

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all appeals raised by students, personnel, or other stakeholders regarding decisions made by the organisation are managed fairly, transparently, and consistently. The appeals process is designed to uphold the principles of natural justice and ensure that all parties are treated equitably.

This policy applies to all appeals relating to decisions made by the organisation, including but not limited to:

- Application outcomes.
- Assessment outcomes.
- Disciplinary actions.
- Complaints resolution outcomes.

This policy and processes implemented are aligned to requirements outlined in *ISO 10002:2018 Quality management – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations*.

2. Policy Statement

MTA Training and Employment ensures that students, personnel, and stakeholders are made aware of the appeals process through various accessible and transparent communication channels. Information about the appeals process is prominently featured in the MTA Training and Employment **Student Handbook**, organisational website, and enrolment materials. During onboarding and orientation sessions for students and personnel, the appeals process is explained to promote understanding. Third party providers are also required to inform students about the appeals process. Ongoing reminders via digital communications and other channels ensure stakeholders have continuous access to this information.

MTA Training and Employment's appeals management system is designed to uphold fairness, timeliness, and effectiveness through a structured and impartial process. Appeals are handled by unbiased personnel who are independent of the original decision being reviewed. The process ensures that appellants have an opportunity to formally present their case and are supported by clear communication and transparent timelines. Appeals are acknowledged promptly, and stakeholders are regularly updated on the progress of their appeals. Decisions are merit-based, considering all available evidence, and the process adheres to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Additionally, all appeals are documented in the **Appeals Register** to maintain accountability and consistency.

MTA Training and Employment systematically analyses appeals outcomes to identify trends, root causes, and areas for improvement. Substantiated appeals are documented in the **Continuous Improvement Register**, and corrective actions are implemented to prevent recurrence. Outcomes of appeals inform policy and procedural updates, ensuring alignment with best practices and stakeholder expectations. Regular audits of the appeals process are conducted to assess its effectiveness and identify further opportunities for refinement. Feedback from appeals also informs resource allocation, risk management, and strategic planning, contributing to the organisation's culture of continuous improvement.

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3. Policy Principles

MTA Training and Employment's appeals process reflects the fourteen (14) guiding principles as outlined in ISO 10002:2018 (refer **Complaints Policy**).

MTA Training and Employment is committed to providing a fair and transparent appeals process that allows individuals to seek a review of decisions that directly affect them. All appeals are managed in a timely, impartial, and confidential manner.

MTA Training and Employment's appeals process reflects the following key expectations:

- Right to appeal. All stakeholders have the right to lodge an appeal if they believe a decision was unfair or incorrect.
- Accessibility. The appeals process is easily accessible and user-friendly.
- Transparency and procedural fairness. Appeals are handled impartially, with a clear process and open communication at all stages.
- Timeliness. Appeals are acknowledged and resolved promptly, with clear timeframes communicated to all parties.
- Continuous improvement. Outcomes of appeals inform continuous improvement within the organisation.

Stakeholders are informed about avenues for appeal with information about how to make an appeal publicly available and easily accessible, including via the MTA Training and Employment **Student Handbook** and website.

Grievances or issues not pertaining to decisions made by the organisation should be referred to MTA Training and Employment's complaints process.

Grounds for an Appeal

Appeals may be considered valid and accepted for review under the following grounds:

- Procedural fairness or irregularity. Where it is believed that the original decision was made without following established procedures or policies, resulting in an unfair or biased outcome.
- New evidence. When new, relevant evidence becomes available that was not considered during the original decision-making process, and this evidence has the potential to affect the outcome.
- Incorrect or unjust application of policies or standards. If it is believed that the policies, procedures, or standards were incorrectly applied or interpreted, leading to an unjust decision.
- Bias or conflict of interest. If there is evidence of bias, discrimination, or a conflict of interest by the person(s) involved in making the original decision.
- Assessment outcome disputes. When a student believes that an assessment decision was unfair, inconsistent with assessment criteria, or not conducted in accordance with the organisation's assessment policies and standards.
- Severity of outcome or penalty. If the appellant believes the outcome or penalty applied was disproportionate, harsh, or unreasonable in relation to the situation.

These grounds ensure that appeals are raised on legitimate and substantive bases, supporting the organisation's commitment to fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement.

MTA Training and Employment's appeals process is free, easily accessible and facilitates requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by MTA Training and Employment or a third party representative providing services on MTA Training and Employment's behalf.

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The appeals process follows the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness by allowing anyone subject to a decision by MTA Training and Employment, or anyone who has allegations made against them, to tell their side of the story before a decision is made.

MTA Training and Employment maintains a student appellant's enrolment during any appeal process.

MTA Training and Employment's process ensures that the decision-maker is independent of the decision being reviewed (for example, an assessor does not consider or decide an appeal against an assessment decision they made).

