

A. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline REIV's approach to managing dissatisfaction, formal complaints and appeals of students, clients and other members of the community. It provides a transparent approach for complaints and appeals from the general public and students to be addressed in a fair, efficient and confidential manner.

This policy contributes to REIV's compliance with the requirements of its registration as a training provider including Elements 1.1, 2.2, 2.7 & 3.2 of the AQTF as well as Guidelines 2.7 & 2.8 of the VRQA Guidelines.

While this policy is designed to comply with REIV's RTO requirements, it is implemented across all of its Workforce Development division including non-accredited courses as a best practise approach to handling training and assessment related complaints.

DEFINITIONS

Appeal means a request for a decision made by the REIV to be reviewed

AQTF means the AQTF Essential Standards of Continuing Registration 2010

Complaint means a person's formal expression of dissatisfaction with any product or service provided by REIV

Services means training, assessment, related educational and support services and/or activities related to the recruitment of prospective learners.

VRQA Guidelines means the VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers 2016

VRQA means Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority, the state VET regulator and REIV's registering body

B. POLICY

1 STATEMENT

1. Nature of complaints and appeals

- REIV responds to all allegations involving the conduct of:
 - The RTO, its trainers and assessors and other staff.
 - Any third party providing Services on behalf of REIV.
 - Any student or client of REIV.
- Complaints may be made in relation to any of REIV'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
- An appeal is a request for a decision made by REIV to be reviewed. Decisions may have been about:

- course admissions
- refund assessments
- response to a complaint
- assessment outcomes / results
- other general decisions made by REIV

2. Principles of resolution

- REIV 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 the associated procedure, REIV ensures that complaints and appeals:
 - Are responded to in a consistent and transparent manner.
 - Are responded to promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and confidentiality.
 - Are able to be made at no cost to the individual.
 - Are used as an opportunity to identify potential causes of the complaint or appeal and take actions to prevent the issues from recurring as well as identifying any areas for improvement.
- REIV will inform all persons or parties involved in any allegations made as well as providing them with an opportunity to present their side of the matter.
- Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of an individual to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws and it does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.
- Where a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, REIV will maintain the student's enrolment, while the complaints/appeals handling process is ongoing.

3. Timeframes for resolution

- Complaints and appeals will be finalised as soon as practicable or at least within 30 calendar days unless there is a significant reason for the matter to take longer. In matters where additional time is needed, the complainant or appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons and will be updated weekly on the progress of the matter until such a time that the matter is resolved.

4. Records of complaints and appeals

- REIV will maintain a record of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes on the *Complaints and Appeals Register*, which will be securely stored according to the *Privacy Policy and Procedure*. These records are reviewed to identify areas of improvement in accordance with REIV's *Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure*.

5. Making a complaint or appeal

- Complaints about a particular incident should be made as soon as possible after the incident occurring and appeals must be made within thirty (30) calendar days of the original decision being made.
- Complaints and appeals must be made in writing using the *Complaints and Appeals Form*, or other written format and sent to REIV's office at 335 Camberwell Rd. Camberwell attention to the Chief Executive Officer.
- When making a complaint or appeal, provide as much information as possible to enable REIV to investigate and determine an appropriate solution. This should include:
 - The issue you are complaining about or the decision you are appealing – describe what happened and how it affected you.
 - Any evidence you have to support your complaint or appeal.
 - Details about the steps you have already taken to resolve the issue.
 - Suggestions about how the matter might be resolved.
- Your complaint or appeal will be acknowledged in writing via email or post within 7 days of receipt.

6. Resolution of complaints and appeals

- Some or all members of the management team of REIV will be involved in resolving complaints and appeals as outlined in the procedures.
- Where a complaint or appeal involves another individual or organisation, they will be given the opportunity to respond to any allegations made.
- Where a third party delivering Services on behalf of the RTO is involved, they will be included in the process of resolving the complaint or appeal.
- In the case of an assessment appeal, an assessor who is independent from the original decision will assess the original task again. The outcome of this assessment will be the result granted for the assessment task.

7. Independent parties

- REIV acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter. Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by REIV.
- REIV may also appoint the independent party to be involved in the resolution of a complaint or appeal where it is deemed necessary.
- REIV will provide complete cooperation with the external mediator investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.
- The CEO will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. The complainant or appellant will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

8. External complaint avenues

Complaints can also be made via the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

- Phone: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
- Email: ntch@education.gov.au

For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: <https://www.education.gov.au/NTCH>

- Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA):

Complainants may also complain to REIV's registering body, Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

VRQA can investigate complaints about REIV in relation to:

- the quality of our training and assessment
- our marketing and advertising practices
- If your complaint does not fall within VRQA's jurisdiction, it may be resolved more quickly if you directly contact the agency responsible as listed on the following website: <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/who-can-help-you-with-complaints-not-for-us.aspx>
- Please refer to the following webpage below before making a complaint to VRQA: <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/complaints.aspx>

For students:

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY



- VRQA may not be able to investigate complaint if you do not include evidence that you have already exhausted our formal internal complaints process as above.

9. Publication

This policy will be published in the *Student Handbook* and on REIV's website.

2 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document Code	Document Name	Document Type
CIF 2.1	Complaints and appeals procedure	Procedure
CIF R2	Complaints and appeals register	Register
CIF 2.1.1	Complaint form	Form
CIF 2.1.2	Appeal form	Form
CIF 2.1.3	Assessment appeals/complaint record	Form