

Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:

- Ensure that Sheforce adheres to the requirements of the National Standards for Group Training Organisations.
- Encourages open communication and provide a means for stakeholders to express concerns.
- Ensure that complaints and grievances are addressed promptly and effectively.
- Provide a structured process for resolution that is fair and impartial.
- Promote a culture of accountability and continuous improvement within the organisation.
- Provide an external avenue of further investigation where a complaint or grievance cannot be satisfactorily resolved by the involved parties.

SCOPE

This policy and procedure applies to all stakeholders associated with the organisation, including employees, apprentices, trainees, clients, employers, and community members. It encompasses all areas of the organisation and addresses issues related to organisational practices, employee conduct, and service delivery.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal - means a request for a decision made by Sheforce to be reviewed. An appeal may be where a stakeholder of Sheforce, or other interested party, may dispute a decision made by Sheforce.

Complaint - is an expression of dissatisfaction or annoyance about something perceived to be wrong or unfair. It can be verbal or written and may refer to minor issues or specific incidents. Complaints can be informal or formal and typically address a specific issue or incident (e.g., poor service, personal interactions). A complaint often seeks a quick resolution or remedy (e.g., a refund or an apology).

Grievance - is a formal complaint that usually involves a perceived violation of rights, policies, or procedures. It often indicates a deeper or systemic issue and is typically documented. Grievances generally address more serious issues, usually require written documentation, may involve investigation and the resolution process may be more extended and involve multiple parties.

KEY FEATURES

The keys features of this policy and procedure are:-

- **Nature of complaints and grievances** - Sheforce will respond to all complaints or grievances made in relation to any of Sheforce's services, activities or practices.
- **Principles of resolution** - Sheforce is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and grievances process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice.
- **Professional and transparent** - Sheforce will ensure that complaints and grievances are responded to promptly, fairly, objectively and with sensitivity.
- **Confidentiality and privacy:** Sheforce is bound by laws that protect your privacy concerning the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information. Complaints and grievances are treated confidentially and the identity of complainants kept confidential to the extent possible where requested, except where the law otherwise provides.

INFORMAL and FORMAL PROCESS

Sheforce provides the opportunity for aggrieved parties to adopt either an informal or formal process regarding their complaint or grievance. Depending on the nature of the concern or grievance, the complainant is encouraged to address the matter informally prior to accessing the formal process.

INFORMAL PROCESS

1. Initial Discussion:

Complainants are encouraged to first address their concerns informally with the individual(s) involved. This initial conversation can help clarify the issue and may lead to an immediate resolution. It is recommended that all stakeholders approach the conversation with an open mind and a willingness to listen.

2. Seeking Support:

If the issue remains unresolved after the initial discussion, complainants may seek assistance from an immediate supervisor or manager. The supervisor or manager can facilitate a meeting between the stakeholders involved to mediate the discussion and explore potential solutions or to investigate further.

3. Documentation:

While not mandatory, it is advisable for all stakeholders to document the issue(s) and any discussions held. This documentation can provide clarity and context if the matter escalates to a formal complaint or grievance.

B. FORMAL PROCESS

1. Filing a Formal Complaint/Grievance:

If the issue has not been resolved through informal channels or is of a more serious nature, complainants may submit a formal complaint or grievance in writing. This written document should include:

- A clear and detailed description of the issue.
- Relevant dates, times, and individuals involved.
- Any supporting evidence, such as emails, photographs, or witness statements.
- The desired outcome or resolution sought by the complainant.

Any individual wishing to lodge a formal complaint or grievance are encouraged to use the Sheforce Complaint and Grievance Form which will enable the required information to be provided. This form is accessible via the Sheforce website www.sheforce.com.au

2. Submission:

The formal complaint or grievance should be submitted to the designated Sheforce complaints officer via email hello@sheforce.com.au or mail to **Level 3, 6 Hartington Street, Glenroy Vic 3046**.

3. Acknowledgment:

Sheforce will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint or grievance within 48 hours. This acknowledgment will include information about the next steps in the process.

4. Investigation:

An impartial and thorough investigation will be conducted by a Sheforce representative. The investigation may involve:

- Interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) involved, and any witnesses.
- Review of relevant documents and evidence.
- Gathering of additional information as needed to understand the context and details of the complaint or grievance.

Sheforce will seek to complete the investigation process within 15 business days and the complainant will be informed of their rights and responsibilities. Should the investigation process be expected to take longer than this period, Sheforce will advise the complainant of the reasons why and confirm a new timeframe.

5. Outcome:

Upon completion of the investigation, the outcomes will be communicated to the complainant in writing. The communication will include:

- A summary of the findings.
- Any actions taken as a result of the investigation.
- Recommendations for resolution, if applicable.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Dismissal of the complaint or grievance due to lack of evidence.
- Recommendations for corrective actions or policy changes.
- Implementation of disciplinary actions if warranted.

6. Appeal:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they will have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing within 15 business days of receiving the initial outcome. The appeal will be reviewed by the Sheforce CEO.

- The appeal process will involve a review of the original complaint, investigation findings
- The Sheforce CEO will review the complaint or grievance and may conduct interviews or gather additional information.
- A decision will be communicated in writing within 15 days.

Records of complaints, grievances and appeals

Sheforce, will maintain a record of all complaints, grievances, appeals and their outcomes and reasons for the outcomes in the Complaints and Appeals Register, which will be securely stored according to the Privacy Policy and Procedures.

Publication

This policy and procedure will be referred to in the relevant Marketing materials, Induction Pack, Handbooks and be available on Sheforce website www.sheforce.com.au

External complaint avenues

Sheforce recognises the right of individuals to approach an external agency if the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure has not resolved the issue to their satisfaction.

Should the aggrieved party wish for the complaints and grievances to be investigated externally, these can also be made via the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.

Email: ntch@education.gov.au

- Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority:
Clients (apprentices, trainees, employers) can register a complaint by:
Phone: 03 9637 2806

Completing the online form at

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/StateRegister/Public.aspx/LodgeComplaint>

Mail at - Manager, Complaints Unit
VRQA, GPO Box 2317
Melbourne VIC 3001

- Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission works to resolve complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment and racial and religious vilification.

Lines are open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, or submit your complaint online
<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1132135/Online-Complaint-Form>

Phone: 1300 891 848

Email: complaints@veohrc.vic.gov.au

- Fair Work Ombudsman

Fair Work Ombudsman works to resolve complaints about Australian workplace laws

Lines are open 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday, or submit your complaint online at
<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1132135/Online-Complaint-Form>

Phone: 1300 799 675

Email: complaints@fwc.gov.au

The Director, Client Services, Fair Work Commission, GPO Box 1994, Melbourne, VIC, 3001

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically as needed to reflect changes in industry practices/legislation, organisational requirements or identified improvement.