



Student Handbook

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1. Introduction

Welcome to Sprout Training. This handbook is designed to inform current and prospective students of Sprout Training about the procedures and administrative processes that affect your participation in training, along with your rights and obligations at Sprout Training. If you wish to discuss any of the following information, please do not hesitate to ask any of our training staff, who will be able to direct you to the most relevant department. Please read this handbook carefully if you intend to enrol in a course with Sprout Training.

Information about the specific courses we offer is available at www.sprout.edu.au

2. Our commitment to you

Provide quality services

Sprout Training is committed to providing the highest quality training and assessment services possible. Sprout Training provides innovative and inspiring educational services created to build a foundation of skills and knowledge that will prepare graduates for work in a related field and encourage ongoing personal and professional development. Sprout Training recognises that individuals learn differently. Rather than building a “one size fits all” education provider we believe strongly in the importance of adapting our teaching methods to build an inclusive, encouraging and motivating learning environment. We have high standards, and these will not change, however we are committed to helping all Sprout Training students reach these standards.

In order to meet our commitments and provide the best service we can, Sprout Training will systematically monitor and evaluate all of our services to ensure that all aspects of operations comply with the [Standards for RTOs 2015](#) at all times. We will also, with great determination, aim to surpass the standards and expectations of our students and industry. We will, with students, industry, employees and other partners, have conversations, conduct regular surveys and collect data that we will systematically analyse and interpret to ensure Sprout Training is providing the best service and outcomes it can for its students and industry. We are not afraid of criticism and in fact we will seek critical and constructive feedback from many sources to ensure Sprout Training provides the highest possible service to its students and is respected by students, industry and the community. We welcome feedback, from trainers and assessors, students and industry, formal and informal, including the outcomes of assessment validation activities and complaints and appeals. We see this as fundamental to the development of a successful training organisation, in terms of student outcomes and also the creation of effective operational systems and a positive organisational culture.

As a student, we encourage you to provide any feedback about your training and assessment experience and general interactions with us direct to the Managing Director. Alternatively, if you are dissatisfied with a service provided or an action we have taken, you have the right to lodge a complaint. Refer to Section 11: *Complaints & appeals* in this handbook for further information about lodging a complaint.

Keeping you informed

Where there are any changes to the services Sprout Training has agreed to provide, we will advise

you as soon as practical in writing. We will tell you if there is a change in the ownership of the RTO or if we enter into an agreement with another organisation to provide services on our behalf (or if there is a change to any of these agreements).

As a RTO, Sprout Training must comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with:

- the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* and the legislative instruments it enables
- legislation, regulations and standards related to delivery of training to overseas students (if applicable)
- workplace health and safety legislation and regulations
- anti-discrimination legislation and regulations, and
- consumer protection requirements.

Sprout Training will keep you (as well as its staff) informed about any changes to legislative and regulatory requirements that may affect the delivery of training and assessment.

Respecting your privacy

In recognition of your right to keep your personal information private, we are committed to protecting and maintaining privacy, accuracy and security of your training records. For further information about this, refer to Section 12: *Management of records* of this handbook.

Access, equity & support

Sprout Training is committed to the principles of access and equity in education and training and generally permits open access to all courses and training programs. The exception is where open access is restricted because of legislation, licensing regulations, government funding policies or because of training package requirements. An assessment of pre-requisite competencies may be carried out to determine a student's suitability.

In many courses student numbers may be limited. Training courses are available to students who meet the specified minimum course entry requirements without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sexual preference, disability, age or any other unlawful grounds of discrimination.

Sprout Training aims to support all of our students and provide access to the educational and support services you need to successfully complete the qualification or course of study in which you are enrolled. For further information about the support we provide to our students, refer to Section 9: *Student Support* in this handbook.

A harassment, victimisation and bullying-free environment

Sprout Training is an equal opportunity education and training provider, committed to freedom from discrimination, verbal, sexual and physical abuse and victimisation. All students and staff have the right

to an environment free from such abuse. Please report any incidents or concerns to your trainer/ assessor or the Managing Director.

