Draft Practice Guide
Feedback, complaints and appeals
(Standards 2.7, 2.8)

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Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations

Quality Area 2 – VET Student Support

What are the key concepts?

The following key concepts are covered in this practice guide:

Standard 2.7	Standard 2.8
- Feedback and complaint management systems - Recording and documenting outcomes	- Appeals management - Independent parties

Achieving these Standards in practice

The following table lists examples of activities that may demonstrate compliance with the Standards, as well as risks to avoid. These examples are <u>not</u> a complete list of every activity or risk, nor do all the activities listed need to be completed to achieve compliance. Rather, they are a guide and should be considered within the context, size, scale and student cohorts of your RTO's operations.

Standard 2.7: Effective feedback and complaints management addresses concerns and informs continuous improvement.	
Performance indicators	**Example activities and other considerations for compliance**
The RTO demonstrates: a. information about how to provide feedback and make complaints is publicly available and easily accessible b. VET students are supported to provide feedback and make complaints c. a complaints management system that: i. ensures parties are afforded procedural fairness	- You have information publicly available on how to provide feedback and complaints. 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 provide people with an environment where they feel supported and comfortable to make complaints or provide feedback. This includes providing a blame-free culture, where there is no detriment to people who complain. - 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 procedural fairness. - You have systems to document and communicate the outcomes of complaints, and store complaint documentation securely.

	Example activities and other considerations for compliance
ii. identifies reasonable timeframes for responding to and resolving complaints iii. provides avenues for further action where complaints are not resolved d. outcomes of complaints are documented and communicated to relevant parties e. feedback and complaints are used to inform continuous improvement.	• 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 is not able to 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. • Failing to capture complaints and feedback received in informal settings, such as when students are having verbal conversations with trainers and assessors. • 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 how it may be relevant across other areas of operations and identifying appropriate solutions.

Standard 2.8: Effective appeal processes are available where decisions of the RTO or a third party adversely impact a VET student.	
Performance indicators	**Example activities and other considerations for compliance**

The RTO demonstrates:
a. VET students are informed about avenues for appeal
b. an appeals management system that:
  i. ensures appellants are afforded procedural fairness
  ii. identifies reasonable timeframes for actioning appeals
  iii. provides avenues for review by an independent party, if requested by the appellant (at no or low cost to them)
c. appeal outcomes are documented and communicated to the appellant
d. the outcomes of appeals are used to inform continuous improvement.
	• You can demonstrate that students are informed about, and understand, their appeal rights. This includes information about the timeframes for acknowledging, resolving and communicating the outcomes of appeals.
	• You have multiple mechanisms/channels available to students to lodge appeals about decisions (such as assessment decisions) 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 can show 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 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 avenues for seeking independent review. • Failing to recognise appeals as opportunities to improve training and assessment services. • Not identifying trends from the appeals received, or failing to take action where causal links are identified.

Self-assurance questions

1	How do you ensure students and others are made aware of the processes for feedback, complaints and appeals?
2	How do you ensure your complaints and appeals management systems are fair, timely and effective?
3	How are the outcomes of complaints and appeals used to continuously improve your services?