

St Francis College

RTO policy and procedures

Complaints and appeals

Purpose

Every RTO must have complaints and appeals policies and procedures that meet the requirements of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* (www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L01377). This document outlines the complaints and appeals policy for St Francis College

Policy statement

The school, as an RTO, has a complaints and appeals policy specific to its RTO operations.

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.

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 the appropriate Head of Department or the RTO Manager.

The school RTO (Emmaus College) 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 15 working days of receipt.
If the school RTO considers that more than 15 working 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, staff members will refer to the school's Student Protection procedures.
2. On receipt of a verbal complaint, staff members will:
 - Resolve the complaint if possible, documenting the complaint, its cause, actions taken and decisions made.
 - 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, the complainant/appellant:
 - may use the support of a third party in progressing the complaint/appeal
 - can either put the complaint/appeal in writing themselves using the form available on the VET Team space or from the Futures Room, or
 - staff members can make a written record for the complainant/appellant to sign. In this case, the staff member will:
 - note whether the complainant/appellant wants the support of a third party
 - ensure the complainant signs and dates the form
 - identify themselves, and their role within the school RTO
 - sign and date the form themselves.
4. On receipt of a written complaint/appeal the staff member will:
 - 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 Head of Campus (Secondary)
 - 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 Head of Campus (Secondary), as appropriate.

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5. To resolve the complaint/appeal, the RTO Manager and/or Head of Campus will:
 - 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 15 working 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 15 working 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.