

Complaints and appeals

Policy statement

Pioneer State High School, as an RTO - 30424, has a complaints and appeals policy specific to its RTO operations.

The Principal Ms Lisa Veney (as the Chief Executive Officer) of the school RTO is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school RTO complies with the VET Quality Framework (VQF). This includes the complaints and appeals policy and procedures.

A **complaint** can be made to the school RTO regarding the conduct of:

- the school RTO, its trainers, assessors or other school RTO staff
- students of the RTO
- any third parties providing services on behalf of the school RTO (if relevant).

Complaints may be made to any member of staff.

An **appeal** can be made to the school RTO to request a review of a decision, including assessment decisions.

Appeals should be made to the trainer/assessor in the first instance, but can also be made to Heads of Department or the RTO Manager.

Pioneer SHS will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaints and appeals process.

1. *Any staff member can receive a complaint or appeal. Where possible, complaints are resolved immediately.*
2. All complaints and appeals are heard and resolved within 60 calendar days of receipt.

If the school RTO considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons for the extended timeframe in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.

3. *The school RTO will maintain a secure Complaints and Appeals Register, documenting all complaints and appeals received, as well as actions taken and decisions made.*
4. *The school RTO will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes reviewing both the details in the Complaints and Appeals Register, and the complaints and appeals policy and procedures, and taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.*

Procedures

1. If a complaint relates to a report about harm or safety, refer to your school's appropriate Student Protection procedures.
2. On receipt of a verbal complaint:
 - Resolve the complaint if possible, documenting the complaint, its cause, actions taken and decisions made in the secure Complaints and Appeals Register.
 - If the complaint cannot be promptly and simply resolved, advise that an appropriate staff member will deal with the complaint, but a written record of the complaint is required.
3. To put a complaint/appeal in writing, advise the complainant/appellant that:
 - they may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint/appeal
 - they can either put the complaint/appeal in writing themselves using the form available on the school website.
 - you can make a written record for them to sign. In this case
 - note whether the complainant/appellant wants the support of a third party
 - ensure the complainant signs and dates the form
 - identify yourself, and your role within the school RTO
 - sign and date the form yourself.
4. On receipt of a written complaint/appeal:
 - if the complaint/appeal is not in relation to the RTO Manager
 - forward it to the RTO Manager
 - enter it into the secure Complaints and Appeals Register.
 - if the complaint is in relation to the RTO Manager
 - forward it to the Deputy Principal responsible for the Senior School
 - enter it into a separate secure Complaints and Appeals Register, which is kept separate from the main Register.
 - send a prompt written acknowledgement to the complainant from either the RTO Manager or the Deputy Principal responsible for the Senior School, as appropriate.

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5. To resolve the complaint/appeal, the RTO Manager and/or Deputy Principal:
 - discuss the issue/s with the staff member to whom the complaint/appeal was made
 - give the complainant/appellant an opportunity to present their case (they may be accompanied by other people as support or as representation)
 - give the relevant staff member, third party or student (as applicable) an opportunity to present their case. They also may be accompanied by other people as support or as representation.
 - if necessary, convene an independent panel, the Complaints and Appeals Committee, to hear the complaint/appeal.
The committee must not have had previous involvement with the complaint/appeal, and must include:
 - a representative of the Principal
 - one or more representative/s of the teaching staff
 - an independent person.
 - deal with the issue/s
 - communicate the outcome/decision to all parties in writing within 60 days of receipt of the complaint/appeal
 - document the complaint/appeal — including the cause, actions taken and decisions made — in the appropriate secure Complaints and Appeals Register.
6. If the complaint/appeal is not finalised within 60 calendar days of its receipt, inform the complainant/appellant of the reasons in writing and regularly update them on the progress of the matter.
7. If the procedures fail to resolve the issue/s, the complainant/appellant may have the outcome reviewed (on request) by an appropriate party independent of the RTO.
8. If the complainant is still not satisfied, the Principal will refer them to the QCAA website for further information about making complaints (<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/vet/rto-registration-audits/appeals-complaints-enforcement>).
9. The school RTO will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes:
 - reviewing the details in the Complaints and Appeals Register
 - reviewing the complaints and appeals policy and procedures
 - taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.

If the processes fail to resolve the complaint or appeal, a review by an independent party will be provided if requested.

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