Sprout Training reserves the right to dismiss any student for disruptive, inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour without refund.

Recognition of your prior learning and current skills

Sprout Training will have regard for your prior learning, including existing skills, knowledge and experience when considering the amount of training to be provided. If you have current, relevant skills and knowledge that can be verified by Sprout Training, you may be eligible for recognition of that prior learning towards the course. Refer to Section 5: *Enrolment procedures* of this Handbook for further information about recognition of your prior learning.

Timely issuance of your certification documentation

We will issue your nationally recognised certification documentation (your Qualification and Record of Results or Statement of Attainment) to you within 30 calendar days of you being assessed as meeting all of the requirements of the course of study you are enrolled in, provided payment for all agreed fees has been received. For information about the issue and re-issue of certification documentation, refer to Section 10: *Certification issuance* in this Handbook.

3. Student obligations & disciplinary procedures

Obligations

Sprout Training's commitment to you is outlined in Section 2 of this handbook. In return, we have some expectations of you to help us make your time and the time of your fellow students and trainers/assessors at Sprout Training pleasant and productive. Sprout Training expects you to:

- contribute to learning in a harmonious and positive manner irrespective of gender, race, sexual preference, political affiliation, marital status, disability or religious belief;
- comply with the rules and regulations of Sprout Training;
- be honest and respectful, which includes not falsifying work or information and not conducting yourself in any way that may cause injury or offence to others;
- be responsible for your own learning and development by participating actively and positively and by ensuring that you maintain progress with learning modules;
- monitor your own progress by ensuring that assessment deadlines are observed;
- utilise facilities and Sprout Training publications with respect and to honour our copyrights and prevent our publications from being distributed to unauthorised persons; and
- respect other students and Sprout Training staff members and their right to privacy and confidentiality.

Disciplinary procedures

Sprout Training has a two-strike disciplinary policy for most behavioural issues.

On the first occasion a student does not meet one or more of the obligations listed above, the student will be counselled by the Managing Director of Sprout Training about their inappropriate behaviour and how it can be improved. A course of action will then be agreed upon as well as a reasonable time period allowed to implement the required changes. A record of the counselling and the agreed course of action will be retained on the student's file and a copy provided to the student.

On the second occasion, the student will be counselled and, at the discretion of the Managing Director, may be suspended from accessing one or more training sessions or will have their enrolment cancelled, with no refund of fees paid. A record of the counselling and the course of action will be retained on the student's file and a copy provided to the student.

Sprout Training may immediately suspend or cancel the enrolment of a student for serious misconduct, including but not limited to:

- disruptive/abusive behaviour or/and harassment of staff, visitors or other students (either verbally or physically)
- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- theft or deliberate damage to the property and equipment of Sprout Training, its staff, visitors or other students
- flagrant disobedience of all reasonable and lawful instructions given to the student.

A suspended student is not permitted on RTO grounds or to access the online learning platform for the period of the suspension (except at the invitation of the Managing Director). A student who has had their enrolment cancelled is not permitted back on RTO grounds.

4. Unique Student Identifier (USI)

From January 2015, any registered training organisation, including Sprout Training, is not generally permitted to issue AQF certification documents (a Qualification or Statement of Attainment) to a student without having (and verifying) the student's Unique Student Identifier (USI). A USI is a reference number made up of numbers and letters. It is free and easy to [create your USI](#) and means there will be a secure online record of your nationally recognised training. From January 2016, you will be able to easily access secure digital transcripts of your achievements. Learn more about the [USI scheme here](#). You'll need to include your USI on your *Enrolment Form*.

5. Enrolment procedures

Students first enrol in a qualification (or individual units of competency) by completing and submitting the *Enrolment Form* available at www.sprout.edu.au. Completed forms can be submitted by email or

in person to the address on the form.

Check for completeness

Sprout Training will confirm that the *Enrolment Form* has been properly completed and ask you for further information if required.

