

Student Handbook 2023



Welcome

Congratulations for taking the next step with SERO Institute!



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About Sero Institute

Purpose

To provide quality learning experiences that enhance opportunities and career options in Australia.

Culture

SERO Institute culture is centred on fun, engaging and flexible learning.

General Information

This student handbook will introduce you to SERO Institute's facilities and other important information.

This handbook will also outline your responsibilities as a student and SERO Institute's responsibilities as your Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

SERO Institute reserves the right to make such changes in regulations, curricula and charges as it deems necessary without previous notice.

Students are required to accept the terms stated in this document and to abide by the regulations of SERO Institute.

Each student is responsible for understanding and complying with the information and rules of SERO Institute.



Pre-Enrolment Information

Read Through your Welcome Kit

It is important that you understand what we expect from you and what you can expect from us. Your welcome pack which includes this handbook, contains everything you need to know about your course, study options and your obligations in undertaking this qualification.

Complete your Pre-training Exercise

The LLN Exercise is a tool that helps us determine whether the course is right for you. It also gives us an insight about your specific training needs.

We also offer support for people from various backgrounds.

Additional support is in place for:

- people who have difficulties in social interactions
- people who struggle with learning, reading, writing, numeracy and oral communication
- people with disabilities.

The Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (LLN) exercise is a requirement and must be completed by potential students.

Our student support services are made available for you, and if you require assistance in completing your LLN Exercise, our LLN Specialist will be happy to assist you.

Complete your Enrolment Form

Once you've decided on which course you will be taking, you will need to complete an enrolment form.

This document will allow us to gather all your personal details and help us to work out whether you are eligible for government subsidised training.

Review your Training Plan

Your training plan outlines the qualification units and planned dates for assessments to be completed that are included in your course. Our administration team will take you through it and make sure that the course reflects your career goals.

Tell us More About Your Previous Studies and Experiences

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Sometimes a student has already acquired experiences that may cover competencies required to complete a course.

Previous skills and experiences which have been gained through study, work or other life experiences is known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

To be considered for RPL, you will need to make an application.

The application process involves the following steps:

1. talk to our Administration team during the verification phone call if you think you'd like to apply for RPL
2. you will be assigned a trainer who will contact you to talk you through what is required to undertake the RPL process
3. submit a portfolio of evidence and a completed RPL kit for your assessor to review against the performance criteria of your course
4. your assessor will prepare a report recommending the next steps which will include any gaps in the required course competencies. You might need to provide additional information or attend a second interview.

If your application is successful, you can complete the remaining parts of the course, or may receive your qualification if a full RPL is granted. Additional fees may apply depending on the outcome of the RPL application.

If you are unhappy with the decision, you can appeal the decision through our appeals procedure.



