

Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

1.Purpose

To ensure all stakeholders have access to a fair, transparent, and timely process for lodging complaints and appeals, in alignment with **Outcome Standards 2.7 ,2.8 and 4.4.**

2.Scope

Applies to learners, staff and any individual interacting with the RTO.

3.Definitions

- **Complaint:** Dissatisfaction with services, conduct, or decisions.
- **Appeal:** Request to review a decision made by the RTO.
- **Procedural Fairness:** Ensuring impartiality, transparency, and the right to be heard.

4.Responsibilities

- **RTO CEO:** Responsible for consistent implementation for this procedure. Oversees resolution of complex or escalated matters and communicates with complainants if the resolution process exceeds 45 business days. The CEO also approves the engagement of independent third-party reviewers when necessary.
- **Compliance Co-ordinator:** Responsible for acknowledging formal complaints within five business days and assigning an impartial staff member to investigate the matter. They ensure procedural fairness is upheld throughout the process, monitor timelines, and maintain accurate records in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- **RTO Staff:** To support learners and stakeholders during the complaints and appeals process. They must oversee all matters with fairness, maintain confidentiality, and demonstrate professionalism. Staff are also responsible for assisting with informal resolutions and referring unresolved issues to the Compliance Co-ordinator.
- **Learners/Stakeholders:** Responsible for engaging respectfully and honestly throughout the complaints and appeals process. They must provide clear and complete information when lodging a complaint or appeal, cooperate with investigations, and follow the outlined procedures. If dissatisfied with the outcome, they are expected to submit appeals within the specified timeframe.

5.Procedure

5.1: Informal Resolution

- The first step encourages learners to resolve issues directly with the person involved, promoting open and respectful communication. If needed, FPWNT admin officer can assist by facilitating a constructive dialogue between the parties. When the matter is resolved informally, there is no need for a formal record, although staff may note the interaction for internal purposes if appropriate.

5.2: Formal Complaint

- If informal efforts do not lead to a resolution, learners can submit a formal complaint using the RTO's official form or via email. Once received, the complaint is acknowledged within 5 business days by Compliance Co-ordinator. An impartial investigation is then conducted by an uninvolved member, aiming to resolve the issue within 20 business days. If the process takes longer than 45 business days, the complainant is notified in writing by RTO CEO and kept updated on progress until the matter is resolved.

5.3: Appeal

- Should the complainant disagree with the outcome of the formal complaint, they may lodge an appeal within **20 business days of the decision**. The appeal is reviewed by someone who was not involved in the original decision, ensuring impartiality. A decision is communicated **within 20 business days**. If the issue remains unresolved, the learner is offered a review by an independent third party at no cost.

5.4: Independent Review

- When a complaint or appeal cannot be resolved internally, the RTO will arrange for an independent third-party reviewer to assess the matter. This process requires a written agreement between the RTO and the external reviewer to ensure transparency and accountability. The findings from the review are formally documented, and appropriate actions are taken based on the recommendations.

6.Documentation

- Complaint form.
- Appeal form.
- Complaint and Appeal Register.

7.Recordkeeping and Continuous Improvement

- All complaints and appeals are recorded in Complain and Appeal Register, as per Record Management Procedure. These records are not only maintained for compliance but also used to identify patterns and areas for improvement. Insights gained from complaint outcomes contribute to the RTO's ongoing quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts.

8.Accessibility

- This procedure is available on the staff shared server and the TeamSite, website and learner handbook for easy access by all relevant personnel.

9.Version and Approval

Version No	Policy Name	Status	Date Approval	Review Date
1	Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure	Approved – CEO, RTO	August 2025	August 2026