Verify Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Sprout Training will verify the provided USI included by a student on their *Enrolment Form* using the Australian Government's USI website.

Enrolment cannot proceed without the student supplying a valid USI that can be verified by the RTO.

Assessment of learning support needs

Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN)

All students wishing to enrol with Sprout Training are required to complete a language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) quiz. The quiz includes a small number of questions that will tell us about each student's level of reading, comprehension and math skills. The purpose of the quiz is to give both the student and Sprout Training an indication of the student's language, literacy and numeracy skills and to determine if they have the appropriate level to undertake the course. It is not a formal assessment. It is a tool we use to ensure students receive learning support, if needed. The support we may be able to provide, if necessary, includes:

- changing the way in which we deliver training and/or conduct assessment – almost customising the course to suit the student's needs;
- referring the student to an LLN specialist who is qualified to help them achieve their goals.

This quiz will be administered once your *Enrolment Form* has been processed.

Other learning needs

In addition, if a student has indicated on the *Enrolment Form* that they require support to successfully complete the course, where possible, Sprout Training will work with the student to identify and provide the type of support needed. Such support may include, but is not limited to:

- providing extra time to complete written tasks;
- providing assistance with written tasks;
- providing extra time to read course material;
- offering large print material;
- offering extra help from the trainer;
- allowing additional time to move around the training rooms; and/or

- minimising how often and how far the student is required to move throughout the premises.

However, there may be some cases where Sprout Training does not have the facilities and resources to effectively help all students. We will discuss support needs as appropriate with students before accepting their enrolment and if the RTO cannot give students the support they require, alternate options will be discussed.

Determination of eligibility for credit transfer or Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

If a student has indicated on the *Enrolment Form* that they have current and relevant skills, knowledge and/or experience and would like to be assessed to determine if they are eligible for recognition of that learning towards the course, a trainer or assessor will contact the student to discuss their situation, the recognition process and the impact on the amount of training they will need to undertake.

Credit transfer

Credit transfer will be granted if a student already holds relevant competencies (that can be authenticated) and the student can present:

- the original or certified copy of a relevant qualification or statement of attainment issued by another RTO; or
- the original or certified copy of a VET transcript issued by the USI Registrar.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Recognition of prior learning will be given to students for competencies they may have acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning if an assessment process determines they meet the requirements specified in the relevant training package or accredited course. A trainer and assessor will advise a student of the RPL process, application and evidence requirements, possible outcomes and indicative timeframes.

Decision about enrolment

Sprout Training will advise the student if their enrolment is accepted or declined.

Enrolment may be declined where extensive support would be required for the student to be able to participate appropriately in the training or where deficiency will clearly inhibit achievement of learning outcomes. As noted above, in such cases, students will be counselled about their options.

If, at any time, places are limited in a course, places will be filled in the order in which complete Enrolment form and full payment, unless alternate arrangements have been made, as per section 6.0, were received.

6. Fees, cancellation & refunds

Payment terms

Information about course fees is included on our website at www.sprout.edu.au.

Full payment is due upon submission of the *Enrolment Form*.

Payment plans can be negotiated on request but cannot exceed six (6) months. This must be negotiated prior to submission of the *Enrolment Form*.

All fees can be paid by:

- Credit Card;
- Electronic Funds Transfer (account details available on request); or
- Cash.

Any change to fees will be published on Sprout Training's website at www.sprout.edu.au.

Other fees

Re-issue Statement of Attainment	\$45
Re-issue Record of Results	\$45

Student cancellation & refund

Students who given notice to cancel their enrolment:

- within four (4) weeks of the course commencement date are not entitled to receive a refund, transfer or credit note.
- between four (4) and twelve (12) weeks prior to the course commencement date are not entitled to a refund. They can, however, transfer their enrolment to a later course, provided the course is within 12 months of the initial course.
- twelve (12) or more weeks before the course commencement date are entitled to a full refund or they may transfer their enrolment to a later course, provided the course is within 12 months of the initial course.

