

## Client Dispute & Complaint Resolution Policy

### 1. Objective

Our service to clients and the general community reflects our **vision** and our **mission statement**. Customer satisfaction is a high priority for Smart Apprenticeship Solutions. This policy provides a vehicle for the submission of feedback and raising of disputes including the fair and timely procedure for resolution.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Visitors, Sub-Contractors, Host Employers, Apprentices, Trainees and partner organisations.

### 3. Policy Statement

Smart Apprenticeship Solutions is committed to continually improving its service levels to our Host Employers, Apprentices, Trainees and partner organisations. Receiving feedback both positive and negative regarding its activities and actions provides SAS with valuable learning and improvement opportunities as well as opportunity to seek a timely resolve to any concerns and complaints or disputes raised.

### Submitting Feedback or Complaints

Smart Apprenticeship Solutions is happy to receive feedback at any time which will then be passed on to the appropriate department and manager for review and corrective actions if required however to facilitate a timely response for more serious matters, SAS encourages the submission of complaints or disputes in writing via email to [admin@sasat.com.au](mailto:admin@sasat.com.au)

All feedback will be received and acknowledged via return email or phone contact within 2 working days. SAS is committed to treating all complaints seriously, investigating fairly, providing prompt resolutions without retaliation of any kind.

### Pathway to Resolution

SAS Management is committed to providing a clearly written and accessible *Client Dispute & Complaint Response Procedure* along with this policy to achieve a timely resolution. Host Employers, Apprentices, Trainees and partner organisations can obtain a copy of this policy and procedure from [www.sasat.com.au/forms-and-resources](http://www.sasat.com.au/forms-and-resources) or by contacting our head office on 133024.

### Alternative Resolution Options

If the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution provided by SAS management there are alternative options for escalation of the complaint.

These may include:

- Fair Work Ombudsman [www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)
- The relevant State Training Authority Training Ombudsman
- QLD - Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training [www.desbt.qld.gov.au](http://www.desbt.qld.gov.au)
- NSW - Training Services NSW
- WorkSafe Queensland [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)
- SafeWork NSW
- Other Government agencies


### 4. Breach of Policy

A breach of this policy, either intended or unintended, will be considered serious and may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment or cancellation of contract.

### 5. Associated Documents

27-03 Client Dispute & Complaint Response Procedure

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	<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Approved by	CEO	Steven Craven	08/23	

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## Client Dispute & Complaint Response Procedure

### 1. Objective

This procedure provides a distinct pathway for correct handling and response by SAS staff to feedback – good or negative, received from SAS’s valued clients. As well clear expectations of what SAS’s clients can expect in response to their complaint from SAS management.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Visitors, Sub-Contractors, Host Employers, Apprentices, Trainees and partner organisations.

### 3. Method

#### Submitting a Complaint

Smart Apprenticeship Solutions is happy to receive feedback from our clients at any time. The SAS staff person receiving this feedback good or negative is tasked to then communicate the feedback to their immediate manager in the first instance or for further escalation according to the organisational chart as commensurate to the seriousness of the complaint.

Complaints of a serious nature should be submitted in writing to ensure accuracy of information is communicated.

The complainant will be afforded a confidential, fair and unbiased investigation of the complaint. The principles of natural justice will underscore the investigation i.e. the complaint will be investigated without bias, affording all parties opportunity to be heard and submit their factual information.

#### SAS procedural response:

1. The complainant should discuss any complaints, problems, grievances or disputes with the immediate SAS supervisor/manager/contact in the first instance as they feel comfortable to do so. Complaints of a serious nature should be submitted in writing to ensure accuracy of information is communicated.
2. The SAS supervisor/manager/contact will then commence the process of investigation and resolution as below. If the complaint reported involves harassment, sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination or a complaint from a customer, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) must be notified immediately.
3. If the complaint remains unresolved after Step 1, the client or the SAS supervisor/manager/contact can request the Operations Manager or CEO to review and create a pathway of resolution.

#### Process of investigation and resolution

4. The Manager/CEO will investigate the complaint and provide a response outlining the resolution pathway no later than 14 working days of receiving the complaint. The CEO may choose to nominate another manager to investigate and resolve the grievance in the event that they are unable to meet the timeline or there is a conflict of interest with the CEO’s involvement in mediating a resolution.
5. The CEO or nominated manager or supervising manager will take all available steps to maintain confidentiality and ensure the privacy and rights of the individual(s) concerned are maintained with the principles of natural justice applied to all parties.
6. The CEO or nominated manager will seek permission to disclose the allegations to the subject of the grievance or complaint and interview any nominated witness (es) if applicable.
7. The complainant and respondent are entitled to have independent parties present during all interviews, if they so desire.

8. At all times both the complainant and respondent will be given ample support and opportunity to put forward their case.
9. The interviews will be minuted and signed by all parties in attendance.
10. A copy of the minutes from an individual's interview will be made available to that individual.
11. After all involved have been interviewed, the CEO or nominated manager will meet firstly with the complainant, and then with other parties to advise of the outcome of their investigations and action to be taken. The investigation details and actions will be documented and if applicable placed on an individual's personnel file.
12. The situation will be monitored by the CEO or nominated manager for a nominated period of time, and follow up action taken if necessary.

### **Further Escalation and Right of Appeal**

13. If the matter(s) remain unresolved at this stage a formal Mediation between the parties may be requested by either party. This may include mediation from an independent Consultant / Mediator or representative of the appropriate government department or body. If the CEO has not been involved at this point the CEO may operate as an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> Party and mediator if appropriate.

In the event that the complainant feels the problem remains unresolved after the Mediation has been conducted:

1. The complainant may submit an appeal in writing to the CEO within 14 working days for consideration OR
2. A formal written complaint may be lodged with the appropriate Government body.

While the above procedures are being followed, every endeavour will be applied to ensure that work continues as normal. Complaint resolution shouldn't interfere with day-to-day work. While the process is underway, employees should continue to comply with managements directions and perform any work that is safe and appropriate. This provision shall apply except when a bona fide safety issue is involved.

Accurate and appropriate records will be kept by the person(s) responsible at the particular level during the process. These records will then be uploaded and securely stored in the relevant staff folder accessible by the relevant staff only.

### **4. Associated Documents**

27-02 Client Dispute & Complaint Resolution Policy

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Approved by	CEO	Steven Craven	08/23	