
Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure





Contents

Policy Context.....	3
Purpose.....	4
Objective.....	5
Scope.....	6
Legislation Context.....	8
General Processes.....	10
Roles and Responsibilities.....	14
Self-Assurance Audit Checklist.....	16
Procedures.....	19
General Process to lodge a complaint or internal appeal.....	24
Categorisation of complaint or appeal.....	28
Continuous Improvement.....	29
Confidentiality and Privacy Statement.....	30
Publication.....	31
Review processes.....	33
Flow Chart Diagram.....	34

Policy Context

This policy relates to:	
Registration Manager	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
Conditions of Registration	VET Quality Framework (VQF)
Codes and Standards	ESOS National Code 2018 – Standard: 3.3.7; 3.4.5; 6.1.6; 7.5.2; 7.6; 8.13.3; 8.14.1; 8.14.2; 8.14.3; 9.4.2; 10.1; 10.2; 10.3; 10.4; Standards for RTOs 2015 - Standard 6
Legislation or other requirements	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2012

This comprehensive policy has been developed to ensure full compliance with the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, which represents the updated regulatory framework governing the vocational education and training sector in Australia. The policy directly addresses the requirements outlined in Standards 2.7 and 2.8 of the SRTOs 2025, which mandate that registered training organisations maintain robust, transparent, and accessible complaints and appeals processes that protect the rights of all stakeholders while ensuring procedural fairness and natural justice.

The policy framework is designed to meet the regulatory expectations of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), which serves as the national regulator for vocational education and training providers. Under the VET Quality Framework, this policy ensures that the organisation maintains the highest standards of service delivery while providing effective mechanisms for addressing grievances and appeals that may arise during the course of business operations, including those related to feedback management that informs continuous improvement processes.

The legislative foundation for this policy is established through the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the associated Compliance Standards and Outcome Standards instruments that took effect on 1 July 2025. These standards require organisations to operate complaints management systems that allow feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation, while ensuring all parties are afforded procedural fairness with reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints.

For international students, this policy aligns with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) National Code 2018, ensuring that overseas students receive appropriate protection and support throughout their educational journey. The policy recognises the unique vulnerabilities of international students and provides additional safeguards to ensure their complaints and appeals are handled with cultural sensitivity and appropriate support mechanisms that comply with both domestic and international regulatory requirements.

The policy incorporates requirements from privacy legislation, particularly the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, which govern the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information throughout the complaints and appeals process. Additionally, the policy acknowledges anti-discrimination legislation at federal and state levels, ensuring that equal access to complaints and appeals processes is provided regardless of protected characteristics and that the learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students as required under Standard 2.5.

This policy recognises that effective complaints and appeals management serves as a fundamental component of quality service delivery that contributes to continuous improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, and organisational excellence. The framework established within this policy creates multiple pathways for resolution, from informal discussions to formal external review processes, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to appropriate mechanisms for addressing their concerns while supporting the organisation's commitment to systematic monitoring and evaluation as required under Standard 4.4.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish a comprehensive framework that ensures all complaints and appeals are managed in accordance with the principles of natural justice, procedural fairness, and best practice standards within the vocational education and training sector. This framework is designed to provide clear, accessible, and effective pathways for resolving disputes while maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality, integrity, and transparency throughout all stages of the process, ultimately supporting the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and quality service delivery.

The policy aims to create an environment where all stakeholders feel confident in raising concerns, knowing that their complaints and appeals will be treated with appropriate seriousness, professionalism, and respect. By establishing clear procedures and reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints, the policy ensures that issues are addressed promptly and effectively, minimising the potential for escalation and promoting positive outcomes for all parties involved while meeting the specific requirements outlined in Standards 2.7 and 2.8.

This comprehensive approach recognises that effective complaints and appeals management serves multiple purposes within the organisation. Firstly, it provides essential protection for

VET students, staff, and other stakeholders by ensuring their rights are respected and their concerns are addressed appropriately through processes that afford procedural fairness to all parties. Secondly, it creates valuable feedback mechanisms that contribute to organisational learning and continuous improvement, helping to identify systemic issues and prevent recurring problems as required under the continuous improvement obligations.

The policy also serves to protect the organisation's reputation and operational integrity by ensuring that all complaints and appeals are handled professionally and in accordance with regulatory requirements. This proactive approach to dispute resolution helps to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders while demonstrating the organisation's commitment to quality service delivery and accountability, supporting the leadership and accountability requirements outlined in Standards 4.1 and 4.2.

Furthermore, the policy establishes clear accountability mechanisms and reporting structures that enable senior management to monitor trends, identify areas for improvement, and implement appropriate corrective actions. This systematic approach ensures that complaints and appeals data is effectively utilised to drive organisational excellence and enhance service delivery across all areas of operation, supporting the risk management and continuous improvement obligations established in the regulatory framework.

The policy ensures that information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students, while also ensuring that VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints. This accessibility requirement extends to appeals processes, ensuring that information about how to appeal adverse decisions is publicly available and easily accessible, with avenues for review by an independent party at no or low cost to the appellant when requested.

Objective

The overarching objective of this policy and procedure is to ensure that the registered training organisation maintains comprehensive, accessible, and effective complaints and appeals processes that fully comply with Standards 2.7 and 2.8 of the SRTOs 2025 while exceeding minimum regulatory requirements through the implementation of best practice approaches to dispute resolution and stakeholder engagement that support continuous improvement and quality service delivery.

The policy seeks to establish clear pathways for informal and formal resolution of complaints and appeals, ensuring that all stakeholders understand their rights and responsibilities within these processes. This includes providing multiple entry points for raising concerns, from informal discussions with immediate supervisors or trainers through to formal written complaints and external review processes, ensuring that individuals can choose the most

appropriate mechanism for their particular circumstances while being supported throughout the process.

A fundamental objective is to ensure that all complaints and appeals are resolved in a manner that respects the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness as mandated by the regulatory framework. This means providing all parties with appropriate opportunities to present their case, ensuring that decision-makers are free from bias and conflicts of interest, and maintaining transparency throughout the process while protecting confidentiality where appropriate and ensuring that reasonable timeframes are established and maintained.

The policy aims to establish a complaints management system that allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation, while ensuring that outcomes of complaints are documented and communicated to all parties involved. The system must identify reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints and provide avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved, supporting the organisation's accountability and transparency obligations.

