of AVETMISS reporting (a Government requirement for all Registered Training Organisations)

VET Industry Requirements

In accordance with RTO requirements, we are required to inform participants of the following and require that acknowledgement be made prior to issuing a Statement of Attainment.

1. Personal information is collected from the participant for the purpose of obtaining and verifying participant related details. It is used by the State and Federal Government Departments for the purpose of planning, provision and reporting of educational and vocational training programs as authorised by the Education Act 1994 and the Skilling Australia's Workforce Act 2005 and other related State and Commonwealth Acts and Regulations. It may be used for audit, verification, research, statistical analysis, program evaluation, post-completion surveys and internal management purposes.
2. Any personal information provided by the participant will be used for the primary purpose for which it is collected, and will be disclosed to The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), government and other authorised agencies for the purposes stated above.
3. Personal information will be managed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act 2004 and may be accessed by the individual to whom it relates on request.

Fees & Refunds

AIFS is entitled to charge fees for services provided to participants undertaking training and assessment that leads to a nationally recognised outcome. These charges are generally for items such as course materials, participant services and training and assessment services.

FEES PAYABLE

Fees are generally immediately payable upon online enrolment onto the course. The exception to this is for corporate account holders who must pay within 30 days of receiving an invoice from AIFS. AIFS may discontinue training if fees are not paid in accordance with the agreed fee schedule.

The current fees and charges for AIFS are accessible to participants via the website(s).

REFUNDS

Participants are eligible for a refund of 100% of any monies paid if the following conditions have been satisfied:

- The request for refund has been received in writing within 7 days of enrolment AND
- The participant has not yet accessed the course.

When a refund is approved, the refund payment will be paid within 14 days. Refunds are to be paid via electronic funds transfer back onto the credit or debit card used for the original purchase.

OUR GUARANTEE TO CLIENTS

If for any reason AIFS is unable to fulfil its service agreement with a participant or if the arrangement is terminated early, AIFS must issue a full refund for any services not provided. The basis for determining “services not provided” is to be based on the units of competency completed by the participant and which can be issued in a statement of attainment at the time the service is terminated.

PAYMENT OF GST

Where a participant is enrolled in a course which is offering units of competency or a whole qualification, the course fees attached to this enrolment will be exempt from the payment of GST.

GST does apply on the payment of some miscellaneous charges where these charges are in addition to and outside the normal services offered in a course.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

AIFS will levy some miscellaneous charges for services. These may include:

- Re-issuing a Statement of Attainment after it has been initially issued to a participant

All miscellaneous charges are to be based on a cost recovery basis and are not intended to be a source of profit.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

AIFS's Fees & Refunds policy does not in any way limit the rights of participants to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

PARTICIPANT COMPLAINTS ABOUT FEES OR REFUNDS

Participants who are unhappy with AIFS arrangements for the collection and refunding of tuition fees are entitled to lodge a complaint. This should occur in accordance with AIFS complaints procedure.

Participant Support Services

Our team of trainers and assessors will assist in any way they can if participants experience problems during their training. If they are unable to help, then we will make every effort to source assistance, but no outside action will be taken without your consent.

There are many agencies and websites which can provide assistance for personal matters and training matters. Please see details below for advice and guidance.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND NUMERACY SUPPORT

We encourage all potential participants to inform us prior to enrolling on the course if they believe that they may encounter language, literacy or numeracy issues that may inhibit their ability to complete the course. To assist participants with this, we have published a list of sample tasks on each course page that correspond to the language, literacy and numeracy levels needed to complete the course.

When it is determined that such a deficiency does exist our policy is to adopt strategies to assist the participant to progress in their chosen course. This could be through additional telephone support, the provision of support materials which include commonly used words and phrases, or some other arrangement suitable to both parties.

Where we are unable to provide the required level of support, referral will be made for dedicated language, literacy or numeracy training. This may be through a local public provider such as a TAFE college.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Where personal or social problems are inhibiting a participants ability to complete the course successfully, we will endeavour, upon request, to find appropriate support for the participant. Organisations that may be referred to include:

Centrelink	132 490
Mental Health Association	1300 729 686
Wesley Mission	1800 021 821
Women's Domestic and Family Violence	1800 811 811
St Vincent De Paul	07 3010 1096
LifeLine	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Alcoholics Anonymous	1300 222 222

DISABILITY SUPPORT

Should a participant or potential participant identify themselves with a disability that may inhibit their ability to complete the course, particularly if their disability will have an effect on their performance in a workplace for assessment purposes, they are encouraged to contact AIFS so that we may discuss customisation of the program to meet the needs of the individual learner.