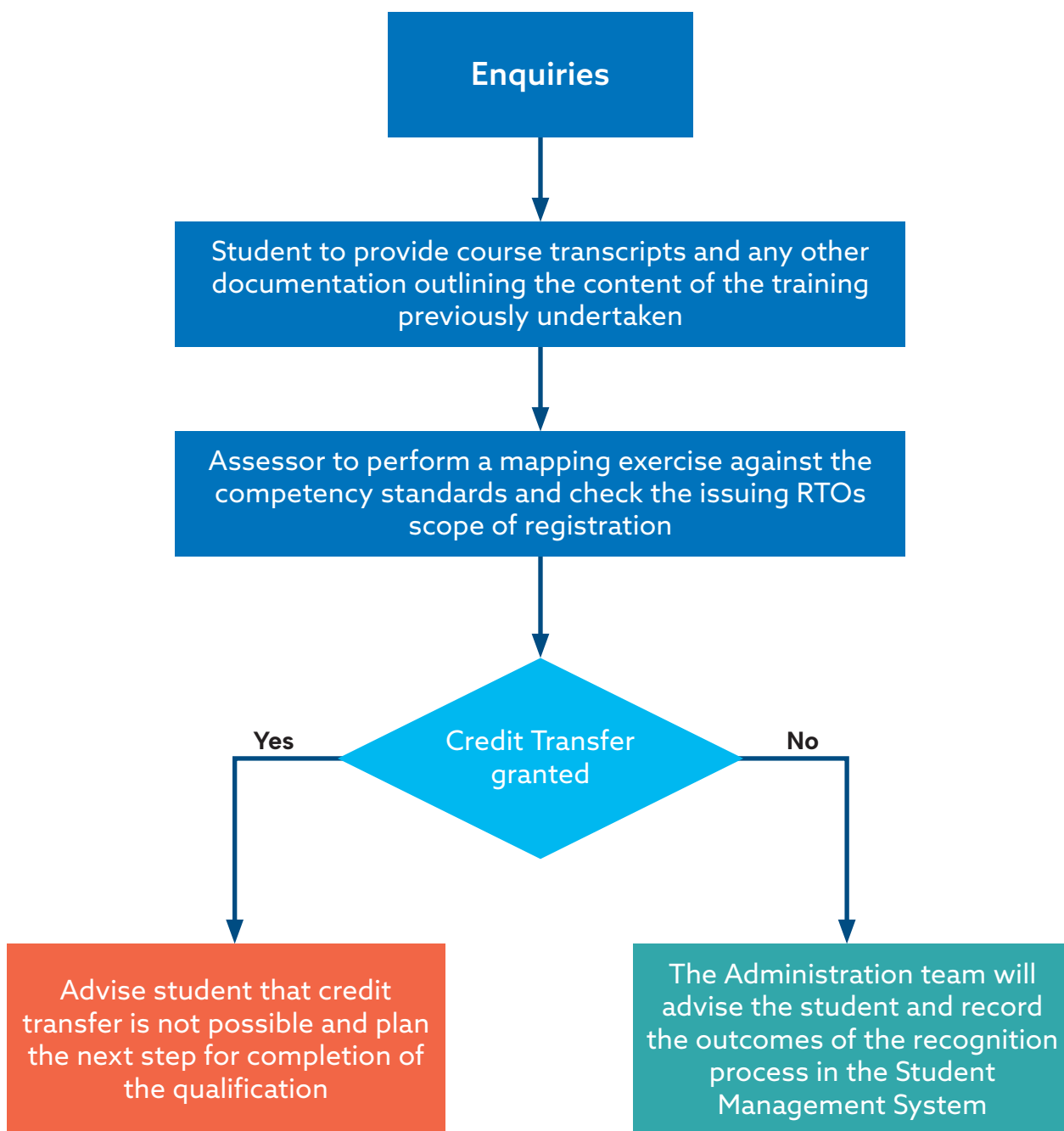
National Recognition (Credit Transfer)

The process of recognising previous studies from another training provider is called credit transfer. It needs to be done before a student is issued a training plan or resources.

We are happy to take into account any relevant qualification, modules, units or credits you may already have from different RTOs in any Australian state or territory. You just need to show us proof before you enrol.

Talk to our administration staff or a trainer about this option or refer to the credit transfer flowchart below:

Credit Transfer Flowchart



Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Under the Student Identifiers Act 2014, if you're studying any nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) course in Australia from 1 January 2015, you must have a USI. We will need this before you can enrol with us.

The USI will make it easier for you to find and collate your VET achievements into a single authenticated transcript, in preparation for that important job interview or for entry into further study. It will also ensure that your VET records are never lost.

Further information can be found by visiting the USI website www.usi.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx. It is possible that some students may receive an exemption from having a USI – you need to contact the Commonwealth government's USI Registrar to request this.

It is important to know that without a USI, SERO Institute is not permitted to issue you a Certificate for your qualification.

Statement of Fees

By the time you are reading this, you will have had everything about our fees and charges explained to you by our administration or enrolment officer and you will have been provided with a Statement of Fees.

All payment terms and circumstances under which refunds may be issued are discussed prior to enrolment.

Our administration team will also discuss with you the possibility of your course being funded by the government. When you sign your Statement of Fees (part of your enrolment form), you agree that you have understood the fees and charges related to your course.

If you are eligible to receive funding to undertake a qualification, you must meet all required criteria. Please use the funding wisely by choosing the right course and completing it. Please ask all the questions you need, as different states and territories all have different rules.

State and Federal Funding

There are plenty of government funded schemes and incentive opportunities throughout Australia that you may be eligible for. You need to discuss these options with our administration office.

