



Managing RTO Complaints and Appeals

Claire Werner




What is your experience of complaints?









Objectives

The purpose of today’s workshop is to examine and discuss key elements of good management of complaints and appeals in RTOs. We will focus on:



- What makes a good process: principles & procedures
- What gets in the way of a good process
- What are the rights of our learners
- What happens when a third party is involved
- Learning from complaints and appeals
- Mediators and conflict resolution specialist
- How to avoid complaint escalation





Links to the Standards

- Complaints and Appeals Management - Standard 6
- Learners' rights – Clauses 4.1, 5.1 and 5.2
- Third Party Involvement – Clauses 2.3 and 2.4
- Quality Assurance – Clauses 2.1 and 2.2



What is the difference?

Complaints



Appeals



The complaints / appeals management process?

The principles that support a good complaints and appeals management process are:






The complaints / appeals management process?

The principles that support a good complaints and appeals management process are:

- Fairness
- Confidentiality
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Efficiency





What do all parties to a complaint or appeal need?

A process that:



What do all parties to a complaint or appeal need?

A process that:

- Is timely and cost-effective
- Is a user-friendly process
- Allows parties to be heard and respected
- Offers an explanation or apology
- Acts as soon as possible
- Has clear delegations and responsibilities
- Has a simple system to record complaint and outcome data
- Has clear accountabilities for complaint handling and organisational improvements.
- Builds reputation and public confidence in the organisation



What gets in the way?





What do the Standards for RTOs say about Complaints Management?





Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
made under subsection 185(1) and subsection 186(1) of the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (the Act).

Compilation No.3


Compilation date: 1 July 2019

Includes amendments up to: Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) Amendment 2019 (No. 1) [F2019L00445]

Standard 6.
Complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively.




What does this mean for your RTO?



Please refer to page **104** of the Users' Guide



USERS' GUIDE
Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015





Enabling Complaints and Appeals

- The first step to an effective complaint and appeals handling system is the enabling of complaints or appeals - make the processes:
 - Visible
 - Accessible
 - Valued
 - Supported by management



What would enable complaints and appeals in my RTO?

Activity - Think about the spoken and unspoken ‘rules’ about complaints and appeals in your RTO.

- What ‘rules’ come to mind that impact complaints or appeals being raised?
- What ‘rules’ are useful, and what could be improved?
- What’s 1-2 organisational cultural changes that would effectively enable complaint and appeal opportunities.



10 minutes



The Magic in Complaints and Appeals

Provides us with **opportunities** to learn and improve...







Benefits

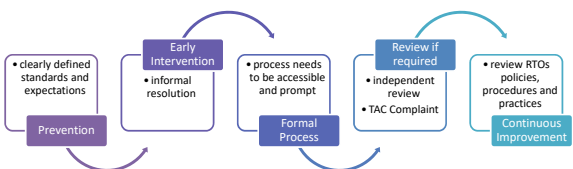
For every successfully managed complaint and appeal there are number of benefits for:

- Community
- Learners
- Providers

<https://youtu.be/ncXPYG9saHI>



Effective Complaint and Appeals Handling Systems



Source: Training Accreditation Council Fact Sheet: RTO Complaints and Appeals 2021



The people perspective



<https://youtu.be/JxJ2FRyUtZE>



What is the situation in my RTO?



Activity – Spotlight

- What complaint or appeals management processes are in place at my RTO?
- What is working well, and what could be improved?
- Are there any obvious gaps we need to work on?



10 minutes



Who else may be involved?

- Mediators
- Other ways to sort it out: Independent third parties
- How to access these services





How to avoid escalation of a complaint or appeal

Activity – Reflection

	Prevention	Early Intervention	Normal Processes	Review if Required	Continuous Improvement
What would cause a complaint or escalate to regulator then how to the regulator?					
What can be done at each stage of complaint management process to avoid this escalation?					

15 minutes

Slide 20

CW6



Need to work on this one

Claire Werner, 13/04/2021





Questions



References and Resources

- The Standards for RTOs (1 July 2019)
- TAC Users' Guide - Standards for RTOs
- TAC Fact Sheet: RTO Complaints and Appeals
- AHRC *Good Practice Guidelines for internal complaint processes* (November 2014)
- Ombudsman WA: Effective handling of complaints made to your organisation
- Legal Aid: Mediation and Dispute Resolution Services



Contact us

Training Accreditation Council
Locked Bag 16
OSBORNE PARK DC WA 6916
Telephone: (08) 9224 6510
Email: tac@dtwd.wa.gov.au
Web: www.tac.wa.gov.au



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