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## COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

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### PURPOSE

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To outline the process to be followed by MRAEL employees in handling complaints, compliments and suggestions from individuals and organisations who have dealings with MRAEL.

To ensure complaints are resolved in a professional and timely manner.

To comply with:

- Standard 1.4 of the National Standards for Group Training Organisations
- Standard 1.1, 2.2 and 2.7 of the Australian Quality Training Framework, Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration

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### SCOPE

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This policy applies to all employees of MRAEL Limited, including staff and apprentices and trainees hosted external to MRAEL, students of MRAEL's Registered Training Organisation (RTO), businesses hosting MRAEL's apprentices and trainees and other stakeholders receiving customer service from MRAEL.

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### POLICY

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Complaints are an indication of an opportunity to improve or clarify some part of our way of doing business. When feedback is in the form of a compliment, additional to confirming good performance it may also provide an opportunity for further improvement in other areas of the business.

The systematic collection and classification of complaints and opportunities for business improvement will allow corrective action and system faults to be rectified or improved and may form part of future strategic planning or risk management practices.

A standardised approach means that complaints can be dealt with in an efficient manner.

As complaints are direct feedback on actual performance or perceptions of performance of MRAEL, there needs to be high level accountability for screening, follow-up and evaluation of remedial action.

People who make complaints have the right to be taken seriously, treated with respect and to receive feedback within a reasonable timeframe without breaching legal responsibilities such as the Privacy Act.

All reports of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or vilification will be treated as a complaint and will be addressed in accordance with this policy. The MRAEL Equal Employment Opportunity Policy provides further information on complaints of this nature.

All staff are responsible for taking and where appropriate resolving complaints.

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Minor verbal complaints received at a field level, such as by an Apprentice Specialist or Trainer, are to be resolved at that level where it is possible and appropriate to do so. The complaint, the action taken and the outcome is to be recorded in the electronic system or file relevant to the business unit. The relevant manager and Coordinator are also to be notified by email of each complaint received, within one working day of receipt, along with a follow up email detailing action taken and the outcome.

Where the complaint is of a major nature or cannot be resolved at the non-management level, it is to be escalated to the appropriate manager without delay. Relevant General Managers are to be notified of complaints relating to, but not limited to, possible discrimination, victimisation, harassment or vilification. The manager will raise a Business Improvement form and lodge it with the Quality team for inclusion in the Business Improvement Register.

Once a Business Improvement form is raised, the Business Improvement Procedure will be followed. This procedure ensures that relevant managers are made aware of feedback relevant to their business unit. Complaints are investigated, and then corrective and preventive measures are taken in a timely manner to resolve the situation. All action is documented on the Business Improvement form and retained on record. Once the matter has been adequately resolved, the Quality team perform a root cause analysis and verify and record the successful resolution of the complaint by questioning relevant employees and/or examining documentation.

All complaints are to be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. It is expected that all complaints will be finalised as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within one month. Regular communication is to be maintained with complainants throughout the process through to resolution. In general, complaints are to be given the highest priority for resolution.

The complainant will be advised of the outcome within reason and in accordance with legislative guidelines such as the Privacy Act.

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### TIPS ON HANDLING COMPLAINTS

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- Receive and acknowledge the complaint with empathy and tact but do not lay blame, admit liability, become defensive or make judgments.
- Identify yourself and your position.
- Answer each call in a positive and courteous way.
- Listen to what the client is saying.
- Restate what they are saying to clarify you are recording it accurately.
- Write down the complaint, if possible, as it is being made. If circumstances do not permit immediate recording, write down the details as soon as possible. Do not rely on memory.
- Record the time, date, means (eg. phone) and location where the complaint was made.
- Record what has been said including all traceable detail eg. name, dates.
- Make sure you have clearly identified the complaint by repeating back your understanding of the situation.
- Make sure you get the name and contact details of the complainant.
- Explain what action you intend to take eg. the matter will be referred to 'name and position', who will call you back within 'timeframe'.
- Meet any promised deadlines.
- If you can resolve the complaint immediately and it is appropriate then please do so.
- Advise your immediate manager by emailing a record of the complaint including the details required for recording on the Business Improvement form.

## **GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

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All employees and students are entitled to have matters of concern to them resolved through an orderly and consultative process. This means that employees, no matter what level their appointment is within the company, and students are entitled to discuss the matter with their immediate supervisor (including an Apprentice Specialist in the case of Apprentice Employment Program apprentices and trainees) or Trainer (in the case of a student), with the intention of resolving the matter of concern.

If this process does not produce a satisfactory result, the individual is entitled to escalate the matter to the next level of supervision. If this escalation does not result in a satisfactory outcome, the individual is entitled to continue escalating the matter until it reaches the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Dependant on the circumstances, for Apprentice Employment Program apprentices and trainees or for students of the RTO, the matter may instead be escalated to the Department of Education and Training.

When a matter is escalated above the individual's immediate supervisor or trainer, the person to whom that escalation has been taken, is expected to seek a report from the person to whom the matter has previously been referred. When the grievance is escalated to the CEO the individual's supervisor or trainer will be present at any meeting regarding the grievance.

In a situation where the matter is escalated to the CEO and cannot be resolved, the individual is entitled to ask for the matter to be referred to MRAEL's Board of Directors for consideration and if deemed necessary, resolution. However, in these circumstances, the board will only deal with the matter where the individual presents his or her case to them in the presence of the CEO and the relevant manager.