Notification of cancellation of enrolment must be received in writing by post or by emailing training@sprout.edu.au and, if the timing of the notification allows for transfer to a later course, a representative of the RTO will contact the cancelling student to arrange the transfer. Eligible students may only transfer their enrolment once.

Cancellation by the RTO

If a payment has been made by a student and received by Sprout Training and Sprout Training:

- terminates the training and assessment arrangement early*;
- is forced to reschedule the training course; or

- fails to provide the agreed services*

a student will be entitled to a full refund of the fee paid if the training to which the payment relates has not yet commenced or a proportionate refund if it has commenced.

The refund will be made within four weeks (28 calendar days) and will be transferred into the student's nominated bank account.

* A student is not entitled to a refund if the student is suspended from attending or has had their enrolment cancelled in accordance with the circumstances explained in Section 3: *Student obligations & disciplinary procedures* in this Handbook.

7. Student Verification

Identification

To confirm authenticity of assessments, the RTO requires all students to provide a form of identification on the first day of training. Identification may include:

- Driver's licence; or
- Australian Passport; or
- Australian Birth Certificate;

or if the student (or past student) doesn't have any of the above, the following will be accepted:

- Naturalisation Certificate (Australian Citizenship); and a Current Green Medicare Card

7. Student support

At Sprout Training, we aim to support all of our students and provide access to the educational and support services you need to successfully complete your course. *Enrolment procedures*, in Section 5 of this Handbook, describes how we will work with you to identify your support needs prior to enrolment and identifies the types of support we may be able to provide to you, noting that it may be necessary for us to decline your enrolment where extensive support is required for you to be able to participate appropriately in the training or where deficiency will clearly inhibit achievement of learning outcomes.

If you start the course, and at any time you feel you are having difficulty or need assistance, please talk to your trainer/assessor. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to this person you may contact the office in person, by phone, email or in writing where all information will be treated with respect, confidentiality and privacy. Sprout Training will make every effort to provide as much support as possible within its policies and resources for students to achieve the required level of competency.

Your trainer will also monitor your learning to ensure you are on track to complete the course and, if necessary, will approach you to discuss your progress and potential support needs.

We may refer to you an external agency to ensure you receive the type of support you need to ensure

you are not disadvantaged in your learning. Such agencies could include the Reading Writing Hotline (telephone number 1300 655 506 or <http://www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au/>)

Support with personal issues

Sprout Training does not employ a welfare officer however; we will do our best to identify appropriate local agencies that can assist you with any personal issues that may arise.

8. Assessment policy and procedures

Assessment policy

The RTO is committed to the delivery of quality assessment. Four (4) principles underpin this commitment:

1. *Assessment decisions are based on the assessment of skills and knowledge compared with units of competence drawn from industry training package.*

Units of competency are drawn from nationally endorsed industry Training Packages as a primary benchmark for assessment. Supporting this are industry standards or codes of practice. These and other industry specific publications and engagement inform the context and standard of performance during assessment.

In order to identify the precise assessment criteria, a methodology of unpacking a unit of competence is applied in order to assess the full scope of the unit including elements of competence and performance criteria, incorporating range statement information and the specific requirements of the evidence guide. This process ensures that our assessment strategies accurately reflect the requirements of the training package and specifically the required knowledge and skills.

Assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers/performance benchmarks to guide assessors in their judgements.

2. *Assessment is conducted in accordance with the principles of assessment*

In the delivery of assessment, The RTO applies the principles of assessment. Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- *Validity* - assessment is conducted against the broad range of skills and knowledge identified within each unit of competence and which is integrated with their practical application.
- *Reliability* - assessment is designed to gather and interpret evidence in a consistent manner that provides for reliable assessment both for the candidate and for assessors. This is achieved by using assessors who have the required competencies in assessment and the relevant vocational competencies. Assessment resources also provide for standardised outcomes supported by model answers to guide assessors in their judgements.
- *Flexibility* - assessment opportunities that reflect learner needs are provided. The chosen

assessment strategies provide for recognition of a learner's prior learning and current competence by offering recognition of prior learning and credit transfer to all learners.