Study With Sero Institute

Your Rights

Your rights are governed by State and Federal legislation. As a student of SERO Institute, you have the right to:

- be treated fairly and with respect by all students and staff
- not be harassed, victimised or discriminated against on any basis
- learn in a healthy, safe and supportive environment where the risks to personal health and safety are minimised
- have your personal details and records kept private and access the information we hold about you
- have any complaints dealt with fairly, promptly, confidentially and without retribution
- make appeals about procedural and assessment decisions
- receive training, assessment and support services that meet your needs
- be given clear and accurate information about your course, training, assessments and progress
- provide feedback to SERO Institute on the services, training, assessment and support you have received from our administration team.

Your Responsibilities

General Responsibilities

We expect you to:

- follow the guidelines set out in our 'Health and Safety' and 'Behaviour' sections
- provide us with relevant and accurate information when asked
- update SERO Institute of any changes to your personal details
- approach your course with commitment
- complete all assessment tasks, learning activities and assignments without cheating
- hand in all assessment tasks and other evidence of your work with a completed, signed cover sheet
- make regular contact as agreed with your trainer

- ensure safekeeping of the hire computer and USB dongle
- progress steadily through your course in line with your training plan
- prepare for all workshops and assessments
- make payments – where applicable – for your training within agreed timeframes
- let us know if you're experiencing any difficulties or if you're unable to attend a training workshop for any reason with at least 24-hours' notice, if applicable.

General Responsibilities

Please let us know if you change your address, phone number, email address or name during your course, otherwise you might not be able to receive important information we will be sending via post or email. If your name changes, please provide a certified copy of your marriage or name-change certificate.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us. It assists us in ensuring that our services meet your needs. Please help us by completing the surveys that are provided to you by your trainer/ assessor. Some of these forms may also be mailed or emailed to you from our office. We welcome feedback from you at any time by email or phone.

Study Hours

We want you to enjoy your course and not feel stressed or over-worked. That's why we only ask you to commit 20 hours of study time a week. If you feel you are not coping, or need more time, simply speak with your trainer and we can adjust your training plan to reflect this. You may however complete your work faster if you would like to. Simply speak with your trainer to organise your sessions.



Study Period

After you are successfully enrolled into a course, we will provide you with a Training Plan that explains the prescribed study period for each enrolled unit. A copy of your Training Plan will be sent to you via email and post.

Attendance and Deadlines

There may be circumstances where you are required to attend a workshop.

If you start missing workshops or fall behind, it can be really hard to stay motivated and catch up later. That's why it is so important to remain committed and stick to a routine.

We expect you to meet all deadlines and attend all training sessions, whether they are face-to-face or online. As much as possible, we want to make sure your studies are a success! Speak to your trainer if you are slipping behind or need more assistance. We will also check on you about mid-way in your program.

Extension of Study

If you are unable to complete the course within the prescribed timeframe (in accordance with your Training Plan) you can apply for an extension of study by informing your trainer or an administration officer.

It is possible to extend your course for a maximum of one year from the date of enrolment for each enrolled VET course.

Behaviour

It's really important to us that all of our students, trainers, assessors and administration team members never feel uncomfortable or threatened because of the behaviour of other people.

We should always remember that people may be offended by things we say, even if the intention was only to make a joke. Therefore, SERO Institute will not tolerate:

- inappropriate language or actions
- harassment and intimidation
- disruptive behaviour
- abusive or violent behaviour
- disrespect of people or equipment
- lateness (including after lunch and breaks) during workshops.

We also won't tolerate people being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during training sessions. If you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or your behaviour is affecting the learning process of others, you will be asked to leave the premises and re-entry to the course will be at the discretion of your trainer. If your behaviour is violent, discriminatory or threatening you may be removed from your course entirely.

This expectation of your behavior is extended to any interaction you have with your trainer, in the preferred method of contact you have arranged. This may be face-to-face, over the phone, via skype and online.

Our Policies

Privacy and Personal Records

We take all reasonable steps to protect your personal information from misuse or loss from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Your personal information is stored in electronic form in our administration database and can only be accessed by authorised staff. These staff are issued with their own Login Identifier they must use to gain access to our systems.