Another key objective is to create effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing systemic issues that may contribute to complaints and appeals, ensuring that feedback and complaints are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement as required under Standard 2.7. By analysing trends and patterns in complaints data, the organisation can proactively identify areas requiring improvement and implement appropriate corrective actions to prevent recurring problems and enhance overall service quality.

The policy also seeks to ensure that an effective appeals management system is maintained that allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation where those decisions adversely affect the student. This system must ensure procedural fairness for all parties, specify reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals, and provide avenues for review by an independent party if requested by the appellant at no or low cost, with outcomes documented and used to inform continuous improvement.

The policy aims to ensure that all staff members understand their roles and responsibilities within the complaints and appeals framework, providing clear guidance on how to handle informal complaints, when to escalate matters to formal processes, and how to support individuals throughout these processes while maintaining appropriate boundaries and professional standards. This includes ensuring that staff understand the regulatory requirements and their obligations under the policy framework.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies comprehensively to all current, prospective, and former VET students of the registered training organisation, encompassing domestic and international students across all training products, qualifications, and skill sets offered by the organisation. The scope extends to cover all aspects of the student experience, from initial enquiry and enrolment through to completion of studies and post-graduation services, ensuring that comprehensive support is available throughout the entire educational journey in accordance with the student support requirements outlined in Quality Area 2.

The policy framework encompasses all staff members, including full-time, part-time, casual, and contract employees, as well as trainers, assessors, administrative personnel, support staff, and senior management. This comprehensive coverage ensures that all individuals working within or on behalf of the organisation understand their obligations and have access to appropriate mechanisms for raising concerns about workplace issues, professional conduct, or organisational policies and procedures while supporting the VET workforce management requirements outlined in Quality Area 3.

Third-party service providers, contractors, and partner organisations that deliver services on behalf of the registered training organisation are explicitly covered within the scope of this policy in accordance with the regulatory requirements. This includes training delivery partners, assessment services, student support providers, and any other external organisations that contribute to the delivery of vocational education and training services, ensuring that VET students receive consistent protection and support regardless of which entity is directly providing services.

The scope of complaints that may be addressed under this policy is deliberately broad and specifically includes concerns related to the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation as required under Standard 2.7. This encompasses training delivery quality, assessment processes and outcomes, recognition of prior learning decisions, credit transfer processes, administrative services, student support provisions, facilities and resources, fee structures and refund processes, marketing and recruitment practices, wellbeing support services, and any other aspect of the organisation's operations that may impact stakeholder experiences.

Appeals covered under this policy include challenges to decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation where those decisions adversely affect VET students as specified in Standard 2.8. This includes assessment decisions, complaints handling outcomes, administrative determinations, disciplinary actions, recognition of prior learning outcomes, credit transfer decisions, and any other decisions made by the organisation or its representatives that stakeholders believe warrant review through the appeals management system.

The geographical scope of this policy extends to all locations where the organisation delivers training and assessment services, including main campuses, satellite facilities, workplace training venues, online learning environments, work placement sites, and any other

locations where educational services are provided. This comprehensive coverage ensures consistent application of complaints and appeals procedures regardless of the mode or location of service delivery, supporting the requirements for appropriate facilities, resources and equipment outlined in Standard 1.8.

The policy scope encompasses feedback management processes that inform continuous improvement, ensuring that all feedback received from VET students, staff, industry representatives, VET regulators, State and Territory training authorities, and employers of current or former VET students is appropriately captured, analysed, and utilised to enhance service delivery and organisational performance in accordance with Standard 4.4.

Legislation Context

This policy operates within a complex legislative and regulatory environment that encompasses federal and state laws governing vocational education and training, consumer protection, privacy, discrimination, and workplace relations. The primary legislative foundation is provided by the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Commonwealth), which establishes the regulatory framework for registered training organisations and empowers the Australian Skills Quality Authority to monitor compliance with prescribed standards including the Outcome Standards and Compliance Standards that took effect on 1 July 2025.

The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 represents the detailed regulatory requirements that flow from this primary legislation, with Standards 2.7 and 2.8 specifically addressing complaints and appeals processes. These standards have the force of law and non-compliance can result in regulatory sanctions including conditions on registration, suspension, or cancellation of provider status, making adherence to these requirements essential for organisational viability and sustainability within the VET sector.

The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 provides additional regulatory obligations that complement the outcome standards, establishing requirements for marketing and advertising, information transparency, accountability measures, and governance arrangements that intersect with complaints and appeals management processes.

For international students, the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Commonwealth) and the associated National Code of Practice provide additional legislative requirements that must be integrated into complaints and appeals processes. These provisions recognise the particular vulnerabilities of international students and mandate enhanced protections, including requirements for accessible information, appropriate support services, and external review mechanisms that complement the domestic regulatory framework.

Privacy legislation, particularly the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, establishes comprehensive requirements for the collection, use, storage, and disclosure of personal information throughout complaints and appeals processes. This legislation requires organisations to implement appropriate safeguards to protect personal information while ensuring that necessary information can be shared to facilitate effective resolution of complaints and appeals and support continuous improvement initiatives.

Anti-discrimination legislation at federal and state levels, including the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, Racial Discrimination Act 1975, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and Age Discrimination Act 2004, establishes protections against discriminatory treatment and requires organisations to provide equal access to complaints and appeals processes regardless of protected characteristics. This legislation supports the diversity and inclusion requirements outlined in Standard 2.5 and ensures that the learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students.

Consumer protection legislation, including the Australian Consumer Law, provides additional protections for VET students as consumers of educational services, establishing rights to fair trading practices, accurate information, and appropriate remedies when services fail to meet reasonable expectations or contractual obligations. This legislation intersects with the information and transparency requirements outlined in Standards 2.1 and 2.2.

Workplace relations legislation, including the Fair Work Act 2009, provides the framework for addressing employment-related complaints and appeals involving staff members, establishing procedures for handling workplace disputes while ensuring compliance with industrial relations requirements and award conditions. This legislation supports the VET workforce management requirements outlined in Standard 3.1.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 establish specific obligations for making reasonable adjustments to support VET students with disability, which intersect with complaints and appeals processes when concerns arise regarding accessibility or accommodation issues. This legislation supports the requirements outlined in Standard 2.4 regarding reasonable adjustments and equal participation in training and assessment.

General Processes

The organisation recognises that despite comprehensive efforts to provide high-quality vocational education and training services that meet the outcome standards established in the regulatory framework, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution, and VET students or other stakeholders may seek to appeal decisions made by the organisation or its representatives. In response to this reality, the organisation has implemented a comprehensive complaints and appeals framework that provides multiple pathways for resolution while ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements and best practice standards.