- *Fairness* - the assessment approach encourages fairness in assessment through consideration of the learner's needs and characteristics and through making reasonable adjustments when it is required. Assessors achieve this through clear communication with the learner to ensure that they are fully informed about, understands and is able to participate in the assessment process.

Assessment may comprise any combination of assessment methods, including but not limited to one or more of the following:

- Questioning (verbal or written)
- Observation of performance in the workplace (or simulated environment)
- Written responses to questions, assignments and case studies.

While students must perform satisfactorily (against pre-determined benchmarks) for all parts of all assessments for a unit, in order to achieve an outcome of 'Competent', students are also given two (2) attempts to demonstrate satisfactory performance in each part of each question. If after two (2) attempts, a student has not demonstrated satisfactory performance, they will be deemed 'Not Yet Competent' in the unit and will have the option of re-enrolling in the unit.

3. *Evidence that meets the rules of evidence is gathered*

Assessment strategies have been designed to ensure:

- **Sufficiency** – the collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly.
- **Validity** – the collection of evidence that is specified in the benchmarks for assessment, with a significant emphasis on direct evidence that is gathered in a simulated fully equipped and operational environment through observation of performance and questioning related to underpinning knowledge.
- **Authenticity** – the collection of evidence that is authentic. To support this, assessors must be assured that the evidence presented for assessment is the candidate's own work. For all assessment, learners are required to state that the assessment is entirely their own work and has been completed according to the instructions provided.
- **Currency** – satisfaction that the learner currently holds the skills and knowledge relating to a particular assessment. This will mostly relate to recognition applications where a learner has been in the workplace for many years and is seeking recognition of skills and knowledge obtained through workplace experience or previous training.

4. *Assessment is validated and continuously improved*

Pre-assessment

To ensure that the assessment resources are consistent with the requirements of the Training

Package or accredited course and that they maintain their validity, currency, sufficiency and effectiveness, assessment tools are reviewed prior to use.

Post-assessment

Assessment judgements made by assessors over time are reviewed periodically and systematically with the purpose of ensuring the RTO's assessment system produces valid assessment judgements and ensures graduates have the skills and knowledge required by industry, as expressed in the training package.

The assessment system itself is also examined to ensure it has produced graduates with the required skills and knowledge.

Assessment procedures

Timing of assessment

Assessment will normally take place after delivery of a theory component and the opportunity to practice the skill and apply the acquired knowledge. Assessment should only occur if students feel ready to attempt the assessment activities/tasks. Students should be invited to contact their trainer/assessor to discuss the assistance that can be provided to them to prepare for the assessment stage of learning.

Assessment activities

Assessment for a unit of competency usually includes more than one component and usually each component has more than one task/activity. The tasks may include: observations of performance, questioning (verbal or written), projects and/or portfolios of evidence. Refer to master assessment materials for the relevant unit of competency for further information about the nature and context of activities to be administered.

Determining competence

Performance in each of the components is to be considered together to make a judgement about a student's competence in the unit.

Students must perform satisfactorily in all parts of all components (against pre-determined benchmarks/model answers) in order to achieve an outcome of 'Competent' in the unit. Assessor/marking guides must be followed in assessing student performance.

If after the two (2) maximum number of allowable attempts, a student has not demonstrated satisfactory performance, they will be deemed 'Not Yet Competent' in the unit (meaning they have not yet met the requirements of the unit) and they will have the option of re-enrolling in the unit.

Students are to be given comprehensive instructions about the assessment activities and performance requirements.

Students must perform satisfactorily in all components of all assessment for every unit of competency that comprise the qualification in order to be eligible to be awarded a qualification.

Providing support to students

If students:

- do not understand how they will be assessed in a unit of competency
- do not understand a question asked by a trainer/assessor
- do not understand the tasks or the behaviours expected from them in the practical tasks

students are instructed to ask their trainer/assessor for further explanation.

