



Arethusa College

Complaints and Appeals Policy – Vocational Education & Training

1. Policy

Complaints and appeals are managed by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) in a fair, efficient and effective manner. The RTO will create an environment where learner's views are valued. This policy and procedure will be made publicly to the School/Community by being made available on our intranet and in materials provided to learners on commencement of enrolment. In the case of delivery through third parties, the material will be made available to the learners through the third party.

Arethusa College ensures that all complaints and appeals will be heard and adhere to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness at every stage of the complaint and appeal process. Resolutions will be reached within 60 calendar days where possible. In the case of the time frame being longer than this, the RTO will communicate with the complainant/appellant why the process is taking longer and an estimated timeframe for resolution as well as being kept informed regarding ongoing progress.

Details of all complaints and appeals will be securely maintained in a Register of Complaints and Appeals and will take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure covers:

- The RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- A third party providing services on the RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; and
- A learner of the RTO.

Complaints may be made regarding the conduct of the above parties, and appeals may be made for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by the RTO or a third party providing services on the RTO's behalf.

3. Definitions

Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

4. Roles and responsibilities

The *CEO/Executive Principal*:

- Approves and ensures the correct implementation of this policy and related procedures;
- Delegates the responsibility of receiving and recording complaints and appeals to the RTO Manager;
- Participates in the complaint and appeal process as chair of the panel; and
- Appoints an independent third party to mediate in the case of the complainant/appellant not being satisfied with the outcome.

The *RTO Manager*:

- Ensures staff and learners are aware of this policy and procedure;
- Receives and records all complaints and appeals on the register;
- Provides the CEO/Executive Principal with details of the complaint or appeal;
- Meets with the CEO/Executive Principal to discuss and possibly decide on an outcome;
- If an outcome is not reached, coordinates and convenes the Complaint and Appeal Committee;
- When an outcome is reached notifies the complainant/appellant in writing of the decision and records this in the Complaints and Appeals Register;
- In the case of the complainant/appellant being unsatisfied with the outcome of the decision, organises an independent third party to review the decision and mediate; and
- Coordinates a meeting to review the policies, procedures and strategies to mitigate the risk of the complaint or appeal occurring in the future.

The *Deputy Head Pathways*:

- Reviews evidence provided by the complainant/appellant in a complaint and makes a documented decision regarding this; and
- Participates in the complaint and appeal process as requested by the RTO Manager or CEO/Executive Principal.

The *Trainer and Assessor*:

- Reviews evidence provided by the complainant/appellant in a complaint and makes a documented decision regarding this; and
- Participates in the complaint and appeal process as requested by the RTO Manager or CEO/Executive Principal.

5. Procedures

Generally, the initial stage of any complaint or appeal shall be for the complainant/appellant to communicate directly with the Trainer and Assessor who will make a decision and record the outcome of the complaint.

Alternatively, the complainant/appellant may communicate the complaint to the Deputy Head of Pathways, who will make a decision in regards to proceeding with the complaint or appeal process.

Learners still dissatisfied with the outcome may initiate a complaint or appeal with the RTO Manager.

If the complainant is proceeding further, the complaint should be:

- In writing addressed to the CEO/Executive Principal and submitted to the RTO Manager;
- On receipt of a complaint or appeal the RTO Manager shall reply in writing to acknowledge receipt of the complaint, then inform the CEO/Executive Principal;
- The RTO Manager and the CEO/Executive Principal will meet to discuss the complaint or appeal and either make a decision or convene an independent panel to hear the complaint; this shall be the "Complaint and Appeal Committee" and will consist of members who have not been involved in the issue to this point. It will include the CEO/Executive Principal, a member of staff and a representative of the School/Community;
- Processes must follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness at every stage;
- When a decision is reached this will be communicated in writing to the complainant/appellant within 60 calendar days of the complaint or appeal being received as well as being recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register;
- If the decision will take longer than 60 calendar days the complainant/appellant will be notified in writing of the reasons why a decision has not been reached and provide regular updates regarding the progress of the matter;
- The complainant/appellant shall be given an opportunity to present their case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation;
- The relevant staff member, third party or other learner shall be given an opportunity to present their case to the committee and may be accompanied by one other person as support or as representation;
- The Complaint and Appeal Committee will make a decision on the complaint;
- The Complaint and Appeal Committee will communicate its decision on the complaint to all parties in writing and this will be recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register;
- If the complainant/appellant is still not satisfied, the CEO/Executive Principal will appoint an independent third party (outside the RTO) to mediate with costs being communicated to all parties prior to commencement;
- If the complainant/appellant is still not satisfied, the CEO/Executive Principal will refer them to the QCAA website for further information about making complaints;
- After the complaint or appeal is finalised the RTO Manager will organise a meeting of relevant parties to review the decision and outcome and evaluate the policies, procedures and strategies of the RTO in order to take appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence.

6. Records and documentation

[Complaints appeals register v1.xlsx](#)