



# Policy - Client Complaints & Feedback

## Purpose

This policy applies to clients wishing to provide feedback on the services provided by South Regional TAFE (the college) and outlines the way in which the college will manage and respond to complaints.

Complaints may relate to:

- The behaviour of college trainers, assessors, or other staff.
- Staff of a third-party providing services on the college's behalf e.g. contractors.
- Other student(s) attending the college.
- College equipment or facilities (problems with or lack of).
- A college service, product, or training delivery.
- The handling of a complaint.

## Scope

This policy does not relate to:

- Academic Appeals by students (e.g. student progress, assessment, curriculum in a VET course of study). Refer to *Policy - Academic Appeals*
- A staff grievance. Refer to *Policy - Grievance Resolution*
- Appeals or feedback regarding decisions relating to actions covered by the provisions of the *Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management*.
- Students and clients under the age of 18 (Minors) who wish to submit a complaint and/or other feedback. Refer to *Policy – Complaints & Feedback – Under 18s (Minors)*.

## Principles

The college values customer feedback and is committed to resolving issues identified in feedback in a transparent and timely way. The aim of this policy is to ensure that complaints are resolved in a way that meets the interests of our clients and the college, whilst ensuring expectations of fairness are met.

### Informal Complaint Resolution

Resolving the complaint informally is encouraged before commencing formal action. This does not need to be in writing, for example you may approach a member of college staff (e.g. lecturer/assessor, Student Services). It is anticipated that most concerns can be resolved at this level.

### Making a Formal Complaint

There are a number of ways that clients can make a complaint or provide other feedback e.g. suggestion, compliment to the college:

- The college website has a webpage dedicated to Complaints and Feedback: [Complaints and Feedback](#). Clients can download a hard copy complaint/feedback form and place in a feedback box or submit directly to [feedback\\_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:feedback_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au). Alternatively click on the **green** Feedback and Complaint Form link to access the online Feedback Management System and follow the prompts to enter the relevant information.
- Hard copy complaint forms and/or client feedback forms are also available from reception at all college campuses (or on request from any college staff member) and can be placed in a feedback

box (or use your own handwritten/typed letter if preferred).

- Telephone the college direct and ask to speak to Student Services, Aboriginal Programs, or a Business System Support Officer.
- Email the college direct via [feedback\\_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:feedback_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au)
- The college's Aboriginal Programs staff can assist clients of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander descent to make a complaint and/or provide feedback in a culturally appropriate way.

Where clients have individual needs, every reasonable effort will be made to provide assistance if requested and to ensure the complaint and/or feedback lodgement process is as flexible as possible.

### **What to Expect once a Complaint is Submitted**

All complaints received will be treated as confidential and managed within the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Investigations will focus on outcomes for the client.

At all stages of the process the individual making the complaint has the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor, or other professional support person) and can withdraw the complaint at any stage of the resolution process.

The individual making the complaint may withdraw a complaint at any stage of the resolution process. The resolution process is documented to provide a clear account of the complaint and the college's response and will provide fair remedies in response to the complaint.

### **Timelines**

- Complaints submitted via the college website feedback management system will receive an immediate automated response direct to the email provided confirming the feedback has been submitted. The notification will include a reference number for the complaint, details of the complaint, and provides an anticipated date of completion to the client.
- Complaints submitted via hard copy complaint forms or sent directly to [Feedback\\_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:Feedback_combit@srtafe.wa.edu.au) will be acknowledged by a Business System Support Officer within five (5) business days of it being received.
- Managers overseeing the complaint are to provide an initial response to the client within ten (10) business days of the first acknowledgement.
- The college aims to resolve any complaint within twenty-eight (28) business days. If the college considers more than sixty (60) calendar days are required to finalise the complaint, the individual who submitted the complaint will be notified in writing, including the justification as to why more than sixty (60) days are required to come to a resolution. Regular updates will also be provided to the complainant during the resolution process.

### **Anonymous Complaints**

If a client submits a complaint anonymously, this will be considered as feedback and included in the college's continuous improvement process where appropriate.

### **Costs**

The complaints process is free of charge.

### **Recordkeeping**

The college complies with the requirement to securely store and maintain records of all complaints and/or feedback and their outcomes.

## Appealing a Complaint Resolution

If the complainant feels their complaint has not been resolved and they do not agree with the resolution outcome and wish to take the matter further, they have the right to take the complaint to an external agency, e.g., the Ombudsman Western Australia:

Phone: (08) 9220 7555

Free call: 1800 117 000 (for calls outside the metropolitan area)

Email: [mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

Postal: PO Box Z5386, St Georges Terrace, PERTH WA 6831

In person: Level 2, Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street, PERTH WA 6000

Further information can be obtained by visiting [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

## Definitions

**South Regional TAFE** (the college) refers to South Regional TAFE, including all its campuses and delivery centres.

**Complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern raised by a client in relation to the products or services provided by the college.

**Client** is any person or organisation accessing the products and services of the college, including students, employers, industry/enterprises, other government agencies and community groups, or those providing services to the college.

**Reasonable action** is action taken by a staff member to try to resolve a complaint that is within their area of responsibility and takes account of their level of authority and decision making.

**Resolution** is an outcome to a complaint, which seeks to reconcile the interests of the client making the complaint and the college. The parties are notified of the outcome. Students and stakeholders may appeal if they are not satisfied with the resolution.

**Natural justice or procedural fairness** – requires that a fair and proper procedure be used when making a decision and includes the right to be heard, the right to be treated without bias, and that any decision be based on relevant evidence.

## Related documents

Policy: Client Complaints Policy and Process – Under 18s

Form: Client Complaint

Form: Client Feedback

Policy: Academic Appeals

Policy: Student Access and Equity

Policy: Access and Diversity

## Related legislation and references

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

Race Racial Discrimination Act 1975

National Complaints Code

Policy: Student Academic Appeals

Standards for RTOs 2015

VET Student Loan Rules 2016 (Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F, Section 88)

Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is available on Doc Hub

VET Student Loan Act 2016 (Part 5, Division 1, Section 48)

Procurement Act 2020

Western Australian Procurement Rules