Please note that we need accurate personal information. It is especially important that you notify us of any changes to your circumstances, such as change of contact details or change of name.

When it comes to collecting your details and keeping them safe, we're guided by the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000 and Privacy Act 1988. This means:

- we collect your information solely for the purpose of operating as an RTO under the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) according to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015
- all your personal details will be stored securely and will not be shared with anyone except you – although we may use it for statistical analysis and government audits
- we cannot discuss your enrolment or results with anyone else. The only way to get around this is to have your enrolment form signed by a third party or to send us a letter of permission.

If you'd like to see your files, please ask in writing. You can ask us to make any corrections to your information at no extra cost. All notifications can be sent to info@sero.edu.au



Access and Equity

SERO Institute is committed to providing opportunities to all people for advancement in training on an equitable basis, including people with disabilities, and people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, and rural and remote learners.

All students have equal access to our programs irrespective of their gender, culture, linguistic background, race, socio-economic background, disability, age, marital status or sexual orientation.

As prescribed by the appropriate National Training Package, all students will be accepted into any program on SERO Institute's scope of registration, provided they meet the eligibility requirements.

Any issues or questions arising regarding access and equity can be directed to the RTO Manager (or their appointed representative).

Some examples of support offered include:

- language and literacy support of students who have difficulty with written or spoken English
- numeracy support
- modification and contextualisation of learning and assessment tasks to accommodate the unique cultural or personal needs of students
- where training programs have a limited number of places available, these will be filled in order of completed enrolment applications.

Equal Opportunity

SERO Institute is committed to equal employment and education opportunity principles and practices. This commitment will ensure that our environment is free from any form of discrimination in the workplace and a training situation, and that all of our practices are based on merit and equality of access.

The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, states that it is against the law to discriminate against someone (treat them unfairly compared with others), or harass them because of their:

- sex
- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or ethno-religious background,
- marital status
- physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability, or any organism capable of causing disease,
- homosexuality (male or female, actual or presumed)
- age (but only in relation to compulsory retirement).

Refund Procedure

If your request for refund is approved:

- we'll let you know our decision in writing along with any refund or adjustment notice
- all refund applications are processed within fourteen (14) days of the application being received
- refund requests are to be entered into the student management system and copies of evidence are stored in the student's file.

Health and Safety

We will always look out for your health and safety by following the guidelines set out by the current OH&S or WHS Acts in each state/territory and all other relevant legislation and codes of practice. Please help us by:

- protecting your own health and safety and avoid risking the health and safety of others
- not bringing threatening or dangerous items to training
- not misusing anything provided by SERO Institute
- co-operating with any instructions given to you by SERO Institute
- not putting yourself or others in danger through the consumption of drugs or alcohol
- reporting any risks you notice
- only smoking in designated areas and never inside a training facility.



Illness and Injury

Please let your trainer know before you start your course if you have a health condition that may need emergency attention during your course. They will treat this information confidentially. Please also tell us if you're involved in an incident or accident that results in personal injury – we'll do our best to support you.

In an Emergency

Please follow our emergency procedures and exit plans and follow any instructions given to you by your trainer or assessor. Do not use lifts during an emergency.

Workshop Locations

To ensure the comfort and safety of both students and SERO Institute staff, all face-to-face training will be undertaken in a publicly accessible location. At no time will any face-to-face workshops be undertaken in a private home. It is a student's responsibility to arrange safe travel to and from workshop locations.



Completing Your Course

Training & Education

Training methods used at SERO Institute

The methods we use will depend on your course. We may use one or more of the following:

- face-to-face workshops
- online learning
- work placements (for aged care or childcare for example)
- self-paced learning.

This flexibility means you can learn in the way that best suits you.

Courses may also involve one-on-one training, phone calls, and online messenger chats, as well as informal review sessions.

Competency-Based Training and Assessment

All our training and assessments are competency-based.

This means that your trainer and assessor will look for evidence that you've mastered a skill or understood an idea. Depending on your course and how you tend to study, they'll do this through:

- observation and questioning
- case studies
- written assignments and projects
- role plays and presentations
- short answers/written questions.