Student right of appeal

Students have the right to appeal an assessment decision and/or lodge a complaint about any aspect of the assessment process. Refer to *Complaints & appeals*.

9. Student safety

Sprout Training is committed to providing you with a safe environment in which to participate in training and assessment. The following guidelines are provided as a basis for safe practice in the training environment:

- Know and observe details of emergency response and evacuation plans;
- Do not undertake activities which may cause injury to yourself or others;
- Wear closed-in shoes at all times;
- Be responsible for your own actions;
- Smoking is prohibited on RTO premises;
- Report all potential hazards, accidents and near misses to staff;
- Consumption of alcohol is prohibited within training and assessment facilities and during the conduct of training and assessment;
- Keep training and assessment areas neat and tidy at all times;
- Seek assistance if you volunteer to lift items (e.g. move furniture in a training area); and
- Observe hygiene standards, particularly in eating and bathroom areas.

Electrical equipment

Electrical equipment that is not working should be reported to staff.

Electrical work should only be performed by appropriately licensed or trained personnel. Students, trainers and assessors should not undertake any task related to fixing electrical equipment such as lighting or electrical training aids.

Fire safety

Sprout Training will undertake to communicate the procedures involved in evacuation and the location of fire equipment to students at each facility for each training and assessment event; and to users of the office at least twice each year.

All users of a training and assessment facility need to be familiar with the location of all exits and fire extinguishers. Users will consult available maps to determine location.

It is the user's responsibility to understand fire drill procedures displayed around the premises. Users are asked to attend any sessions on fire safety procedures and the use of fire safety devices.

First aid

All trainers and assessors working for or representing Sprout Training must have current First Aid training accreditation. First aid facilities are provided at all Sprout Training facilities and Sprout Training staff are familiar with these facilities and their location. If an incident does occur, it must be reported to Sprout Training staff and dealt with as a priority. Once the incident is under control details of the incident must be recorded on a Sprout Training Incident Report Form which must include details of any aid administered by staff involved. All incidents will be documented in the Incident Report Log. Acknowledgement of receipt will be provided immediately upon receipt.

Computer facilities

Extended periods of work with computers can result in general fatigue and eye strain. Repetitive tasks and incorrect posture may result in persistent 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 approximately at a 90-degree angle.

The computer screen should be positioned to avoid reflection from lights and windows and at a suitable distance so that it can be easily read.

Lifting

Students, trainers and assessors are encouraged not to lift anything related to the training and assessment provided by the Sprout Training unless they do so voluntarily and take all responsibility for any injury caused.

Never attempt to lift anything that is beyond your capacity and always bend your knees and keep your back straight when picking up items.

If you have experienced back problems in the past do not attempt to lift heavy objects at all. If you are required to lift a heavy object, please notify Sprout Training staff of your injury and ask for assistance.

Work and study areas

Always ensure that all work areas are clean and clear of clutter so as to avoid the danger of accident by tripping or falling over.

Place all rubbish in the bins provided, ensure that kitchen bench spaces are left clean and tidy and that all dishes are washed.

Place all dirty tea towels or any cleaning cloths in the dirty washing basket located in the food preparation kitchen.

Do not sit or climb on any desks or tables.

10. Certification issuance

Certification issuance

Sprout Training issues AQF certification documentation (qualification testamur, statement of attainment or record of results – as appropriate) only to a student who:

- it has assessed as meeting the requirements of the training product as specified in the relevant training package or VET accredited course, and
- has paid all agreed fees they owe to the RTO

Further, AQF certification documents will only be issued to a student if the student has supplied, and Sprout Training has verified, their Unique Student Identifier (USI) (refer to the Section 4: *Unique Student Identifier (USI)* in this handbook for further information about the requirement to have a USI).

Certification documentation will be issued to a student within 30 calendar days of the above requirements having been met.

