

Appendix A – Complaints and Appeals (RTO) Information

General

All complaints and appeals will be managed:

1. Informally (recorded for future reference in the event of a systemic or recurrent issue); and
2. Formally using a three-stage process which includes:
 - lodging a formal complaint or an appeal against an assessment decision;
 - an internal appeal or review of the complaint decision; and
 - provision for independent review.

Characterisation of Complaints

Simple RTO complaints:

- involve minimal risk or detriment to the complainant or the department;
- may not require formal investigation;
- may relate to issues of quality, cost, timeliness, service delivery, use of personal information, etc.;
- do not relate to allegations of misconduct; and/or
- are suitable for local resolution.

Significant RTO complaints:

- are more serious or complex with medium or high level of risk/detriment to the complainant or the RTO;
- may involve a potential breach of training legislation;
- may require formal investigation; and/or
- may involve allegations of misconduct against a QFES member.

Lodgement and Investigations

QFES will investigate (as far as principles of natural justice and procedural fairness allow) all complaints including anonymous complaints but encourage learners, staff or stakeholders to access the informal or formal processes to enable a thorough investigation and resolution process.

Learners lodging an appeal about an assessment outcome must do so within 30 calendar days of being notified of the initial assessment decision.

QFES will ensure:

- both the complainant and anyone who has allegations made against them will have the opportunity to present their cases;
- any people involved in the complaint will have the option of being accompanied or assisted by a third person (such as a colleague, supervisor or counsellor) at relevant discussions if they so desire;
- neither the complainant nor the respondent will be discriminated against or victimised;
- all complaints and appeals will be acknowledged in writing within five business days of receipt;
- complaint decisions and any subsequent appeal of the decision or assessment appeals will be finalised and advised to the complainant or appellant within 20 working days, where possible;
- where QFES considers more than 60 calendar days may be required to process or finalise the formal stages, the complainant will be informed in writing of the reasons why (such as availability of or access to 'evidence' or sources, or specialist expertise) and will regularly update the complainant regarding progress of the process.

At all stages of the process, discussions relating to complaints and appeals will be recorded in writing. Reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken will be provided to the complainant, and the respondent if requested.

Review of Decisions

QFES provides for the review of complaint and appeal decisions by an independent party and will abide by the outcome of an independent review. Further, will ensure due consideration is given to any recommendations arising from an independent review.

Records Management

Records of all complaints and appeals will be retained for a period of 10 years and will be kept strictly confidential. The complainant will have appropriate access to these records, if required.

The School of Fire and Emergency Services Training (SFEST), QFES will maintain a RTO Complaints Register which includes details of complaints or appeals received; decisions; and actions taken to prevent recurrence.