SERO Institute Education Standard

SERO Institute is committed to and is responsible for delivering training and assessment that is consistent with the highest industry standards. To achieve this, we:

- provide staff with extensive training
- regularly review our training and assessments to find areas to improve
- work to implement more efficient internal processes (that result in a better experience for you)

We also have a strict quality-assurance system in place. This lets us evaluate our materials, monitor all our training and assessments and check the satisfaction levels of our students and staff. Rest assured that if we ever receive industry feedback that our practices are not in line with legislation, standards or codes of practice, we will take action immediately.

We also take our student feedback seriously. SERO Institute is always looking for ways to make things, not just better, but amazing – if you have any feedback, we would love to hear from you. Just visit www.seroinstitute.com.au and go to the 'contact us' page.

Your Trainer & Assessor

No matter what course you're taking, your trainer and assessor will be highly qualified professionals. They will hold a training and assessment qualification, as well as a qualification that is at least at the same level of the qualification they are teaching or assessing, and will be experts in the relevant industry. They'll also be part of a rigorous, ongoing professional development program which ensures that they stay up to date with their specific industry, as well as adult training methodologies.

Your trainer is there to support you as you complete your course, so never hesitate to ask him/her any questions you have.



Your Assessments

At the beginning of your course, your trainer and assessor will discuss the assessments that you are required to complete. This will include the timing of the assessments throughout your course, including when an assessment will be provided to you and the dates for submission in the case of written assignments or projects. You will also be informed of the criteria against which you will be assessed.

Detailed student instructions are provided with each assessment and your assessor can also assist you with any questions you have in relation to completing your assessments.

We expect you to demonstrate a level of commitment by completing your assessments on a regular basis. If you are having trouble in getting the work done, speak to your trainer who will negotiate with you for any additional time or assistance you may need.

Types of Assessment

Assessments will include a combination of the following:

- workbooks
- role plays – acting out a hypothetical situation to demonstrate your skills and knowledge
- demonstrations or workshop presentations
- group projects
- self-assessment checklists – to be completed alone or with your trainer to check your progress
- written questions
- case studies

Assessment Policy

Each assessment task will be assessed as either Satisfactory (S) or Not Satisfactory (NS) and you will need to achieve a Satisfactory result for all assessments related to a unit to achieve an overall outcome of Competent. If you are found Not Satisfactory for one or more of your assessments, you can have two further attempts to complete the assessment and achieve a satisfactory outcome.

However, if you are still assessed as Not Satisfactory, you will need to complete additional training and assessment to support you in achieving a competent outcome. This may incur an additional fee as identified in the fees and charges information. If you do not agree with any assessment decision, you can lodge an assessment appeal as described within this handbook.

Completing Your Course

There are three steps to completing your course:

1. achieve 'Competent' for all your units
2. obtain an employer verification (apprentices and trainees)
3. within 30 days, it is our responsibility to issue you with your appropriate AQF certification documentation (certificate, transcript, statement of attainment).

Partial Completion

If you don't complete your course, for whatever reason, we'll send you a Statement of Attainment (SOA) for the units or modules that you have completed (as long as you have a USI). You can use this to apply for Credit Transfer if you take a similar course in the future, or to apply for jobs.



Possible Setbacks in Learning

Missed Workshops or Sessions

For those who are taking a workshop or sessions, we expect you attend all of them. If you can't make it, please contact our administration team or your trainer. They may be able to arrange extra time with you.

Withdrawal

If you want to stop taking your course, please let us know straightaway. That way, we can send you your Statement of Attainment (for the units you've completed) as soon as possible.

Misconduct

Misconduct refers to things like:

- theft
- cheating or fraud
- violence or assault
- discrimination, harassment, intimidation or victimisation
- serious negligence or breach of confidentiality
- refusing to carry out lawful and reasonable instructions
- being so affected by alcohol or drugs (both illegal and prescription) that your ability to take part in training is affected.

Consequences

- any misconduct will result in a meeting and a written warning
- repeated incidents will result in termination from your course without refund
- serious misconduct will result in immediate termination from your course without refund.

Cheating

Cheating means two things, neither of which will be tolerated at SERO Institute:

- plagiarism: taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own
- collusion: conspiring to deceive others.