4. Appeal and Dispute Resolution Procedure

1. Before making a formal appeal, individuals are encouraged to discuss the matter with the relevant MTA Training and Employment personnel in an effort to reach a shared understanding of the matter and agreement.

If a stakeholder is still unhappy, they may lodge a formal appeal in writing to MTA Training and Employment Chief Executive Officer.

2. Any stakeholder may submit a formal appeal to MTA Training and Employment about a decision. Appeals information captured includes:
 - Submission date of appeal,
 - Name of appellant,
 - Nature of appeal,
 - Date of the event / activity which lead to the appeal,
 - The products and services or related organisation practices relevant,
 - A description of the appeal and relevant supporting data,
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable),
 - The requested remedy,
 - Immediate action taken (if any), and
 - The due date for a response.

All stages of the appeals process are documented. Appeals may be lodged via various channels including in-person via MTA Training and Employment personnel, via telephone and via email.

All appeals are immediately recorded in the MTA Training and Employment **Appeals Register**.

3. MTA Training and Employment commences processing of appeals as soon as practicable and within five (5) business days of an appeal being made and finalises the outcome as soon as practicable.

Appeals are allocated to the MTA Training and Employment General Manager Apprenticeships, who may allocate alternate or additional resourcing to the investigation and processing of the appeal.

4. MTA Training and Employment acknowledges receipt of appeals in writing immediately, as soon as practical, and:
 - Arranges a suitable time if needed to discuss the appeal,
 - Advises appellants of expected timeframes, and
 - Gives appellants the contact details of the allocated contact person they can speak to about their appeal.

An up-to-date status is made available to the appellant upon request and at regular intervals.

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5. Appeal investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the appeal as soon as practical and within twenty (20) working days of the appeal being received in writing.

Appellants are given an opportunity to formally present their case at no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

Decisions and outcomes of all appeals are merit-based decisions that consider all available evidence. MTA Training and Employment ensures appeals are considered with an open mind and without bias arising from any past issues with the appellant.

Issues raised in appeals are analysed to determine cause(s) and the root cause evident.

6. Appellants are advised of the outcome of the appeal in writing, including detailed reasons for the outcome. With this notification, appellants also receive information on how they can progress their appeal if still unhappy.
7. If an appellant, on receiving written advice on the initial appeal, is still unhappy they may escalate the appeal to the MTA Training and Employment Chief Executive Officer for independent external review. Escalated appeals are to include the following information:
 - Submission date of appeal,
 - Name of appellant,
 - Nature of appeal,
 - Reasons why the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the original appeal, and
 - Any other relevant information or attachments (if applicable).

8. MTA Training and Employment Chief Executive Officer acknowledges receipt of escalated appeals in writing as soon as possible and within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal.

The Chief Executive Officer refers the matter to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose by MTA Training and Employment.

MTA Training and Employment gives due consideration to any recommendations arising from the external review within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the recommendations, including implementing the decision(s) or recommendation(s) and/or taking the preventive or corrective action(s) required by the decision and advises the appellant of that action in writing.

Investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the appeal as soon as practical and within twenty (20) working days of the escalated appeal being received in writing.

Appellants are advised on the outcome of appeals in writing, including detailed reason(s) for the outcome, explanations for decisions and remedies where appropriate.

MTA Training and Employment securely maintain records of all details of the appeals process and retains evidence of all documentation relevant. Each appeal and its outcome is recorded via the **Appeals Register**.

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Appeals Processing Delays

If at any stage MTA Training and Employment considers more than twenty (20) working days are required to process and finalise an appeal, MTA Training and Employment:

- Informs the appellant in writing, including reasons why more time is required, and
- Regularly updates the appellant on the progress of the matter.

MTA Training and Employment retains records of all appeals for a period of at least ten (10) years, allowing parties to the appeal access to these records.

Improvement Actions

MTA Training and Employment is committed to take appropriate action in any case where an appeal is upheld. In cases where an appeal is upheld, MTA Training and Employment endeavours to identify the root cause of the matter that was appealed and takes appropriate action to prevent the situation happening again.

All improvement actions arising from appeals are recorded in a **Continuous Improvement Register** for recording the receipt and management of improvement records.

MTA Training and Employment:

- Regularly analyses appeals to identify trends and any further improvements needed,
- Audits the appeals process on an annual basis to assess its effectiveness and improve the appeals process as needed.

Please refer to the **Quality Policy** for further information on the continuous improvement process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

MTA Training and Employment monitors and evaluates the appeals process to ensure appeals are handled objectively.

A process of performance monitoring, evaluation, and reporting has been established and implemented.

The organisation continually improves the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Process performance and outcomes are regularly audited to identify and remove causes of existing and potential problems, as well as to uncover any opportunities for improvement.

Please refer to the **Quality Policy** for further information on the monitoring and evaluation process.

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