The complaints and appeals framework is designed around the principle of graduated response, beginning with informal resolution mechanisms that encourage direct dialogue and collaborative problem-solving, progressing through formal internal processes that provide structured investigation and decision-making in accordance with procedural fairness principles, and culminating in external review options that ensure independent oversight when internal processes do not achieve satisfactory outcomes for appellants.

The complaints management system allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation as required under Standard 2.7. This system ensures that all parties are afforded procedural fairness, identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints, and provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved through internal processes. The system is designed to be publicly available and easily accessible by VET students, with appropriate support provided to assist individuals in providing feedback and making complaints.

Informal complaint resolution represents the first level of response and is encouraged for all issues that can potentially be resolved through direct communication, clarification of expectations, or minor adjustments to service delivery. This approach recognises that many concerns arise from misunderstandings, communication gaps, or minor service delivery issues that can be effectively addressed through prompt, collaborative engagement between the parties involved while maintaining the principles of procedural fairness and respect for all stakeholders.

When informal resolution is not successful or appropriate, formal complaint processes provide structured mechanisms for comprehensive investigation and decision-making. These processes ensure that all relevant evidence is gathered and considered, that all parties have appropriate opportunities to present their case in accordance with procedural fairness principles, and that decisions are made by individuals with appropriate authority and expertise while maintaining independence from the subject matter of the complaint.

The appeals management system allows VET students to appeal decisions of the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation where those decisions adversely affect the student as required under Standard 2.8. This system ensures that all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness, specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals, and provides avenues for review by an independent party if requested by the appellant at no or low cost to the appellant.

External review mechanisms provide the final level of oversight and ensure that stakeholders have access to independent review when internal processes do not achieve satisfactory outcomes. These mechanisms are essential for maintaining stakeholder confidence in the integrity and fairness of organisational processes while providing additional quality assurance and accountability measures that support the organisation's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

Throughout all stages of complaints and appeals processes, the organisation maintains comprehensive documentation that enables effective monitoring, analysis, and continuous improvement while ensuring compliance with privacy and confidentiality requirements. This documentation provides essential evidence for regulatory compliance, supports trend analysis and systematic improvement initiatives, and ensures that organisational learning occurs as a result of complaints and appeals experiences in accordance with Standard 4.4.

The organisation recognises that effective complaints and appeals management requires appropriate resource allocation, including dedicated staff time, management oversight, and financial resources to support investigation activities, external review processes, and implementation of corrective actions. This commitment to adequate resourcing demonstrates the organisation's serious commitment to stakeholder satisfaction, continuous improvement, and regulatory compliance while supporting the risk management obligations outlined in Standard 4.3.

RTO's internal complaints process must:

- Include a process for the student to lodge a formal complaint or appeal if a matter cannot be resolved informally
- Ensure that RTO will respond to any complaint/appeal the student makes regarding their dealings with RTO, their education agents or any related party the provider has an arrangement with to deliver the course or related services.
- Commence assessment of the complaint/appeal within 10 working days of lodgement in accordance with the RTO's complaints handling policy and process, and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable
- Ensure the student is given an opportunity to formally present their case at minimal or no cost and be accompanied and assisted by a support person of their choice at any relevant meetings
- Conduct the assessment of the complaint or appeal in a professional, fair and transparent manner
- Ensure the student is given a written statement of the outcome of the appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome
- Keep a written record of the complaint/appeal, including a statement of the outcome and reasons for the outcome.

Staff also have the right to avail themselves of this process.

RTO will approach all complaints and appeals with an open view and attempt to resolve issues through discussion and conciliation. Where a complaint cannot be resolved through discussion and mediation, RTO acknowledges the need for an appropriate external and independent agent to mediate between the parties.

RTO understands individuals' concerns regarding confidentiality and is totally committed to fair treatment respecting and upholding individuals' rights to privacy protection under the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained in The Privacy Act amended 1988 (Cth). RTO respects the privacy rights of all individuals in the workplace. RTO has implemented a program to ensure compliance with the APPs.

RTO understands that despite all its efforts to provide satisfactory services to its students, complaints may occasionally arise that require formal resolution. Students have the opportunity to have any complaint or appeal resolved and resolutions reached that attempt to satisfy all parties. There is no cost to the student unless the referral is made to a third party.

Complaints and appeals may be made in relation to any of the following:

- RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- Any third-party providing services on RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff;
- Assessment/RPL outcome;
- Fees and refunds/re-crediting or
- A student of RTO.

Complaints may be made in relation to any of RTO's services and activities such as:

- The application and enrolment process
- Marketing information
- The quality of training and assessment provided
- Training and assessment matters, including student progress, student support and assessment requirements
- The way someone has been treated
- The actions of another student
- Personal safety
- Customer service and administration
- The issue of result, certificate and statement of attainment
- Learning resources
- Fees and changes
- Student amenities and facilities
- Discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Other issues that may arise

Where a stakeholder is not satisfied with the RTO's decision regarding their complaint, they may appeal against that decision.

RTO is committed to developing a procedurally fair complaints and appeals process that is carried out free from bias, following the principles of natural justice. Through this policy and procedure, RTO ensures that complaints and appeals:

- Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
- Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.

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- Can be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and to take action to prevent the issue from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
 - Are viewed as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works.
 - Are responded to from a view that is client focused and helps RTO to prevent these events from recurring.
 - Ensure that complaints and appeals are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and in complete confidentiality.
 - Are treated confidentially and that the views of each complainant, appellant and respondent are respected and that any party to complaint or appeal is not discriminated against nor victimised.
 - Are dealt with in a fair, equitable and consistent manner.

RTO must ensure that students are fully informed of their right to lodge a complaint or appeal.