If we are unable to meet the individual needs of the participant, we will endeavour to identify other Registered Training Organisations delivering the same competencies who may be able to meet these needs.

Complaints & Appeals

AIFS has a firm commitment to attempt to resolve all verbal and/or written complaints and appeals initially through discussion and conciliation.

As part of the standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 it is a requirement that the Complaints and Appeals Policies are publicly available and so they are replicated in full below.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

What is a complaint?

A complaint is generally negative feedback which has not been resolved locally. It could be about the RTO services or staff (including trainers and assessors), a third party that provides services on behalf of an RTO (including its staff, trainers and assessors) or a learner of the RTO. A complaint may be received by AIFS in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant in order to be acted on. Complaints may be made by any person but are generally made by students and/or employers.

Early resolution of complaints

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It can often be the case that a student's decision to make a complaint can be avoided by appropriate communication and consultation with students at the time a decision is made.

Relationship to continuous improvement

The outcomes of the complaints handling system are entered into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that complaints received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement, as well as assisting with the identification of other potential causes of complaints.

Complaint handling principles

AIFS will apply the following principles to its complaints handling:

- A written record of all complaints is to be kept by AIFS including all details of lodgement, response and resolution. The complaints register is to be used to record the details of the complaint and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the complaint handling process. Records relating to complaint handling must be stored securely to prevent access by unauthorised personnel.
- A complainant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost. This is normally conducted via telephone.
- Each complainant may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant discussion.
- All parties involved in the complaint will be informed of any allegations associated with the complaint and be provided with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.

- The complaints policy must be publicly available. This means that the complaints policy and procedure must be made publicly available through this Participant Handbook which can be downloaded from the website(s).
- The handling of a complaint is to commence within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the complaint and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The complainant is to receive written acknowledgement of the complaint being registered within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the complaint.
- The complainant is to be provided a written response to the complaint, including details of the reasons for the outcome. A written response must be provided to the complainant within fourteen (14) days of the lodgement of the complaint.
- Complaints must be resolved to a final outcome within sixty (60) days of the complaint being initially received. Where the AIFS Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint, the CEO or an authorised delegate must inform the complainant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. As a benchmark, AIFS should attempt to resolve complaints as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve a complaint within thirty (30) days is considered acceptable and in the best interest of AIFS and the complainant. A complainant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the progress of the complaint handling. Updates should be provided to the complainant at a minimum of four (4) weekly intervals.
- AIFS, where relevant, shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant during the complaint handling process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint handling process that find in the favour of the complainant shall be implemented immediately.
- Complaints are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No AIFS representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of the AIFS Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the complainant has given permission for this to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.

Complaints are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the complaint handling process. This means that the complainant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply. The complainant is entitled to have their complaint heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally the decision must be made based on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not take into account irrelevant considerations.

Review by external agency

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by AIFS, they have the opportunity for a body that is independent of AIFS to review his or her complaint following the internal completion of complaint handling process. In these circumstances the AIFS Chief Executive Officer will advise of an appropriate party independent of AIFS to review the complaint (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to AIFS in regards to the recommended outcomes. This advice is to be accepted as final and advised to the complainant in writing.

A complainant who remains not satisfied with the process applied by AIFS following review by an independent party may refer their grievance to the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Students are to be advised that ASQA will require the student to have exhausted all avenues through AIFS internal complaints handling procedure before taking this option. AIFS considers that it would be extremely unlikely that complaints and appeals are not able to be resolved quickly within AIFS internal arrangements.

Complaints Handling Procedure

Matters that cannot be resolved at the time they occur should be referred to the AIFS Chief Executive Officer for review. The following procedure is to be followed when a Complaints Form is received:

