



Policy: Complaints and Appeals

This policy governs the actions of Platinum Certification AQA when a complaint or appeal regarding staff, or services it provides is received. Platinum Certification AQA will respond and act confidentially, professionally and responsibly in the management of general complaints regarding staff, services or products it provides.

This document will be supported by all Platinum Certification AQA staff including contractors.

What is a Complaint vs an appeal?

For the purpose of this policy:

- a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal, by any person or organisation to Platinum Certification AQA, relating to the activities of Platinum Certification AQA, where a response is expected.
- an appeal is a request by a Provider to Platinum Certification AQA for reconsideration of a decision it has made relating to that Provider's certification.

Receipt of a Complaint or Appeal

A complaint/appeal can be made in several ways:

- Providers can email client.relations@platinumcert.com.au to lodge a complaint/appeal or provide other feedback.
- Providers can discuss their complaint/appeal or feedback with any member of the office or auditing team who will escalate it according to the processes below.
- If a Provider does not wish to address the complaint or appeal directly with Platinum Certification AQA, they can contact the relevant body:

(NDIS/ACIS) JASANZ 1800 805 154

(NDIS) NDIS Commission 1800 035 544

Where possible, a staff member should seek to obtain key information about the complaint or appeal including, but not limited to:

- The name and contact details of the person making the complaint or appeal (and their role);
- The nature of the complaint or appeal – specifically, whether it is:



- a general complaint about Platinum Certification AQA services, and/or
- allegation of non-conformance with audit.
- The relevant date of occurrence;
- The action/resolution the complainant or appellant is seeking;
- Whether the complainant or appellant wants the complaint to remain confidential;

Complaints Handling Process

The Operations Manager or delegate will be informed, and will:

- Document the complaint or appeal into the Feedback Register.
- Acknowledge any complaint or appeal within 24hrs of receipt initially by phone if possible and then in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their complaint or appeal to JASANZ/ACIS/NDIS Commission as appropriate.
- Ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy for a client, or been employed by a client will not be used by Platinum Certification AQA to review or approve the resolution of a complaint for that client within two years following the end of the consultancy or employment.

All complaints received will be acted on (following the procedures above) within three days of receipt of the complaint.

The decision resolving the complaint shall be made by, or reviewed and approved by, person(s) not involved in the activities related to the complaint, in the first instance being the Operations Manager or delegate.

Platinum Certification AQA will ensure the complainant is kept informed of progress in resolving the complaint during the investigation process and potential actions, and whenever possible, shall give formal notice of the outcome and the end of the complaint process to the complainant.

Any complaint outcome which is not satisfactory to the complainant can be escalated and referred directly to the CEO for final resolution, thereby falling under the appeal management process.

Certification Appeals Process

The Appeals process will only be implemented after significant effort has been made by Platinum Certification AQA and the organisation to resolve the matter.

Appeals will be resolved within 4 weeks post notification ensuring that the appellant is kept informed throughout the process and final resolution provided in writing.

All appeals will be directed initially to the Operations Manager or delegate. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Operations Manager shall:

- acknowledge the appeal (by phone, and in writing advising the complainant that at any stage they can escalate their appeal to JASANZ).
- register the appeal in the Feedback Register.



- advise the Audit Team Leader involved.
- appoint an independent technical expert (usually the External Risk Committee) to coordinate and manage the process as required.
- The Operations Manager shall be responsible for gathering and verifying all necessary information to validate the appeal to be provided to the External Risk Committee for consideration.
- The Operations Manager shall provide the appellant with progress reports and the result of the appeal.

Submission, investigation and decision on appeals shall not result in any discriminatory actions against the appellant. The appeals-handling process includes the following elements and methods:

- an outline of the process for receiving, validating and investigating the appeal, and for deciding what actions need to be taken in response to it, taking into account the results of previous similar appeals.
- tracking and recording appeals, including actions undertaken to resolve them.
- ensuring that any appropriate correction and corrective action are taken.

The decision to be communicated to the appellant will be made by, or reviewed and approved by, individual(s) not previously involved in the subject of the appeal.

Platinum Certification AQA will take any subsequent action needed to resolve the appeal.

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaints handling process, then the complainant may refer the complaint to JASANZ.

Aged Complaints – referral to JASANZ where relevant

Should a complaint not have been resolved within three months of the date of complaint (aged complaints) it is to be transferred to JASANZ and the complainant/appellant advised accordingly;

Aged complaints are to be referred to JASANZ as follows:

- original complaint;
- records of the review of the complaint;
- response to the complainant;
- any other records that inform the background to the complaint.

JASANZ may at its discretion deal with any complaint that is referred to it at the level of the secretariat, the Accreditation Review Board or, if the matter is sufficiently grave, the Governing Board.

Failure to refer an aged complaint or provide relevant records of the complaint would result in a major nonconformity. Suspension of accreditation may apply to any accredited body which:

- fails to maintain a complaints system;
- suppresses or conceals records of complaints;
- fails to abide by any direction arising from a valid referred complaint



Responsibility

All actions regarding complaints/appeals are to be recorded in the Platinum Certification AQA Feedback Register.

References

National Disability Scheme Insurance (Approved Quality Auditors Scheme) Guidelines 2018

JAS-ANZ Accreditation Manual 2020

Assured Auditing Complaints Register

AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065:2013 Conformity Assessment-Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

ISO/IEC 17000: 2020