Students must be informed that the person(s) responsible for investigating the complaint will not be the subject of the complaint or appeal.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	The Chief Executive Officer bears ultimate accountability for the effectiveness and compliance of the complaints and appeals framework, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to support comprehensive processes that meet the requirements of Standards 2.7 and 2.8. The CEO is responsible for appointing members of the Complaints and Appeals Committee, authorising external review processes, and ensuring that organisational learning occurs as a result of complaints and appeals experiences. The CEO maintains oversight of systemic issues identified through complaints analysis and ensures that appropriate corrective actions are implemented across the organisation to support continuous improvement. The CEO ensures that governing persons act diligently and make informed decisions which facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements and lead a culture of integrity, fairness and transparency in the organisation's delivery of services as required under Standard 4.1.
RTO Manager	The RTO Manager serves as the primary operational leader for complaints and appeals processes, maintaining direct oversight of the Complaints and Appeals Register, ensuring compliance with regulatory timeframes and requirements, and providing regular reporting to senior management on trends, issues, and outcomes. The RTO Manager is responsible for categorising complaints and appeals, assigning appropriate investigation resources, and ensuring that all stakeholders receive appropriate communication throughout the process. The RTO Manager coordinates with external review bodies when required and ensures that staff receive appropriate training and support to fulfil their roles within the complaints and appeals framework. The RTO Manager ensures that outcomes of complaints and appeals are documented and communicated to all parties, and that feedback and complaints are used to inform continuous improvement initiatives as required under Standards 2.7 and 2.8.
Administration Manager	The Administration Manager provides essential administrative support for complaints and appeals processes, including maintaining accurate records, coordinating communication with stakeholders, scheduling meetings and interviews, and ensuring that all documentation requirements are met in accordance with regulatory standards. The Administration Manager is responsible for providing regular progress updates to complainants and appellants, particularly in cases where resolution timeframes extend beyond standard periods, and for ensuring that all parties receive timely notification of outcomes and next steps. The Administration Manager supports the public availability and accessibility of information about

	complaints and appeals processes, ensuring that VET students can easily access relevant information and support.
Trainers and Assessors	Trainers and Assessors serve as the first point of contact for many VET student concerns and complaints, and are responsible for attempting informal resolution of issues within their areas of expertise and authority while maintaining procedural fairness and professional standards. When informal resolution is not successful or appropriate, trainers and assessors must promptly refer matters to appropriate management personnel while providing comprehensive information about the nature of the concern and any attempts at informal resolution. Trainers and assessors have important roles in preventing complaints through proactive communication, clear expectation setting, and responsive student support that aligns with the training and student support requirements outlined in Quality Areas 1 and 2. Trainers and assessors must cooperate fully with formal investigation processes and provide accurate information to support fair and transparent resolution of complaints and appeals.
Complaints and Appeals Committee	The Complaints and Appeals Committee, comprising the CEO, RTO Manager, and one additional member nominated by the CEO, is responsible for formal review and determination of appeals against complaint outcomes and complex assessment appeals. The Committee ensures that appeals are assessed fairly and objectively in accordance with procedural fairness principles, that all relevant evidence is considered, and that decisions are made in accordance with regulatory requirements and organisational policies. The Committee identifies systemic issues that may require organisational attention and makes recommendations for continuous improvement initiatives that address root causes of complaints and appeals. The Committee ensures that avenues for independent review are available when requested by appellants and that such reviews are conducted at no or low cost to the appellant as required under Standard 2.8.
Student Support Staff	Student Support Staff play crucial roles in supporting VET students throughout complaints and appeals processes, providing guidance on available options, explaining procedures and rights, and offering emotional and practical support during what can be stressful experiences. Student Support Staff assist in identifying appropriate support services and reasonable adjustments that may be required to ensure equal access to complaints and appeals processes, particularly for VET students with disability or those from diverse backgrounds. Student Support Staff contribute to the early identification of systemic issues and support the organisation's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment that promotes and supports diversity as required under Standard 2.5.

Third Party Representatives	Third Party Representatives who deliver services on behalf of the organisation have specific responsibilities to cooperate with complaints and appeals processes, provide accurate information when requested, and implement corrective actions as directed by the organisation. Third parties must understand their obligations under the complaints and appeals framework and ensure that their staff are appropriately trained to handle initial concerns and refer matters to the organisation when formal processes are required. Third parties must maintain appropriate records and reporting mechanisms to support the organisation's overall complaints and appeals management system and continuous improvement initiatives.
All Staff Members	All staff members have responsibilities to support the effective operation of complaints and appeals processes, including providing a respectful and supportive environment for individuals raising concerns, cooperating fully with investigation processes, maintaining confidentiality as required, and contributing to continuous improvement initiatives arising from complaints and appeals outcomes. Staff members are responsible for understanding their obligations under this policy and seeking guidance when uncertain about appropriate responses to complaints or concerns. All staff must support the organisation's commitment to procedural fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement while maintaining professional standards and promoting positive stakeholder relationships.

Self-Assurance Audit Checklist

The organisation maintains a comprehensive self-assurance audit checklist to ensure ongoing compliance with Standards 2.7 and 2.8 of the SRTOs 2025 and continuous improvement of complaints and appeals processes. This checklist addresses all aspects of the complaints and appeals framework and is completed annually by the RTO Manager with oversight from the CEO, incorporating feedback from stakeholders and analysis of trends and outcomes.

Complaints Management System Compliance: The audit verifies that the complaints management system allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation as required under Standard 2.7. The audit confirms that all parties are afforded procedural fairness, that reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints are identified and maintained, and that avenues for further action are available where complaints are not resolved through internal processes. The audit examines whether information about how to provide feedback and make complaints is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students.

Appeals Management System Compliance: The audit assesses the effectiveness of the appeals management system in allowing VET students to appeal decisions of the

organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation where those decisions adversely affect the student as required under Standard 2.8. The audit verifies that all parties to appeals are afforded procedural fairness, that reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals are specified and maintained, and that avenues for review by an independent party are available if requested by the appellant at no or low cost.

Procedural Fairness Implementation: The audit reviews the consistent application of procedural fairness principles throughout all complaints and appeals processes, including verification that all parties have appropriate opportunities to present their case, that decision-makers are free from bias and conflicts of interest, and that transparent processes are followed while maintaining appropriate confidentiality protections. The audit examines whether support is provided to VET students to help them provide feedback and make complaints or appeals.

Documentation and Communication: The audit examines the comprehensiveness and accuracy of complaints and appeals documentation, including the Complaints and Appeals Register, individual case files, correspondence records, and decision documentation. The audit verifies that outcomes of complaints and appeals are documented and communicated to all relevant parties as required, and that information about complaints and appeals processes is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students.

Timeframe Compliance: The audit assesses compliance with reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints and actioning appeals, including analysis of any cases where timeframes were exceeded and the reasons for such delays. The audit examines whether appropriate communication was provided to stakeholders when timeframes could not be met and whether additional support was offered during extended processes.

