Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

ASQA

Practice Guide

Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Practice Guide

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Standard 2.7: Feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement of the NVR registered training organisation.

Performance indicators:

An ***NVR registered training organisation*** demonstrates:

a. it operates a complaints management system that:

   i. allows feedback and complaints about the organisation, any third parties, and any person employed or contracted by the organisation;

   ii. ensures all parties are afforded procedural fairness;

   iii. identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints; and

   iv. provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved;

b. information about how to provide feedback and make complaints through the complaints management system is publicly available and easily accessible by ***VET students***;

c. VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints;

d. outcomes of complaints are documented and communicated to all parties of the complaint; and

e. feedback and complaints are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

Example activities and considerations for compliance

- You have information publicly available on how to provide feedback and complaints about your RTO's ***services***, including those delivered by third parties. This includes information about the timeframes for acknowledging, resolving and communicating the outcomes of complaints.

- You can demonstrate the mechanisms and channels you have in place to receive and action feedback and complaints from various stakeholders including students, employers, staff and third parties.
- You can demonstrate that you test VET students' awareness and satisfaction with feedback and complaints processes and outcomes.
- You can show that artificial intelligence (AI) tools used for complaint management are tested to ensure they do not disadvantage any student group based on language, cultural background, or accessibility needs.
- You can show how the staff responsible for processing feedback and complaints ensure that matters are investigated promptly and impartially, uphold the principles of natural justice and ensure procedural fairness.
- You have systems to document and communicate the outcomes of complaints, and store complaint documentation securely.
- You can demonstrate the approach you take to understand the root cause of a complaint and how this informs actions, including policies and processes (or amendments to these), leading to continuous improvement of the services you provide – for example, identifying trends from complaints received and addressing this across all areas of operations.
- You provide opportunities for complaints to be escalated and complaint outcomes to be reviewed. Where a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, you have documented systems for providing the complainant with avenues for further review.

Known risks to quality outcomes

- Failing to recognise complaints as opportunities to improve training and assessment services.
- Not ensuring third parties escalate complaints they receive about services delivered on your behalf.
- Failing to capture complaints and feedback received in informal settings, such as when students are having verbal conversations with trainers and assessors.
- Failing to ensure that AI tools used in complaints management processes have adequate consent and security safeguards to collect and store sensitive information.
- Failing to allow all parties involved in a complaint the opportunity to respond.
- Not identifying and acting on trends from the complaints received.
- Not considering the root cause or potential impact of a complaint and how it may be relevant across other areas of your operations.

Standard 2.8: Effective appeal processes are available to VET students where decisions of the NVR registered training organisation or a third party adversely affect the student.

Performance indicators:

An ***NVR registered training organisation*** demonstrates:

a. it operates an appeals management system that:

i. 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;

ii. ensures all parties to the appeal are afforded procedural fairness;

iii. specifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals; and

iv. provides avenues for review by an independent party, if requested by the appellant (at no or low cost to the appellant);

b. information about how to appeal an adverse decision through the appeals management system is publicly available and easily accessible by VET students;

c. outcomes of appeals are documented by the organisation and communicated to the appellant; and

d. the outcomes of appeals are used by the organisation to inform continuous improvement.

