

SafeFoodTest.com **Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedures**

1. Overview

- 1.1 This policy has been developed to ensure all current and prospective registrants/clients of SafeFoodTest.com are given access to free, effective and fair complaints resolution and appeals processes.
- 1.2 There are two separate areas of complaint or appeals:
 - Academic
 - Non-Academic

2. Scope

- 2.1 Any current or prospective registrants/clients of SafeFoodTest.com who experiences incorrect, inappropriate or unfair treatment in the course of their business relationship with SafeFoodTest.com is entitled to access to the complaints and appeals process set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the training and the matter or the mode in which the training was delivered.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Appeal: A written request made to SafeFoodTest.com by an appellant/registrant for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the SafeFoodTest.com related to the certificate program requisites or certificate program process.
- 3.2 Appellant: A person issuing a complaint or appeal.
- 3.3 Complaint: request, other than an appeal, made to SafeFoodTest.com for corrective action relating to the activities of SafeFoodTest.com
- 3.4 Registrant: A person who has completed his/her registration process with SafeFoodTest.com by providing the required information name, address, phone, email and has delivered confirmed payment via credit card, PayPal, cash or check.
- 3.5 Respondent: A person responding to a complaint or appeal.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 The principles which support this policy are as follows.

- 4.1.1 The consideration of complaints and appeals will be dealt with according to principles of this policy with procedural fairness and respect to the rights of the appellant.
- 4.1.2 Attempts will be made to resolve complaints and appeals as amicably possible.
- 4.1.3 Appellants and respondents will not be subject to discrimination or harassment resulting from their participation in the complaint or appeal process.
- 4.1.4 This complaint process does not restrict a registrant or person the right to pursue other legal remedies.
- 4.1.5 All SafeFoodTest.com staff will make all attempts to respond to complaints within the time limits set out in this policy.
- 4.1.6 All procedures will be made available to the public via the SafeFoodTest.com website.
- 4.1.7 Appellants and/or respondents have the right to be represented by any third party other than legal counsel such as a family member, friend, or other professional support person, if they so desire.
- 4.1.8 All communications arising from the appeals/complaint process, together with the proceedings of the Appeals and Complaints Committee, will remain confidential
- 4.1.9 Where the appeal relates to suspension of Certificate Status, students may maintain their status while awaiting the outcome of the appeal.
- 4.1.10 The appellant has the opportunity to formally present his/her case at no cost to them.

5. Policy Content

5.1 The Appeals and Complaints Committee:

The Appeals and Complaints Committee shall be comprised of the three members:

Executive Program Director/CEO

Director of Finance/CFO

Office Manager/Receptionist

The committee will review the appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint and will inform the appellant of the outcome of this decision in writing. The Committee may ask either the appellant or respondent (or both) to present their case in person to the Committee.

5.2 Academic Complaints:

5.2.1 The Academic Complaints and Appeals process is for matters which relate to:

Assessment/Tests and results

Student progress

Curriculum content & delivery

Delivery of Certificates or Certifications

If at any point, a student becomes dissatisfied in any matter with regards to their business dealing with SafeFoodTest.com they should commence Stage One Academic complaints procedures which are explained below.

At any point in this process, an appellant may seek advice from SafeFoodTest.com Executive Director of Operations/CEO

5.2.2 SafeFoodTest.com registrants have access to a four stage complaints and appeals process as follows:

5.2.3 Stage One Academic Informal:

The first step is direct communication between the appellant and respondent to allow both parties to discuss their point of view and attempt to resolve the matter amicably.

The appellant should communicate the matter to the relevant staff member within 10 working days of becoming aware of a specific problem.

The appellant is entitled to request and receive from the respondent a written response giving reasons and full explanation for decisions and actions taken.

5.2.4 Stage Two Academic Formal Complaints & Appeals Process:

If, after undertaking Stage One, or in situations where Stage One is not possible, the appellant should issue their complaint in writing to the office manager within 10 working days of the complaint issue becoming known. Within 5 working days, the office manager will explain to the appellant the course of action to be taken and possible outcomes of the appeal to avoid any conflict of interest. If a case arises where the office manager has been the respondent involved in the complaint or appeal, the matter must be referred to the financial

officer/CFO to carry out Stage Two. Within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal the office manager or the financial manager/CFO will provide in writing the outcome of this step of negotiations to both appellant and respondent.

5.2.5 Stage Three Academic Appeals and Complaints Committee:

In cases where an appellant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two and believes that:

They did not have sufficient opportunity to present their case to the decision maker.