Continuous Improvement Integration: The audit reviews evidence that complaints and appeals outcomes are being effectively utilised to inform continuous improvement as required under Standards 2.7 and 2.8. This includes analysis of trends and patterns, identification of systemic issues, implementation of corrective actions, and monitoring of the effectiveness of improvement initiatives. The audit assesses whether learning from complaints and appeals experiences is being shared appropriately across the organisation and integrated into risk management and strategic planning processes.

External Review Utilisation: The audit examines the organisation's experience with external review processes, including the frequency of requests for independent review, outcomes of external reviews, implementation of external recommendations, and stakeholder satisfaction with external review processes. This analysis helps identify whether internal processes are functioning effectively and whether any improvements are needed to enhance stakeholder confidence and reduce reliance on external review mechanisms.

Stakeholder Support and Accessibility: The audit assesses the effectiveness of support provided to VET students throughout complaints and appeals processes, including evaluation of accessibility arrangements, reasonable adjustments for VET students with disability, cultural safety considerations for First Nations people, and support for VET students from diverse backgrounds. The audit examines whether information and processes are provided in appropriate formats and languages to ensure equal access for all stakeholders.

Third Party Integration: The audit reviews the integration of third party arrangements into complaints and appeals processes, including verification that third parties understand their obligations, that appropriate reporting and communication mechanisms are in place, and that VET students can access complaints and appeals processes regardless of which entity is providing services. The audit examines whether third party performance in complaints and appeals management is appropriately monitored and managed.

Regulatory Compliance: The audit confirms compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, including ASQA standards, ESOS National Code requirements for international students, privacy legislation compliance, anti-discrimination law adherence, and consumer protection regulation compliance. The audit verifies that any regulatory changes or updates have been appropriately incorporated into organisational policies and procedures and that staff training has been updated accordingly.

Procedures

	Procedure Steps	Responsibility	Reference
1	Informal Complaint	Trainer Administration	
2	Formal Complaint	CEO Trainer RTO Manager	

The complaints and appeals policy and procedure and form are made available to all students and potential students by directly contacting RTO, through RTO's website, pre-enrolment and Student Handbooks.

Where possible, all informal attempts shall be made to resolve the issue (informal complaint) this may include advice, discussions, meeting with the student, emails and general mediation in relation to the issue and the student's issue. Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues, but once a student has submitted a formal complaint/appeal, the following procedures must be followed.

If a student is uncomfortable with speaking directly to the person involved or the informal process does not resolve the issue to the student's satisfaction, the formal process should be followed as described below.

Where a student is unhappy with the outcome of an assessment decision, this will be dealt with under assessment appeals.

Formal Complaints

Any student, potential student, employee or third party may submit a formal complaint to RTO with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process unless it is referred to a third party. Complainants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies/persons at any point of the complaint and appeals process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's costs unless authorised by the CEO.

Any person wishing to submit a formal complaint can do so by completing the Complaints and Appeals Form and state their case, providing as many details as possible. This form can be obtained by contacting the administration staff at RTO, or through the RTO website.

All formally submitted complaints are submitted to the RTO Manager.

Once a formal complaint is received it will be entered into the Complaints and Appeals Register and written acknowledgment will send to the complainant which is monitored by

the RTO Manager regularly. The information to be contained and updated within the register is as follows:

- The name of the complainant
- Date of the complaint
- Type of complaint
- Name of investigating officer/business unit assigned to deal with the complaint
- Response from those involved in the allegations
- Analysis of the matter
- Outcome of complaint
- Action recommended addressing systemic issues (if any)
- Time taken to investigate the complaint
- Complainant satisfaction with the outcome.

A student may be assisted or accompanied by a support person at any face to face meetings regardless of the nature of the issue or complaint throughout the process.

The RTO Manager will then refer the matter to the appropriate staff members or CEO to resolve or decide on the complaint within 10 working days and keep the complainant informed of any decisions or outcomes concluded, or processes in place to deal with the complaint.

Where a decision is expected to take longer than 60 days, RTO will advise the student in writing of the delay and include the reasons for the delay. Thereafter the student will be provided with weekly updates in writing of the progress of the complaint or appeal. Weekly updates to both complainant and appellant will be provided by the Administration Manager. If the decision is taking more than 60 days, the matter can be forwarded to an external complaint resolution organisation as well for resolution.

Once a decision has been reached, the RTO Manager informs all parties involved in writing. Where the complaint process does not find in favour of the learner, students must be notified within 10 working days of concluding the internal review that they have the right to appeal. To appeal a decision, RTO must receive, in writing, grounds of the appeal within 10 days of the date of the notice of the decision.

The RTO Manager ensures that RTO will act immediately on any complaint where the complaints process results in a decision that supports the student. RTO will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventive action that is required and advise the student of the outcome.

Copies of all documentation, outcomes and further action required will be placed on the Complaints and Appeals Register by the RTO Manager or representative and also in the student's file.

Appealing

All students have the right to appeal decisions made by RTO where reasonable grounds can be established. The areas in which a student may appeal a decision made by RTO may include:

- Any other conclusion/decision that is made after a complaint has been dealt with RTO in the first instance as described in the complaints process above. This is referred to as a general appeal.
- Assessments decisions as set out below (assessment appeals).

To activate the appeals process, the student must complete a Complaints and Appeals Form that is to include a summary of the grounds the appeal is based upon. The reason the student feels the decision is unfair is to be clearly explained and help and support with this process can be gained from RTO staff. With regard to general appeals, The Complaints and Appeals Committee determines the validity of the appeal and organises a meeting with all parties involved in the matter and attempts to seek resolution where appropriate.

The process for all formally lodged appeals will begin within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee ensures RTO acts on any substantiated appeal.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee is made up of three people; the three people will be selected from this group: the CEO and RTO Manager and one other person nominated by the CEO.

General Appeals

Where a student has appealed a decision or outcome of a formal complaint, they are required to notify RTO in writing within 20 working days of the grounds of their appeal. Any supporting documentation should also be attached to the appeal

The appeal shall be lodged through the Complaints and Appeals Committee and they shall record the details of the appeal in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee will be notified and will seek details regarding the initial documentation of the complaint and make a decision based on the grounds of the appeal.

The student will be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decisions, and the Complaints and Appeals Register updated. The student will also be provided with the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify RTO if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

Assessment Appeals

Where a student wishes to appeal an assessment, they are required to notify their Trainer in the first instance. Where appropriate their Trainer may decide to re-assess the student to ensure a fair and equitable decision is gained. The Trainer shall complete a written report regarding the re-assessment outlining the reasons why assessment was - or was not - granted.