Certification re-issuance

If a qualification, statement of attainment or record of results is misplaced or damaged, the student or past student may request the re-issue of the misplaced or damaged document by accessing, completing and submitting the *Request for re-issuance of documentation*, available from www.sprout.edu.au.

For privacy reasons, the request must be made by the student (or past student) and the original or a certified copy of one of the following identification documents must be sighted by the Managing Director of Sprout Training:

- Driver's licence; or
- Australian Passport; or
- Australian Birth Certificate;

or if the student (or past student) doesn't have any of the above, the following will be accepted:

- Naturalisation Certificate (Australian Citizenship); and a Current Green Medicare Card.

A fee applies for the re-issuance of documentation and is located in the information about requesting the re-issuance of documentation at www.sprout.edu.au for the applicable fees.

Certification documentation will be issued within 21 calendar days of a complete request being submitted provided:

- payment has been received, and
- entitlement to the documentation has been confirmed - the learner (or past learner) requesting the documentation is the learner (or past learner) to whom the documentation was originally issued.

11. Complaints & appeals

Sprout Training is committed to providing a fair complaints and appeals process and respects the right of stakeholders to lodge complaints and requests for appeals about decisions. The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be adopted at each stage of the complaint and appeal process and all people involved will be treated with courtesy and respect. The lodgement of a complaint or a request for an appeal will not disadvantage any stakeholder in their dealings with the RTO.

The policy is made publicly available by including it here, in the Student Handbook, which is available from the RTO's website.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a specific action or service of the RTO or an allegation involving the conduct of:

- the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- a third party providing services on behalf of the RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or
- a student of the RTO

What is an appeal?

An appeal is a request for a review of a decision made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf), including decisions about assessment.

Value of complaints and appeals

The RTO values complaints and requests for appeals as opportunities to identify operational improvements to quickly and appropriately respond to changes in the marketplace or stakeholder expectations. The subject of complaints and requests for appeals and outcomes are recorded on the 'Complaints and Appeals Register' to allow analysis of matters over time and identify any common factors that may need action.

It is preferable, to all parties, that matters are resolved as quickly and effectively as possible and stakeholders, including students, are encouraged to raise issues of concern directly with their trainer and assessor or the Managing Director at the earliest opportunity with the view to addressing the matter in an informal but effective matter.

Procedures for making a complaint or lodging an appeal

If a stakeholder, including a student, is unable to raise issues of concern directly with their trainer and assessor or the Managing Director with the view to addressing the matter in an informal manner, or if the stakeholder, including the student, is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal approach, a formal complaint or request for appeal may be lodged.

A complaint or request for appeal:

- must be made within 15 calendar days of the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal;
- must be made in writing using the Complaint & Appeals Form available from the RTO's website or otherwise in writing provided the following information is included:
 - whether you are lodging a complaint or requesting an appeal;
 - your name, home phone number, mobile number and email address;
 - the date of the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal;
 - details of the complaint or appeal (you may attach supporting documentation if required);
 - any steps you may have taken to resolve the issue;
 - what outcome would you like to see from raising this complaint / appeal;
 - a statement that the information provided is, to the best of your knowledge, true and correct, that you acknowledge that the RTO may use the information provided to investigate the complaint and that you understand that this information may also be used for the continuous improvement of the RTO's operations; and
 - your signature and the date of submission
- will be acknowledged in writing within seven (7) calendar days of receipt of a complaint or request for appeal.

If the person lodging a complaint or appeal is a current student, they may continue to participate in training while the matter is being investigated.

Procedures for investigating a complaint or appeal

Complaints and requests for appeals will be investigated by a person or persons who was not/were not involved in the event, circumstance or decision that is the subject of the complaint or request for appeal.

Details of complaints and requests for appeals will only be made known by those directly concerned.

The person or persons conducting the investigation will interview the person making the complaint and, if the complaint was about a person, will separately interview the person the complaint is about. They may also review documentation, including RTO policies and procedures and may, if relevant, interview other stakeholders and staff.