Plagiarism

A plagiarist is someone who presents the thoughts or writings of another person as his/her own. Each student is, therefore, required to acknowledge all direct quotations (irrespective of the source), ideas, paraphrased writings and statistical information.

Collusion

A plagiarist is someone who presents the thoughts or writings of another person as his/her own. Each student is, therefore, required to acknowledge all direct quotations (irrespective of the source), ideas, paraphrased writings and statistical information.

Collusion includes, but is not limited to:

- a. working with another person to write all or part of an assignment unless the assessment's written instruction states this is acceptable
- b. using another student's notes or research to prepare an assignment, and
- c. a student allowing another student access to his/her work if the other student is doing an assignment on the same topic, but has not yet submitted it, meaning the work would be of assistance to him/her.

Here are some examples of cheating:

- not acknowledging the sources of information you use in your assignments (ask your trainer about how to reference properly)
- collaborating with others on assignments when you haven't been asked to
- copying all or part of an assessment from others
- submitting the same work for different courses
- submitting the work of others from previous courses
- stealing work from your trainer or assessor, the internet or other students.

If a student is suspected of cheating, your trainer or assessor must follow a specific procedure, which includes:

- providing examples of your previous work
- providing comparisons of your work and other students' work – if they suspect collusion
- discussions with you
- a review of any previous incidences of cheating.

Consequences

If evidence points to cheating, you will receive a 'Not Yet Competent' mark and we will advise you of any disciplinary procedures. If you disagree with the result, we have an appeals process in place.

Complaints & Appeals

We have the same process for both academic and non-academic complaints:

Academic-related complaints include:

- assessment results
- training delivery
- training quality
- changes to course structure.

Non-academic complaints include:

- sexual harassment
- discrimination
- payment or refund issues.

Complaints Process

Informal Approach

If you wish to discuss your concerns with SERO Institute, these are the steps you should follow:

1. Contact SERO Institute via info@sero.edu.au, call us at 1800 206 010, or post us a letter to PO BOX 2547 Southport BC QLD 4215 Australia
2. Speak to an Administration Officer or trainer about your concerns
3. If you are satisfied with the first contact resolution, your complaint will be treated as 'resolved'
4. If you want to escalate the complaint to the General Manager, Compliance, please e-mail katya@sero.edu.au

Formal Approach

These are the steps in filing a formal complaint:

1. Provide your complaint in writing to katya@sero.edu.au
2. Be prepared provide evidence of your complaint

3. The General Manager, Compliance will review your complaint based on the evidence supplied and conduct an investigation. You may receive a phone call to clarify any matter relating to the complaint.
4. The General Manager, Compliance will write to you within 20 working days of receiving the complaint with an outcome. The outcome of the complaint will be recorded on your student file.

Appeals Process

SERO Institute will ensure that:

1. we ask someone from SERO Institute who hasn't been involved in your study programme to review your appeal within 10 days
2. you may have face-to-face consultations with this person, who will then liaise with SERO Institute management
3. the General Manager, Compliance will send you a report advising further steps
4. if you're dissatisfied with the outcome you may ask (in writing) for an external appeals process to be used
5. we will contact an external mediator, who will arrange for a formal discussion and who will prepare a report on their findings
6. after receiving the mediator's report, we'll send you a summary of their recommendations. There will be a charge for appealing a decision but we hope we don't have to use this process!

If you are unsatisfied with the decision made by SERO Institute, you can formally request for an external appeals process. An external review of your complaint can be requested to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) by calling 1300 366 700 or follow the instructions posted in www.aat.gov.au.



Compassionate & Compelling Circumstances

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend workshops
- b. bereavement of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent (where possibly a death certificate should be provided)
- c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel
- d. a traumatic experience such as involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident, or witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime. Such cases as these should be supported by reports from police or psychologists.

Please note, that the above are only some examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances.

If you believe you have a circumstance which has impacted on your progress or ability to complete your assessment obligations, you should contact the administration team.


Your trainer will use his/her professional judgment to assess each case on its individual merits. He/she will consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim, and will retain copies of these documents in the student's file.




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