If this is still not to the student's satisfaction, the student may formally lodge an appeal. They will lodge this with the Complaints and Appeals Committee and the appeal will be entered in the Complaints and Appeals Register.

The RTO Manager will be notified and will seek details from the Trainer involved and any other relevant parties. A decision will be made regarding the appeal either indicating the assessment decision stands or details of a possible re-assessment by a third party. The third party will be another Trainer appointed by RTO.

The student will be notified in writing of the outcome with reasons for the decision, and the Complaints and Appeals Register updated. The student will also be provided the option of activating the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The student is required to notify RTO if they wish to proceed with the external appeals process.

External Appeals

If not satisfied with the decision in stage 2, the complainant may request that the matter be further reviewed by an external dispute resolution process, by the body appointed by RTO for that purpose.

The details of these external bodies are as follows:

LEADR Complaints, Appeals and Resolution Department
<https://www.leadriama.org/aboutleadr/compliments-suggestions-and-complaints>

Or

By contact with the Legal Aid Department in your relevant state.

The division of the expenses associated with the mediation e.g. mediator's fee, room hire and possibly travel expenses are to be shared equally between RTO and the complainant.

The RTO will immediately implement recommendations arising from the external review within at least 10 working days of the receipt of the recommendations.

Further information

If a client (student or other party) is still dissatisfied with the decision of RTO, they may wish to seek advice or make a complaint about RTO to ASQA directly. If, after RTO's internal complaints and appeals processes have been completed, the complainant still believes RTO is breaching or has breached its legal requirements, the complainant can submit a complaint to ASQA by completing the "Complaint about a training organisation operating under ASQA's jurisdiction" form. While ASQA will not be able to act as the complainants advocate the lodgement of the complaint will inform ASQA's risk assessment of RTO and a complaint audit may be conducted.

Contact details for ASQA are:

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Melbourne - Level 6, 595 Collins Street

Brisbane - Level 7, 215 Adelaide Street

Sydney - Level 10, 255 Elizabeth Street

Canberra - Ground Floor, 64 Northbourne Avenue

Perth - Level 11, 250 St Georges Terrace Adelaide - Level 5, 115 Grenfell Street

Hobart - Level 11, 188 Collins Street Telephone: 1300 701 801

Email: complaintsteam@asqa.gov.au

Website: www.asqa.gov.au

RTO Staff may also use this complaints and appeals process. RTO will use all complaints as an opportunity for continuous improvement.

This policy and procedure is compliant with VQF and National Code Standards in providing a process for complaints and appeals to be heard and actioned where necessary.

The RTO Complaints and Appeals policy - principles of natural justice and procedural fairness

- o All parties to a complaint or appeal have the opportunity to put their case and have this properly considered
- o Any allegation against an RTO staff member or member of a subcontractor party is made known to that person
- o Investigations and decisions are made by persons who do not exercise bias
- o A complainant should feel confident that they will not suffer any discrimination as a result of using the complaint or appeal process
- o Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent of the people that need to be directly involved in the complaint or appeal process.
- o All the information regarding this policy can be found:
 - On RTO's website
 - In the Pre-Enrolment Handbook and Learner Handbook
 - In the Staff Handbook
 - In the Letter of Offer and Agreement
 - During Orientation
- o The student can be supported or accompanied by an independent person or friend during the complaints and appeals process.
- o It is normal RTO policy that whilst a student is going through any formal complaint or appeals process that the student remains enrolled at RTO and continues their studies and assessments in the normal way. It should be noted that if the complaint or appeal has resulted in the student being suspended or excluded due to a breach of the Student Code of Conduct, then the suspension or exclusion shall continue until either it has expired, or the result of the complaint or appeal is decided in the students favour.
- o RTO has a fair and transparent informal and formal complaints and appeals process, but should the student require it, access is available to an independent mediator who can review the complaint and/or appeals process.

Important: see note at beginning of the section on External Appeals Procedure below.

NOTE: If the outcome is in the appellant's favour then RTO will implement any changes recommended by the adjudicator immediately and advise the appellant of the outcome and actions taken.

General Process to lodge a complaint or internal appeal

The process to be followed for an external appeal is documented by LEADR for Students.

The following actions must be completed for a complaint or internal appeal:

	Process
Availability of Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures	The complaints and appeals policy and procedure and form are made available to all students and potential students by directly contacting RTO, through the RTO's website, pre-enrolment and Learner handbooks.
Informal Complaints	<p>Where possible all informal attempts shall be made to resolve the issue (informal complaint).</p> <p>This may include advice, discussions, meeting with the student, emails and general mediation in relation to the issue and the student's issue.</p> <p>Any staff member can be involved in this informal process to resolve issues but once a student has placed a formal complaint / appeal the following procedures must be followed.</p>
Receive and acknowledge the Formal complaint	<p>Complaints</p> <p>Any student, potential student, employee or third party may submit a formal complaint to RTO with the reasonable expectation that all complaints will be treated with integrity and privacy. There is no cost for the complaints process unless it is referred to a third party</p> <p>Complainants have the right to access advice and support from independent external agencies/persons at any point of the complaint and appeals process. Use of external services will be at the complainant's costs unless authorised by the CEO.</p>

	<p>Any person wishing to submit a formal complaint or appeal can do so by completing the Complaints and Appeals Form and state their case providing as many details as possible. This form can be obtained by contacting Administration staff at RTO, or through the RTO website.</p> <p>a. As per policy, complaints are to be made in writing by the complainant.</p> <p>b. The RTO Manager should review all complaints upon receipt.</p> <p>c. Acknowledge receipt of complaint in writing by sending a letter to complainant.</p> <p>d. Record details of the complaint on the Complaints and Appeals Register.</p>
Review of Complaint or Appeal	Once a complaint or appeal is received and checked for it should be forwarded to the review person (identified in the table below) for review.
Cost	There will be no charge to the complainant or appellant for the lodgement or presentation of their case. Incidental expenses for attending RTO offices to lodge the document or attend a meeting or any charges incurred (e.g. telephone) will NOT be reimbursed.
Presentation of case	All complainants and appellants must be given the opportunity to formally present their case and to be accompanied by a friend or third party to support them (and if language is an issue to help them present their case). The cost to accompany that friend/third party will be at their own cost.

