# logo

# Sports Medicine Australia

## Policy on Handling Student Complaints and Appeals

Sports Medicine Australia is committed to providing a learning environment in which complaints and appeals are responded to promptly, with minimum distress and maximum protection to all parties. Sports Medicine Australia views student complaints and appeals as providing an opportunity to review and improve it’s policies and practices, and also to gain insight into student levels of satisfaction.

### Responsibilities of managers, staff and students

Managers and other designated staff at Sports Medicine Australia are responsible for responding appropriately to complaints or appeals and managing the resolution process.

All students and staff have a responsibility to contribute to the achievement of a productive, safe and equitable study environment at Sports Medicine Australia. In particular, students and staff have a responsibility to:

* participate in the complaint resolution process in good faith
* cooperate fully in any investigation process
* assist the complaint handler in reaching satisfactory resolution wherever possible
* avoid complaining about the same matter to several different units or individuals at the same time
* avoid making complaints or counter-complaints with a mischievous or malicious intent.

### Accountability for student complaints

A key principle in the Sports Medicine Australia resolution process is that complaints or appeals are resolved wherever possible at the **lowest appropriate** level of management. A good guiding principle is for students to consider who would be the person most likely to have the relevant information to assist them in resolving their concern.

* In the initial instance a complaint may be taken to the Course Presenter. Depending on the nature of the complaint the State Education Manager may resolve the issue directly, and notify the National Education Manager of the complaint for monitoring.
* All students have the option of making a formal written complaint to the National Education Manager. However, if the complaint has not previously been considered at the appropriate level of management, the National Education Manager will seek advice from that manager before responding to the complaint.

## Complaints

### How to make a complaint

A complaint to a person in authority must be in writing. Procedural fairness usually requires that the complainant must be willing to be identified unless the matter involves allegations of corruption, maladministration or serious waste.

* If the complaint is about a staff member, the complaint should be made to the State Manager of your local branch of Sports Medicine Australia.
* If the complaint is about a fellow student or Course Presenter, the complaint should be made to the State Education Manager of your local branch of Sports Medicine Australia.
* If the complaint relates to the quality of service that Sports Medicine Australia delivers, the complaint should be made to the National Education Manager.

### Outcomes and Documentation of the complaint resolution process

Students will receive written advice of the outcome of their complaint or appeal. All documentation relating to complaints and appeals will be kept strictly confidential. The policy is set out to assist Sports Medicine Australia to monitor and improve the quality of service and programs that are offered.

### Procedure for Lodging Written Complaints

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| **Step** | **Actions** | **Responsibility** |
| 1 | Participant wishes to lodge written complaint. Participant to submit complaint to statement manager or national manager. | * Participant * State or national manager |
| 2 | Complaint acknowledged in writing within 5 days. | * Participant * State or national manager |
| 3 | State or national manager to review the complaint and inform all parties involved of the allegations | * State or national manager |
| 4 | State or national manager to provide those involved an opportunity to present their side of the matter | * State or national manager * Student * Relevant parties |
| 5 | State or national manager to advise participant in writing of the outcome within 60 days of receiving the complaint | * State or national manager |
| 6 | If issue not resolved by the State or national manager, the State or national manager is to provide the participant with details of external channels for complaints | * State or national manager |
| 7 | State or national manager to seek feedback from the participant once the process is complete to gain further guidance as to Continuous Improvement of process. | * State or national manager |
| 8 | State or national manager to document and retain all correspondence and outcomes of the complaint process and refer (if appropriate) root cause and improvements to the Continuous Improvement processes | * State or national manager |

## Appeals

### How to make an Appeal

An appeal may be made if a student feels that the education or assessment process is unjust. SMA seeks to resolve appeals at the lowest possible level. A student may seek to resolve an assessment appeal with their trainer through discussion at time of assessment. If the appeal is unable to be resolved at this time students may appeal to the Education Manager in their state. Appeals are to be made to the State Education Manager in writing within 14 days of assessment decision which is the subject of the appeal.

### Principles for managing appeals at Sports Medicine Australia

Sports Medicine Australia process for handling student appeals are based on confidentiality, impartiality, procedural fairness, protection from victimisation and prompt resolution.

* Where appropriate, appeals will be resolved at the lowest possible level of management. However, Sports Medicine Australia recognises that some appeals are most appropriately dealt with at a more senior level.
* Students may request to be reassessed at no cost during the course they are enrolled in. If the appeal is unable to be resolved at this time the student is required to notify the State Education Manager within 14 days of the course they were enrolled in.
* If the appeal is unable to be resolved at the initial course the student was enrolled in the SMA Education Manager will arrange for the student to be assessed by another SMA assessor at the next available course. This will be at no cost to the student.

## Notes

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| 1 | Where applicable, Employers will be advised to following the Complaints Procedure for avenues to make complaints. |
| 2 | All participants are provided with the SMA terms and conditions prior to enrolment which details the process for dealing with complaints and appeals |
| 3 | SMA ensures that all complaints and appeals are managed fairly, efficiently and effectively |
| 4 | SMA acknowledges that all feedback, both positive and negative, is a critical component of our continuous improvement strategy. |
| 5 | The participant will be kept informed, in writing of the progress of the complaint or appeal. If it should take longer than sixty (60) days SMA will provide the participant with written reasons. |
| 6 | At any point in the complaint handling process, mediation can be arranged if agreed to by the parties involved. |
| 7 | A participant with literacy difficulties can request assistance from another person to complete their written compliant. An independent SMA staff member can be made available if requested by the student to assist with the writing of the appeal if required. |