

SC 7 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and clients have a fair, simple, and easily understood way to make complaints, or lodge appeals.

The RTO values feedback as an opportunity to improve its training, assessment, and support services.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students, prospective students, and clients of the RTO.
- All RTO staff, trainers, assessors, and contractors.
- All training and assessment activities (both nationally recognised and non-accredited) across all delivery modes (classroom, workplace, and online).

Definitions

Complaint: A formal statement of dissatisfaction about the RTO's services, decisions, or actions.

Appeal: A request to review or reconsider a decision made by the RTO, such as a complaint, outcome, or assessment result.

Resolution: An outcome that fairly addresses the issue raised.

Independent Reviewer: A staff member or authorised person who was not involved in the original issue, has no conflict of interest, and is trained in complaints and appeals handling

Policy Statements

Fairness and accessibility

- a. The RTO is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and accessible system for handling feedback, complaints, and appeals.
- b. All students and clients are entitled to express concerns or dissatisfaction without fear of disadvantage.
- c. The RTO fosters a culture of respect, openness, and responsiveness where issues are viewed as opportunities to learn and improve.

Lodging complaints and appeals

- a. All complaints and appeals are handled in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- b. Decisions are made objectively, based on evidence, and by individuals not involved in the original matter.
- c. Everyone involved in a complaint or appeal is given a genuine opportunity to be heard and to present their case.

Transparency and accountability

- a. The RTO ensures that processes for lodging and managing complaints and appeals are clearly communicated, easy to understand, and consistently applied.
- b. Outcomes are documented, explained to the parties involved, and used to inform continuous improvement.
- c. Responsibility for managing complaints and appeals rests with the Senior Management Team, supported by staff who act with integrity and impartiality.

Confidentiality and support

- a. All matters are managed sensitively and in confidence.
- b. Information is only shared with those directly involved in the resolution process.
- c. Students and clients are encouraged to seek support or bring an advocate to any meeting related to their concern.
- d. The RTO recognises that raising a complaint or appeal can be stressful and ensures that wellbeing and counselling support are made available when required.

Timeliness and communication

- a. Complaints and appeals are managed promptly and resolved as quickly as possible while ensuring fairness and accuracy.
- b. Students and clients are kept informed of progress and expected timeframes throughout the process.
- c. If additional time is needed, the RTO communicates the reasons and revised timelines in writing.

Self-assurance

- a. Feedback, complaints, and appeals are viewed as valuable sources of information that help strengthen quality and service delivery.
- b. The RTO analyses trends and outcomes to identify potential improvements in its systems, training, and student experience.

- c. Corrective actions and quality improvements arising from complaints and appeals are documented, monitored, and reviewed through the Quality Assurance framework.

Right to external review

- a. Students and clients have the right to escalate a complaint or appeal to an external agency if they are not satisfied with the RTO's internal process or outcomes.
- b. The RTO cooperates fully with external regulatory bodies.
- c. External review outcomes are used to enhance internal processes and strengthen compliance.

Procedures

A. Procedural fairness

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>1. Communication, fairness, and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All complaints and appeals will be handled without charge, without prejudice, and without disadvantage to the student. ▪ The RTO will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaint or appeal is being processed. ▪ Students may nominate a support person or advocate (e.g., family member, counsellor, or legal representative). ▪ Interpreters or additional communication support will be provided where needed. ▪ All correspondence, records, and evidence will be managed confidentially in line with the Privacy Policy. 	The RTO