<p>Determination</p>	<p>The Review Person may gather evidence and constitute a review committee as they see fit.</p> <p>This process must be commenced within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal (and receipt of all supporting evidence) and complete the process within a reasonable time period usually 10- 15 working days.</p> <p>If further evidence is requested, then the Review Person must communicate with the complainant or appellant as soon as possible and within 5 working days asking for evidence.</p> <p>The process will be put on hold until the evidence is received.</p> <p>How a decision is reached will be advised in the written response to the complainant or appellant.</p>
<p>Timescale</p>	<p>The complaint or appeal should normally be commenced within 10 working days of the receipt of the completed form and associated supporting material. See "Determination" above in relation to request of supplementary information.</p>
<p>Appeal following a complaint</p>	<p>If the complainant is not happy with the decision, they may appeal. That appeal is on the fairness and objectivity of the decision.</p>
<p>Formal response to a complaint</p>	<p>A template for a formal written response has been developed for when the complaint is accepted or rejected.</p> <p>This included the complainant's right to access the Internal Appeals process.</p>

Formal response to an appeal	A template for a formal written response has been developed for when the appeal is accepted or rejected. This includes the complainant's right to access the External Appeal process.
Documentation	<p>All documentation relating to a formal complaint or appeal must be recorded on the student file.</p> <p>This must include the initial form, supporting evidence, meeting minutes, copy of correspondence with all concerned parties. This information will be kept confidently and stored securely for 7 years.</p> <p>Documentation of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes is securely maintained. Potential causes of complaints and appeals are identified, and RTO takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of re-occurrence.</p>
Complaints and Appeals Register	All formal complaints or appeals must be logged in the Complaints and Appeals Register
Learning	A complaint or appeal is a learning opportunity for RTO. The outcome will be seen as an input to the continuous improvement process. Any decisions that support students will be immediately implemented

<p>Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015</p>	<p>Subject to Clause 6.6, to be compliant with Standard 6 RTO has the following procedures in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations involving the conduct of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) RTO, its trainers, assessors or other staff; b) a third-party providing services on RTO's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff; or c) a student of RTO. 2. RTO has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by RTO or a third-party providing services on the RTO's behalf. 3. RTO's complaints policy and appeals policy ensure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process; b) are publicly available; c) set out the procedure for making a complaint or requesting an appeal; d) complaints and requests for an appeal are acknowledged in writing and finalised as soon as practicable; and e) provide for review by an appropriate party independent of RTO and the complainant or appellant, at the request of the individual making the complaint or appeal, if the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal. 4. Where RTO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, RTO: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) informs the complainant or appellant in writing, including reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required; and
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	b) regularly updates the complainant or appellant on the progress of the matter.
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Categorisation of complaint or appeal

The nature of the complaint or appeal will be categorised as follows:	Matter referred to the following:
Administrative Complaint. Complaints against the delivery of administrative and support services and facilities	RTO Manager
Academic Complaint. Complaints against teachers/trainers, training delivery and assessment and the like.	RTO Manager
Student Conduct Complaint. Complaints against misconduct/ misbehaviour of students.	RTO Manager
Appeal	CEO of RTO

Continuous Improvement

The organisation recognises that effective complaints and appeals management is not merely about resolving individual issues but represents a valuable source of information for driving systematic improvement across all areas of operation in accordance with the continuous improvement requirements outlined in Standard 4.4. The continuous improvement framework integrated into this policy ensures that every complaint and appeal is viewed as an opportunity to enhance service quality, address systemic issues, and strengthen organisational performance while meeting the regulatory requirements for using feedback and complaints to inform continuous improvement.

Data collection and analysis form the foundation of the continuous improvement approach, with comprehensive information gathered about the nature, frequency, and outcomes of complaints and appeals across all operational areas. This data is systematically analysed to identify trends, patterns, and emerging issues that may indicate systemic problems requiring organisational attention and corrective action. The analysis includes examination of feedback from VET students, staff, industry representatives, VET regulators, State and Territory training authorities, and employers of current or former VET students as required under Standard 4.4.

Regular reporting mechanisms ensure that complaints and appeals data is effectively communicated to relevant stakeholders, including senior management, academic staff, administrative personnel, and governance bodies. These reports highlight key trends, identify areas of concern, track the effectiveness of improvement initiatives implemented in response to previous complaints and appeals experiences, and support the organisation's commitment to transparency and accountability in service delivery.

Root cause analysis is conducted for recurring complaints or complex issues to identify underlying factors that may be contributing to problems and to develop targeted interventions that address these fundamental causes rather than merely treating symptoms. This analytical approach ensures that improvement efforts are focused on areas where they will have the greatest impact on preventing future complaints and enhancing stakeholder satisfaction while supporting the risk management requirements outlined in Standard 4.3.

Implementation monitoring ensures that corrective actions identified through complaints and appeals analysis are effectively implemented and that their impact is appropriately measured and evaluated. This systematic approach to improvement implementation ensures that organisational learning occurs as a result of complaints and appeals experiences and that continuous enhancement of service quality is achieved in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation requirements established in the regulatory framework.

Stakeholder feedback is actively sought regarding the effectiveness of complaints and appeals processes themselves, with regular surveys and feedback sessions conducted to gather insights about stakeholder experiences and suggestions for process improvements. This feedback is systematically reviewed and incorporated into ongoing enhancement of the complaints and appeals framework, ensuring that processes remain accessible, effective, and responsive to stakeholder needs.

External benchmarking activities compare the organisation's complaints and appeals performance with industry standards and best practices, identifying opportunities for innovation and improvement that may not be apparent through internal analysis alone. This external perspective helps ensure that the organisation maintains contemporary approaches to complaints and appeals management and continues to enhance its performance relative to sector expectations and regulatory requirements.

Staff development and training programs ensure that personnel involved in complaints and appeals processes have current knowledge and skills to effectively fulfil their responsibilities under the regulatory framework. Regular training updates address regulatory changes, best practice developments, and lessons learned from organisational experiences, ensuring that staff capabilities continue to evolve and improve while supporting the professional development requirements outlined in Standard 3.1.

Integration with broader quality assurance processes ensures that complaints and appeals outcomes are considered alongside other performance indicators and feedback mechanisms to provide a comprehensive view of organisational effectiveness. This integrated approach

supports the systematic monitoring and evaluation requirements outlined in Standard 4.4 and ensures that complaints and appeals management contributes to overall quality improvement initiatives.