In the case of an appeal against an assessment or other decision, the person or persons conducting the investigation will review the decision and the evidence used to make the decision. If it is an assessment decision being appealed, the assessor and student will be interviewed separately to find out whether there is any relevant information not contained in the learner's file.

A complainant or appellant may be accompanied by and/or assisted by a support person at any time.

Regardless of the outcome, and while complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable, the complainant or appellant will be notified of the outcome, and reasons for the outcome, in writing within 30 calendar days of the complaint or appeal being lodged.

Where the RTO considers more than 30 calendar days are required to process and finalise a complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant will be:

- informed in writing of the reasons why more than 30 calendar days are required; and
- regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

Review by a third party

If the complaints and appeals process fails to resolve a complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant may request a review by a party independent of themselves and the RTO. A mediator can be provided by the [Australian Mediation Association](#); however, the complainant or appellant must organise the mediation and meet all costs of engaging a mediator. The RTO will reasonably cooperate in any organised mediation session/activity.

Use of complaints and appeals to inform continuous improvement

The causes of complaints and appeals are identified and corrective action is taken to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence and to inform the continuous improvement of RTO operations. The *Complaints and Appeals Form* ensures that such causes and opportunities are captured in the RTO's *Continuous Improvement Register* and procedure for monitoring compliance and continuous improvement ensure the systematic consideration of these causes and opportunities for improvement.

12. Management of records

Sprout Training is committed to meeting its obligation to manage and ensure the accuracy and integrity of certain records relevant to the operations of the RTO and respects that individuals have the right to keep their personal information private.

Access to records, privacy & accuracy

- The RTO is required to collect certain information for national database and tracking purposes, to assist in ongoing qualification issuance as required and to contact and communicate with learners during the period of a learner's enrolment. As an example, the *Enrolment Form* collects information about a learner, some of which is used by the RTO during the period of enrolment (e.g. contact details and details about work experience and qualifications achieved), some of which is collected to contribute to national records of VET activity (e.g. reason for study, employment status and level of schooling).
- In recognition of a learner's right to keep their personal information private, the RTO is committed to protecting and maintaining privacy, accuracy and security of your training records. All data is confidential and is not forwarded to any other party unless the RTO is legally obligated to do so as a condition of its registration or a learner has given written consent for the data to be released to a third party. Some data must be provided to the national statistical database to comply with the Total Vet Activity reporting requirements for RTOs.
- Records about progress, competency achievement, qualification issuance are updated periodically by the Director or Trainers and Assessors.
- Learners can confirm and update and/or correct their personal and sensitive information during their enrolment period by contacting the Director.
- Access to electronic records is password controlled via employee login to a secure company shared drive and access is limited to those who need the information/record in the course of providing training and assessment services or in administering the RTO. The Managing Director has access to all records and will provide access to essential others as the need arises. Access to hard copy records is also controlled by the Managing Director.
- Certain information about learners, including information related to enrolment, progress and attainment must be retained by the RTO for 30 years. Learners may have access to their records, including records of progress, records of certification issued to them at a mutually convenient time agreed with the Managing Director. Learners may be required to provide photo ID for this access.

Treatment of records on ceasing operation

The RTO acknowledges that it has a responsibility to transfer records to ASQA should the RTO cease to operate. Student records of achievement are retained by the RTO in its Learner Record System and will be forwarded to ASQA within 30 days of the organisation effectively ceasing to operate as an RTO.

Student records of achievement will include the following information for each student:

- family name, first name
- residential post code
- date of birth
- student ID number

- enrolment and commencement dates
- code and title of qualification, course or program student enrolled in
- codes and titles of units of competency completed and results (if applicable)
- date the Certificate or Statement of Attainment was issued

Destruction of Records

The Managing Director is the only person who can authorise the destruction of physical/hard copy records. Records are only to be authorised for destruction after the retention period (itemised in the above table) has lapsed.

Documents identified for destruction are to be securely destroyed e.g. shredded.