

## COMPLAINTS-HANDLING PROCEDURE

This document provides procedural guidance to those who wish to submit a complaint to Approval Systems Pty Ltd.

### HOW TO SUBMIT A COMPLAINT

We are able to receive your complaint through any medium you choose, including e-mail, written communication, via telephone, and via in-person conversation. We generally recommend that you submit your complaint in writing via e-mail, as this allows you to include any evidence for your claim as an attachment, and also provides an immediate written record of your complaint submission for both your records and our own.

If you do not already have an email contact address at Approval Systems, you may submit an inquiry via our contact form on our website: [approvalsystems.com.au/contact](http://approvalsystems.com.au/contact). Please include your best contact details for us to get in touch with you in order to gain the information we need to be able to process your complaint.

Regardless of how you choose to submit your complaint, it will be submitted into our internal complaints-handling procedure to be processed. You will receive confirmation of the receipt of your complaint within 21 days.

### COMPLAINTS-HANDLING PROCEDURE

Approval Systems has an extensive internal complaints-handling procedure, with step-by-step processing instructions disseminated to all staff and responsibilities allocated for all processes. This procedure is not published publicly, but is available for your information upon request once you have submitted a complaint. The elements of the procedure that are relevant to your complaint are detailed as follows.

1. Your complaint will be entered into our complaints-received register, and you will be asked to complete our Complaint Information Form to populate our records for your complaint.
2. You will be informed who your Point of Contact is for your complaint, and informed of your Complaint ID number. We recommend keeping a record of this ID number.
3. Your complaint will be escalated through our procedure to our Complaints Handler, a management staff member appropriate to the nature of the complaint. The complaints handler will investigate your claim fairly and efficiently to allow the organisation's management to form a complete understanding of its context and nature.
4. The organisation's management will discuss your claim, any requested remedies submitted with the claim, all evidence gathered, and also the claim's implications for the potential improvement of any relevant organisational services and processes. The objective of this discussion will be to agree upon the proportionate and appropriate response to your claim.

5. Within three months of the receipt of your complaint, your Point of Contact will inform you of the organisation's formal response to your claim. If you do not respond to this communication within 6 months, your claim will be closed.
6. If you communicate that you are satisfied with the organisation's response, your claim will be closed pending any outstanding actions agreed upon in the resolution of the complaint.
7. If you communicate that you are dissatisfied with the organisation's response, your claim will be re-entered into the complaints-handling procedure to be escalated and responded to once again within three months. Please note that details regarding why the response provided to you was unacceptable, and what might be some improvements to the response you would seek from the organisation, would be beneficial to the reprocessing of the claim.
8. As per steps 3, 4 and 5 above, your complaint will be processed until another final response is reached by the organisation's management and communicated to you for your assessment. If you do not respond within 6 months, your claim will be closed.
9. If you communicate that you are satisfied with the new response offered by the organisation, your complaint will be closed pending any outstanding action agreed upon in the most recent response to your complaint.
10. If you are still, at this point, dissatisfied by the organisation's response, your complaint will be closed within the internal complaints procedure and left open to you to seek arbitration.
11. At any time in this process, you may choose to remove your complaint from the internal complaints-handling procedure and engage with an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provider, including but not limited to instances when an agreement between both parties could not be achieved through the internal complaints-handling procedure. Approval Systems' chosen ADR provider is [RICS DRS Australasia](#).

## KEY INFORMATION FOR THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

- Approval Systems will keep detailed written records throughout the complaints process, and recommends strongly that you do the same.
- The more evidence you can provide to support your claim, the more robust it will be
- Our staff are dedicated to providing a fair, efficient and effective complaints procedure and to communicating in a respectful, compassionate and understanding manner throughout the complaints-handling procedure. We ask that you treat our staff with dignity and respect, understanding that they are doing their best to help you progress your claim.
- You are welcome to submit an anonymous complaint, however please note that if you choose to do so it may limit our ability to investigate all avenues of evidence for your claim.
- You will be kept informed of your complaint's progress throughout the complaints-handling process by your Point of Contact, but you may reach out for updates at any time.
- The timeframes indicated above are maximum limits. It is likely that your claim will be processed faster than the indicated times.
- Every claim is initially assessed for urgency, severity, and the need for immediate actions to be taken. Please be assured that if your claim is urgent and/or severe, that the process will be undertaken with a serious commitment to achieving immediately actionable responses in an appropriately efficient timeframe to reflect said severity and urgency.

- If you wish to submit a complaint but you do not require an organisational response, your complaint will still be progressed through the complaints-handling procedure for the purposes of organisational learning. You may opt-out of receiving updates and information regarding your complaint if that is your wish – simply communicate this to your Point of Contact.

## COMPLAINTS AND ACCESSIBILITY

If you have any special needs or considerations that affect your ability to submit a complaint or receive a response, or impact the nature of your claim, please inform your Point of Contact. We are able to accommodate your needs and assist you in submitting your complaint, and in understanding our complaints-handling procedure to its fullest extent. Whatever special considerations you may require must be communicated to Approval Systems in order to be accommodated through the complaints handling procedure.

Examples of accommodations we are able to make include:

- Writing evidence and filling in the Complaint Information Form from your dictation, either via telephone or in person
- Providing large print or audiotape formats of critical information and communications
- Providing translated communications or documents
- Communicating with an appointed third-party regarding your complaint's progress

We will endeavour to accommodate any special requirements you may communicate to us regarding your ability to participate equally in our complaints-handling procedure.

## STANDARDS AND AFFILIATIONS

Approval Systems' complaints-handling policy has been developed in alignment with the Australian Standard on Customer Satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (ISO 10002:2004) and AS/NZ ISO 9000:2006, and other International Standards and AS/NZ Standards detailed in that document (ISBN 0 7337 7311 7). It has also been informed by the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) professional guidance document 'Complaints Handling, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, July 2016'.

Approval Systems' status as a member organisation of the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors rests on the consistent and correct implementation of its complaints-handling policy and procedure.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you wish to seek further information regarding Approval Systems' complaints-handling policy and procedure, please contact Approval Systems directly to discuss the procedure in more detail.

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