Confidentiality and Privacy Statement

The organisation is committed to maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality and privacy protection throughout all complaints and appeals processes, recognising that stakeholder confidence in these protections is essential for ensuring that individuals feel comfortable raising concerns and participating fully in resolution processes. This commitment aligns with the organisation's broader obligations under privacy legislation and supports the creation of a safe and inclusive learning environment as required under Standard 2.5.

Personal information collected during complaints and appeals processes is managed in strict accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and the Australian Privacy Principles, with clear limitations placed on collection, use, disclosure, and retention of personal information to ensure that privacy rights are fully protected while enabling effective resolution of complaints and appeals. The organisation maintains appropriate mechanisms for lawfully collecting and analysing data as required under Standard 4.4 while ensuring that individual privacy is protected.

Access to complaints and appeals information is strictly limited to personnel who have legitimate needs to access this information for the purposes of investigation, decision-making, or implementation of corrective actions. All personnel with access to this information receive appropriate training regarding confidentiality obligations and are required to maintain strict confidentiality except where disclosure is specifically authorised or required by law, regulatory obligations, or procedural fairness requirements.

Information sharing with external parties is carefully controlled and occurs only with appropriate consent from affected individuals or where required by law, regulatory obligations, or external review processes. When information must be shared with external parties, appropriate safeguards are implemented to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that information is used only for authorised purposes while supporting the organisation's commitment to transparency and accountability.

Documentation and record storage systems incorporate comprehensive security measures to prevent unauthorised access, disclosure, or loss of confidential information. These systems include both physical and electronic security measures that are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure ongoing effectiveness in protecting sensitive information while enabling appropriate access for legitimate purposes including regulatory reporting and continuous improvement activities.

Retention and disposal of complaints and appeals records follows established protocols that ensure information is retained for appropriate periods to meet regulatory requirements and organisational needs while ensuring secure disposal when retention is no longer required. These protocols include specific requirements for destruction of both physical and electronic records to prevent unauthorised recovery of disposed information while maintaining compliance with audit and reporting obligations.

Special considerations apply to information relating to VET students with disability, First Nations people, and other individuals from diverse backgrounds to ensure that cultural sensitivity and appropriate protections are maintained throughout complaints and appeals processes. This includes recognition of specific privacy considerations and cultural protocols that may apply to particular communities or individuals.

Publication

This policy and procedure is made widely available to ensure that all stakeholders have comprehensive access to information about their rights and obligations within the complaints and appeals framework, supporting the requirement that information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students as specified in Standard 2.7. The policy is published on the organisation's website in a prominent and easily accessible location, with clear navigation paths that enable stakeholders to quickly locate relevant information when needed.

Physical copies of the policy are available at all organisational locations, including reception areas, student services centres, and staff common areas, ensuring that individuals who prefer or require hard copy access can obtain policy information without barriers. Staff members are trained to assist stakeholders in accessing policy information and explaining key provisions when requested, supporting the organisation's commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

The policy is included in all student handbooks, pre-enrolment information packages, and orientation materials to ensure that VET students receive comprehensive information about complaints and appeals processes before commencing their studies. This proactive approach helps establish clear expectations and enables students to understand their rights and options should concerns arise during their studies, supporting the information requirements outlined in Standards 2.1 and 2.2.

Information about appeals processes is similarly made publicly available and easily accessible, ensuring that VET students understand how to appeal adverse decisions through the appeals management system as required under Standard 2.8. This includes clear explanations of timeframes, procedures, rights to independent review, and the availability of such reviews at no or low cost to appellants.

Staff induction and training programs include comprehensive coverage of the complaints and appeals policy to ensure that all personnel understand their roles and responsibilities within the framework and can provide appropriate guidance to stakeholders when requested. Regular refresher training ensures that staff knowledge remains current and comprehensive, supporting the workforce management requirements outlined in Standard 3.1.

External stakeholders, including industry partners, regulatory bodies, and community members, have access to policy information through the organisation's website and can

request additional information or clarification through established communication channels. This transparency demonstrates the organisation's commitment to accountability and stakeholder engagement while supporting the integrity and transparency requirements outlined in Standard 4.1.

Policy updates and revisions are communicated promptly to all stakeholders through multiple channels, including website updates, email notifications, staff meetings, and student communications, ensuring that all parties have access to current information about complaints and appeals processes and any changes that may affect their rights or obligations. This communication includes updates to timeframes, procedures, external review arrangements, and any other significant changes to the framework.

Accessibility features are incorporated into all published materials to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats for VET students with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and other individuals who may require specific accommodations to access information effectively. This includes consideration of visual, auditory, cognitive, and cultural accessibility requirements.

Review processes

The policy will be reviewed annually by the RTO Manager.

Flow Chart Diagram

The complaints and appeals process follows a systematic flow that ensures appropriate escalation and comprehensive resolution of all matters raised by stakeholders while maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements and procedural fairness principles:

Initial Concern Identification → Informal Resolution Attempt → Formal Complaint Lodgement → Procedural Fairness Assessment → Complaint Investigation and Evidence Gathering → Complaint Decision and Communication → Appeal Lodgement (if required) → Appeal Assessment with Procedural Fairness → Appeal Decision and Communication → Independent External Review (if requested) → Implementation of Final Decision → Continuous Improvement Integration → Monitoring and Evaluation

This systematic flow ensures that all complaints and appeals progress through appropriate stages with adequate opportunities for resolution at each level while maintaining compliance with Standards 2.7 and 2.8 and supporting the organisation's commitment to procedural fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement. The flow chart provides clear guidance for both stakeholders and staff regarding the progression of complaints and appeals and the various options available for resolution.

Each stage of the process includes specific timeframes, responsibility assignments, and communication requirements to ensure that all parties understand their roles and obligations and that matters progress efficiently toward resolution. The flow chart identifies key decision points where matters may be resolved or escalated to the next level of review, including points where independent external review may be requested by appellants.

Documentation requirements are integrated throughout the flow to ensure that comprehensive records are maintained and that organisational learning occurs as a result of each complaint and appeal experience. This systematic approach to process management and documentation ensures that the organisation meets all regulatory requirements while continuously improving its service delivery and stakeholder satisfaction.

Support mechanisms are embedded throughout the process flow to ensure that VET students receive appropriate assistance and that reasonable adjustments are made where required to ensure equal access to complaints and appeals processes. This includes identification of points where additional support services may be required and mechanisms for ensuring that procedural fairness is maintained for all parties involved.