Example activities and considerations for compliance

- You can demonstrate that students are informed about, and understand, their appeal rights. This includes clear, publicly available information about the appeals process and timeframes for acknowledging, resolving and communicating the outcomes of appeals.
- You have multiple avenues available to students to lodge appeals about decisions (such as assessment judgements) including in-person via your trainers and other staff, via telephone and via email.
- You can demonstrate that your appeals management system facilitates transparent handling of matters, including which decisions are subject to appeal and to independent review.
- You ensure that every appeal is considered fairly such that students can present their case, relevant evidence is reviewed, and any AI-assisted steps (such as initial categorisation or summarising documents) are checked by staff. You record reasons for decisions and note if AI tools were used, with human review before finalising outcomes.
- You can demonstrate that, if AI tools are used to draft or document appeal outcome records, they are checked for accuracy and completeness and that sensitive information is handled securely. You ensure that reasons for the decision remain transparent and human-reviewed, privacy safeguards are applied to any data processed by AI, and records are retained in line with your organisation’s compliance and privacy requirements.
- You can demonstrate how you ensure that your staff responsible for processing appeals are objective, impartial and adequately trained. This includes adequately documenting and communicating the outcomes of appeals and storing appeal documentation securely.
- You can demonstrate how students are made aware of the additional avenues they can take to have their appeal reviewed by an independent party, including ensuring they are provided with information on the costs that may be associated with using these avenues.
- You can demonstrate how you use appeal matters to identify opportunities for continuous improvement in the services you provide.

Known risks to quality outcomes

- Not informing students of their rights to appeal a decision.
- Failing to inform students of all avenues for seeking independent review.

- Failing to ensure that appeal processes are accessible to all students or offering alternative ways to appeal decisions.
- Failing to ensure that AI tools used in processing sensitive appeal information have adequate controls in place to minimise the risk of privacy breach.
- Failing to ensure that AI tools used to categorise or summarise appeals information support fairness by accurately interpret language and/or cultural context.
- Failing to recognise appeals as opportunities to improve training and assessment services.

Self-assurance questions

1. How do you ensure that you operate an outcomes-focused complaints and feedback management process that makes it easy for VET students and stakeholders to provide feedback or make complaints, works to resolve those complaints, and then actively uses those complaints and feedback to continuously improve your organisation's service offerings?
2. How do you ensure your complaints and appeals management systems are procedurally fair, timely and objective?
3. How do you ensure that information about how to lodge feedback, complaints and appeals is easily accessible and publicly available?
4. How do you ensure appellants are provided with avenues for independent review of decisions at no or low cost, and are your records sufficient for an external reviewer to understand the issues?
5. How are the outcomes of complaints and appeals used to continuously improve your services?
6. How do you ensure the effectiveness of safeguards in place to protect sensitive complaints and appeals information, including data collected within any AI tools?

Case study

Capturing feedback to inform continuous improvement

In 2025, HHH Training Pty Ltd (HHH) reviewed its feedback and complaints process to strengthen student voice and continuous improvement in line with the 2025 Standards for RTOs.

HHH mapped how students, staff and employers interacted with the organisation and recognised that although formal complaints were uncommon, informal feedback occurred frequently through conversations, emails, and course evaluations. In response, the provider introduced a multi-channel feedback system, allowing input in-person, via an online portal, through anonymous suggestion boxes, and via the Quality Indicator surveys (of both students and employers). Staff were trained to identify and record all feedback, particularly issues affecting training quality, assessment fairness, and student support.

The complaints system was also redesigned to be clear and accessible, with information on making complaints provided through handbooks, orientation, campus materials, the student portal and HHH's public website. The complaints system ensured all complaints were logged, tracked and communicated, and had defined timeframes for finalisation. The system also covered third party

services, with third party providers contractually required to escalate and cooperate in complaint handling.

Importantly, HHH used the full suite of feedback as part of its formal continuous improvement discussions. This quarterly analysis led to practical changes, such as clearer assessment instructions, improved trainer response times, and consistent marking through peer moderation. By communicating these changes back to students, HHH reinforced trust and its culture of continuous improvement.

Frequently asked questions

1. **The Standards for RTOs 2015 guided providers to resolve complaints or appeals within 60 days. This has been removed from the 2025 Standards. What are ASQA's expectations under the 2025 Standards?**

   The inclusion of a mandated timeframe to resolve complaints or appeals would be prescriptive in nature and not in accordance with the outcomes-focused approach under the 2025 Standards. The 2025 Standards require providers to identify reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints. The identified timeframe should be clearly advised to complainants so that they are aware of the expected timeframe for resolution of their complaint or appeal.