- A Complaints Form is received by AIFS and is to be immediately recorded into the AIFS Complaints Register.
- Complaints which are received in other forms such as phone or email are to be detailed on a Complaints Form by the person (staff member) receiving the complaint and then recorded in the Complaints Register.
- The Complaints Form is to be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate who is to review the matter and make recommendation as to how to respond to the matter. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may choose to consult with the complainant, with others within AIFS or relevant agencies external to AIFS in determining their recommendations.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may choose to make inquiries about the matter or may task another person to research the matter against relevant policy.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to commence their review of the complaint within seven (7) working days from the date the complaint was submitted.
- Written acknowledgement is to be sent to the complainant providing acknowledgement of the complaint within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the complaint.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to finalise their response to the complainant and provide the complainant a response as soon as possible but no later than fourteen (14) working days from when the complaint was submitted.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to communicate the response to the complainant in writing. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to seek feedback from the complainant about their level of satisfaction with the complaint outcome and advise the complainant of their options if they are not completely satisfied with the outcome.
- Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint handling, the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to arrange for the complaint to be considered by an appropriate independent third-party. The independent third-party is required to respond with their recommendations within fourteen (14) days of their review being requested.
- A complainant who remains not satisfied with the process applied by AIFS following review by an independent party may refer their grievance to the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Students are to be advised that ASQA will require the student to have exhausted all avenues through AIFS internal complaints handling procedure before taking this option.
- The response to the complainant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed and what actions and outcomes have been identified as a result of the complaint.
- Opportunities for improvement that were identified as a result of the complaint are to be recorded in a Continuous Improvement Item and submitted for the next Management Team meeting. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may, at his or her discretion, follow-up with the complainant after consideration by the Management Team to inform the complainant of the improvement actions identified.
- The Complaints Register is to be kept up to date at all times to accurately reflect how the matter was responded to and the duration from the date the complaint was received to the date the complaint was resolved.

To access the Complaints Form or the Information Release form please visit www.foodsafety.com.au/forms and download the appropriate documents.

APPEALS POLICY

What is an appeal?

An appeal is an application by a student for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding during their time with AIFS. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute. Appeals must be lodged within twenty eight (28) working days of the student being informed of the decision or finding.

It is important to note that a student may appeal any decision including but not limited to assessment outcomes or administrative decisions that AIFS may make. Examples of administrative outcomes that may be appealed can be associated with a decision to deny a refund or to deny an application for credit transfer. As the process for handling an assessment appeal compared with an appeal of an administrative decision is slightly different, this difference has been catered for within this policy with adjusted processes for both situations.

The appeals policy applies to AIFS and any third parties providing services on the RTO's behalf.

Early resolution of appeals

In all cases, issues that arise during training and assessment should be resolved at the time they occur between the persons involved. It can often be the case that a student's decision to make an appeal can be avoided by appropriate communication and consultation with students at the time a decision is made.

Relationship to continuous improvement

The outcomes of the appeal handling system are entered into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of appeals handling is very positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved. It is for this reason that appeals received from stakeholders should be seen in a positive light and as opportunities for improvement, as well as assisting with the identification of other potential causes of appeals.

Appeal handling principles

AIFS will apply the following principles to its appeals handling:

- A written record of all appeals is to be kept by AIFS including all details of lodgement, response and resolution.
- The appeals register is to be used to record the details of the appeal and to maintain a chronological journal of events during the appeal handling process. Records relating to appeal handling must be stored securely to prevent access by unauthorised personnel.
- An appellant is to be provided an opportunity to formally present his or her case at no cost. This is usually conducted via telephone.
- Each appellant may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant discussion.
- All parties involved in the appeal will be informed of any allegations associated with the appeal and be provided with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- The appeals policy must be publicly available. This means that the appeals policy and procedures must be made publicly available through this Participant Handbook which can be downloaded from the website(s).
- The handling of an appeal is to commence within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the appeal and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The appellant is to receive written acknowledgement of the appeal being registered within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the appeal.
- The appellant is to be provided a written response to the appeal, including details of the reasons for the outcome. A written response must be provided to the appellant within fourteen (14) days of the lodgement of the appeal.
- Appeals must be resolved to a final outcome within sixty (60) days of the appeal being initially received. Where the AIFS Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the appeal, the CEO or an authorised delegate must inform the appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. As a benchmark, AIFS should attempt to resolve appeals as soon as possible. A timeframe to resolve an appeal within thirty (30) days is considered acceptable and in the best interest of AIFS and the appellant. An appellant should also be provided with regular updates to inform them of the progress of the appeal handling. Updates should be provided to the appellant at a minimum of four (4) weekly intervals.
- AIFS shall where relevant, maintain the enrolment of the appellant during the appeal handling process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the appeal handling process that find in the favour of the appellant shall be implemented immediately.
- Appeals are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No AIFS representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of AIFS Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the appellant has given permission for this release to occur. This permission should be given using the Information Release Form.