B. Making a complaint

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>1. Attempt to resolve informally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students or clients are encouraged to first raise their concern informally with the relevant staff member (e.g., trainer, assessor, or support officer). ▪ If the issue cannot be resolved informally, the person may proceed to lodge a formal complaint. 	Complainant
<p>2. Lodging a formal complaint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complaints must be lodged as soon as possible after the incident occurring. ▪ The complaint is submitted electronically through the RTO's JotForm Complaints Form, available on the RTO website via the following link Complaints Form 	Complainant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The complainant should provide as much information as possible to enable the RTO to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. Information should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a clear description of the issue ○ any evidence to support your complaint ○ details of the steps (if any) that you have already taken to resolve the issue ○ the outcome that you seek ▪ A member of the Senior Management Team will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five (5) business days via email. ▪ The acknowledgement will confirm the process, expected timeframes and available supports. 	Senior Manager
<p>3. Investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The complaint will be reviewed and investigated by a person/s (independent reviewer/s) not involved in the original issue to ensure independence and fairness. Independent reviewers may include members of the Senior Management Team and/or staff members. ▪ The independent reviewer/s contacts all parties, gathers evidence, and assesses the facts. ▪ All parties involved in the complaint may have a support person of their choice present at meetings that may be scheduled to resolve the issue. ▪ All parties will be given a reasonable opportunity to present their side and provide supporting information. ▪ The RTO will aim to finalise investigations within twenty (20) business days of receipt. ▪ Complex matters may take longer, in which case the complainant will be kept informed of progress. 	Independent Reviewer/s
<p>4. Outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The complainant will be informed of the outcome, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the findings of the investigation ○ the reasons for the decision ○ any actions or improvements the RTO will implement ▪ If the complainant is unsatisfied with the decision, they may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ lodge an appeal using the JotForm Appeals Form within ten (10) business days; or ○ seek external review (see step 5 below) 	Independent Reviewer/s Complainant

<p>5. External review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the matter is not resolved internally, the complainant may request an external review through: National Training Complaints Hotline - Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snippet from the National Training Complaints Hotline: <p><i>If you have a complaint relating to your experiences whilst undertaking training in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, the National Training Complaints Hotline can refer your complaint to the most appropriate authority to have your complaint considered.</i></p> The RTO will cooperate fully with external agencies and provide requested documentation and/or information. 	<p>Complainant</p> <p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p>
<p>6. Recordkeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All complaint details, outcomes, and actions are recorded through JotForm and logged in the Complaints and Appeals Register. Improvement actions (where required) are tracked in the Corrective Actions and Improvements Register. Records are stored securely as per the Records Management Policy. 	<p>Quality and Compliance Manager</p> <p>General Manager (Finance and Administration)</p>

C. Appealing a decision

Procedure		Responsibility
1. Lodging an appeal <ul style="list-style-type: none">Appeals are to be submitted via the JotForm Appeals Form via the following link Appeals Form within ten (10) working days of receiving a decision or outcome.The form must include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">the decision being appealedthe reason for the appealsupporting evidence		Appellant
2. Acknowledgement <ul style="list-style-type: none">A member of the Senior Management Team will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within five (5) business days via email.		Senior Manager
3. Review		

D. Self-assurance

Procedure	Responsibility
<p>1. Monitoring and continuous improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The RTO monitors all complaints and appeals logged in JotForm and reviews data monthly.	Quality and Compliance Manager

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trends, root causes, and improvement opportunities are discussed at the Quality Assurance Committee. Outcomes are recorded in the Corrective Actions and Improvements Register and followed up to ensure completion. The process is reviewed annually or following significant changes to legislation, contracts, or Standards requirements. 	
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Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer:

- Ensure independence, resources, and cooperation with external reviews.

Quality and Compliance Manager:

- Oversee complaints and appeals, maintain registers, ensure fairness and timeliness.

Trainers and Assessors:

- Address informal issues respectfully and escalate where needed.

Review Panel:

- Conduct impartial reviews and document findings.

General Manager (Finance and Administration):

- Maintain secure records.

All Staff:

- Treat all complaints respectfully and report to management.

Related Documents

SC 7.1 Complaints Process Flowchart

SC 7.2 Complaints and Appeals Register

SC 7.3 Complaints Form

SC 7.4 Appeals Form

QA 1.13 Corrective Actions and Improvements Register

QA 1.1 Quality Assurance Committee Terms of Reference

QA 2 Document Management Policy and Procedures

SC 1 Student Information Policy and Procedures

SC 5 Student Support and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures

TA 6 Assessment Policy and Procedures

Monitoring and Review

The Quality and Compliance Manager monitors the complaints and appeals process and reviews this policy annually or when required by changes to legislation, standards, or funding contracts.

Document Control

Document No. & Name:	SC 7 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure_V3.0 (22.10.2025).docx
Quality Area:	SC 7
Author:	Foresite Group Pty Ltd
Status:	Approved
Approved By:	Quality and Compliance Manager
Approval Date:	13.11.2025
Review Date:	Jan 2027