Or

The process was not carried out in accordance with SafeFoodTest.com policy or procedures.

Or

The decision was made opposing to the evidence provided; the appellant can issue a written statement of their complaint with the SafeFoodTest.com Program Director/CEO. This statement should be issued within 10 working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of Stage Two negotiations. To avoid any conflict of interest, where the program director has been responsible for the decision being appealed or has been involved in the outcome of Stage One or Two, they must nominate another senior staff member to stand in their place on the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

5.2.6 Stage Four External Agencies:

Where the appellant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Three and believes that at the Appeals and Complaints committee the process was not carried out in accordance with SafeFoodTest.com policy and procedures they may request that the matter to be referred to an independent appeals reviewer. The purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether SafeFoodTest.com has followed its policies and procedures - it is not to make a decision in place of SafeFoodTest.com.

Independent Appeals Reviewer:

This independent reviewer will review the case, seeking input from all parties before making recommendations to SafeFoodTest.com within 15 working days.

5.3 General Non-Academic Complaints:

- 5.3.1 The General Non-Academic Complaints process is for matters which relate to:
Customer service and administration

Marketing and information

Facilities

Fees related matters

Welfare

If at any point an appellant becomes concerned they should commence Stage One General Non-Academic Complaints process per SafeFoodTest.com policy and procedures.

At any point in this process an appellant may seek advice from SafeFoodTest.com Office Manager/Receptionist.

SafeFoodTest.com Students have access to a four stage complaints process as follows:

5.3.2 Stage One Non-Academic Informal:

The first step is direct communication between the appellant and respondent to allow both parties to discuss their point of view and attempt to resolve the matter amicably. The appellant should communicate the matter to the relevant staff member within 10 working days of becoming aware of the problem. The appellant is entitled to request and receive from the respondent a written response giving reasons and full explanation for decisions and actions taken.

5.3.3 Stage Two Non-Academic Formal Complaints & Appeals Process:

If after undertaking Stage One, or in situations where Stage One is not possible, the appellant should issue their complaint in writing to the office manager within 10 working days of the complaint issue becoming known. Within a further 5 working days, the office manager will explain to the appellant the course of action to be taken and possible outcomes of the appeal. To avoid any conflict of interest, where the office manager has been the respondent involved at the informal stage, the matter must be referred to the financial officer/CFO to carry out Stage Two. Within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal the office manager or the financial manager will provide in writing the outcome of this step of negotiations to both appellant and respondent.

5.3.4 Stage Three Non-Academic Appeals and Complaints Committee:

Where the appellant is unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two and believes that:

They did not have sufficient opportunity to present their case to the decision maker.

Or

The process was not carried out in accordance with SafeFoodTest.com policy and procedures.

Or

The decision was made opposing to the evidence provided.

The appellant can issue a written statement of their complaint with the SafeFoodTest.com Executive Program Director/CEO. This statement should be lodged within 10 working days of receiving the written notification of the outcome of Stage Two negotiations. To avoid any conflict of interest, where the Executive Program Director/CEO has been responsible for the decision being appealed or has been involved in the outcome of Stage One or Two, they must nominate another senior staff member to stand in their place on the Appeals and Complaints Committee.

5.3.5 Stage Four External Agencies:

Where the appellant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the Stage Three and believes that at the Appeals and Complaints committee process was not carried out in accordance with SafeFoodTest.com policy or procedures they may request that the matter to be referred to SafeFoodTest.com nominated independent appeals reviewer. The purpose of the external appeals process is to consider whether SafeFoodTest.com has followed its policies and procedures and is not to make a decision in place of SafeFoodTest.com

Independent Appeals Reviewer:

This independent agent will review the case, seeking input from all parties before making recommendations to SafeFoodTest.com within 10 working days.

6. Administrative procedures

6.1 This policy and related documentation is accessible through the SafeFoodTest.com website at: <http://safefoodtest.com>

6.2 Records of all complaints and appeals will be kept for a period of five years. These records will be strictly confidential and filed separately from student files. These records will be under the responsibility of the Executive Program Director/CEO and the Office Manager.

- 6.3 Any recommendations for process improvement or policy change arising out of any stage of the complaints and appeals process will be forwarded the Advisory Committee for recording and consideration.
- 6.4 This policy and related procedures will be communicated to staff via email and ongoing staff information sessions. New staff will receive policy information during the induction process.
- 6.5 Recommendations arising from any external review of the Complaints and Appeals Policy or procedures should be implemented within 90 days of notification.

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