Appeals are to be considered and handled to ensure the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are applied at every stage of the appeal handling process. This means that the appellant is entitled to be heard with access to all relevant information and with the right of reply. The appellant is entitled to have their appeal heard by a person that is without bias and may not be affected by the decision. Finally the decision must be made based on logical evidence and the decision-maker must take account of relevant considerations, must act for a proper purpose and must not take into account irrelevant considerations.

Review by external agency

Where the appellant is not satisfied with the handling of the matter by AIFS, they have the opportunity for a person that is independent of AIFS to review their appeal following the internal completion of an appeal handling process. In these circumstances, the AIFS Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate will advise of an appropriate party independent of AIFS to review the appeal (and its subsequent handling) and provide advice to AIFS in regards to the recommended outcomes. This advice is to be accepted as final and advised to the appellant in writing.

If the appellant is seeking a refund of their tuition fees based on an unfavourable outcome, this may be considered by the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate on its merits. If the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate does not approve a refund and considers that AIFS has dealt with the matter appropriately and has provided the student all reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their competence, the student is to be advised of the opportunity to refer the matter to the Office of Fair Trading in relation to their dispute over the requested refund.

AIFS considers that it would be extremely unlikely that appeals are not able to be resolved quickly within AIFS internal arrangements.

Appeals Handling Procedure

The following procedure is to be followed when an application to appeal a decision is received:

- An application to appeal a decision is received by AIFS and is to be immediately recorded into AIFS's Appeals Register. An application to appeal a decision must be submitted in writing.
- The application to appeal a decision is to be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate who is to review the matter and make recommendation as to how to respond to the matter. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may choose to consult with the appellant, with others within AIFS or relevant agencies external to AIFS in determining their recommendations.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may choose to make inquiries about the matter or may task another person to research the matter against relevant policy or legislation.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to commence their review of an appeal within seven (7) working days from the date the appeal being submitted.
- Written acknowledgement is to be sent to the appellant providing acknowledgement of the appeal within seven (7) working days of the lodgement of the appeal.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to finalise their response to the appellant and provide the appellant a response as soon as possible but no later than fourteen (14) working days from when the appeal was submitted.
- The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to communicate the response to the appellant in writing. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to seek feedback from the appellant about their level of satisfaction with the appeal outcome and advise the appellant of their options if they are not completely satisfied with the outcome.
- Where the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal handling, the Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate is to arrange for the appeal to be considered by an appropriate independent third-party. The independent third-party is required to respond with their recommendations within fourteen (14) days of their review being requested.
- Where the appeal is in relation to an assessment decision, a reassessment should be recommended. Students participating in a reassessment should be provided with detailed counselling about the perceived gaps in their skills and knowledge along with additional training to support their improvement and ability to demonstrate competence. Reassessments should be scheduled to occur as soon as practicable following the outcome of an appeal. The reassessment must be undertaken by a different assessor than was used during the initial assessment. Following the reassessment, the student must be provided with detailed feedback about their performance and the outcome.

- An appellant who remains not satisfied with the process applied by AIFS following review by an independent party may make a complaint to the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Students are to be advised that ASQA will require the student to have exhausted all avenues through AIFS internal appeals handling procedure before taking this option. The response to the appellant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed and what actions and outcomes have been identified as a result of the appeal.
- Opportunities for improvement that were identified as a result of the appeal are to be recorded in a Continuous Improvement Item and submitted for the next Management Team meeting. The Chief Executive Officer or an authorised delegate may, at their discretion, follow-up with the appellant after consideration by the Management Team to inform the appellant of the improvement actions identified.
- The Appeals Register is to be kept up to date at all times to accurately reflect how the matter was responded to and the duration from the date the appeal was received to the date the appeal was resolved.

To access the appeals form or the information release form please visit www.foodsafety.com.au/forms and download the appropriate documents.

Ceasing to Operate

If circumstances are such that AIFS is not able to carry on operations (death, liquidation, bankruptcy), AIFS has a responsibility to transfer these enrolments to another RTO with least disruption to individual participants.

On ceasing operations, AIFS is to:

- Facilitate the transfer of currently enrolled participants to another RTO
- Issue these participants with an appropriate refund for service not provided
- Issue participants with Statements of Attainment based on completed units of competency.

The above also applies if a third party delivering services on our behalf ceases operations and we are unable to continue providing that service to our participants.

For more information call 1300 797 020 or visit us at foodsafety.com.au

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