



Riverina Community College

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY

January 2017

Contents

PURPOSE	3
COMMENCEMENT	3
APPLICATION.....	3
POLICY	3
COMPLAINTS & APPEALS HANDLING PROCESS	3
Step 1	4
Step 2	4
Step 3	4
Step 4	4
Step 5	4
General.....	4
BREACH OF THIS POLICY	5
COMPLIANCE.....	5
MORE INFORMATION	5
RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS.....	5
VARIATIONS	6
POLICY VERSION AND REVISION INFORMATION	6

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy and subsequent procedure provides guidance on the Riverina Community College (RCC) complaints handling process.

Complaints can have potential customer service, legal, financial, contractual, industrial, business or ethical implications for RCC so our procedure for managing complaints and feedback provides important information to maintain quality service delivery.

As such, we have a streamlined position and process when it comes to complaints handling as below.

COMMENCEMENT

The commencement date of this policy is 1 January 2017. It replaces all other Complaints & Appeals policies or procedures, whether written or not.

APPLICATION

This Policy applies to employees, agents and contractors (including temporary contractors) of RCC, collectively referred to in this Policy as 'employees' as well as clients and students.

This Policy is not limited to the workplace or work hours. This Policy extends to all functions and places that are work related.

POLICY

RCC is committed to providing quality services to all clients. We encourage and use feedback both positive and negative, as an opportunity to maintain and improve the quality of our services.

Every effort is to be made to make it straightforward and safe for a client, student or employee to make a complaint or provide feedback.

RCC Complaints & Appeals Handling Policy will be actively promoted to employees, clients and students via the initial enrolment and induction processes. This document will also be made available online at RCC's website along with the Student Handbooks, etc.

All clients, students and employees will be informed of their right to make a complaint or provide feedback and how the complaint / feedback will be handled. All clients and complainants will be made aware of their right to use an advocate to support them to make a complaint and during the complaint handling process.

All staff will do their utmost to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible within their area of responsibility.

Complaints will be investigated in a manner that is fair to the complainant, the College and its staff.

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS HANDLING PROCESS

It is noted that all staff, clients and students are encouraged to first attempt to resolve their complaints in an adult and professional manner prior to engaging the official complaints process as in most occasions, this is quite often the most effective and efficient way to manage disagreements or complaints. If however, the complainant has either attempted this way without success or does not feel comfortable engaging in this process, then they are encouraged to follow the process below.

Step 1

Complaints should be made using the Complaint/Appeal Form and emailed to the Operation's Manager however all complaints, whether written, oral or anonymous will be handled with sincerity, confidentiality and promptly.

Step 2

The Operation's Manager will review the complaint and provide acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint within 2 business days. Resolution of complaints will be sought as soon as possible within a maximum of thirty (30) business days.

The Operation's Manager is to input the data from the complaints form into the complaints workbook on the continuous improvement register, then save the complaint form within the complaints file located in the Continuous Improvement folder. Any additional information, sheets or emails relating to this complaint should also be saved in this same file.

Step 3

Once the Operation's Manager has reached a decision, all complainants will be informed of the final outcome of their complaint. Where an outcome has not been achieved within 15 working days or a significant delay in its resolution is anticipated, the complainant will be informed of the progress of their complaint in writing until a final outcome is achieved.

The Operation's Manager is then to record and finalise the complaint in the Continuous Improvement register within the complaints handbook. If the complaint was founded, any actions to remedy the situation and to prevent future similar occurrences will be required to be entered in the continuous improvement register under the continuous improvement workbook.

Step 4

If any party is unsatisfied with the outcome provided by the Operation's Manager, they are able to lodge an appeal in writing via email to the CEO (email address provided upon request).

Step 5

The CEO will review the complaint and provide their response in a formal letter detailing the outcomes from their decision to the complainant. This appeals process will take no more than 30 working days (starting from the date the appeal was lodged).

The RTO Manager is then to save this letter in the same folder as step 3.

General

Staff members who are the subject of a complaint will be supported and kept informed throughout the investigation process and advised of the final outcome. The staff member must not communicate directly with the complainant or their advocate unless directed to do so.

Feedback will be recorded and managed using the same processes as complaints to ensure continuous improvement action occurs in relation to these matters.

All complaints and feedback will be recorded in the complaints workbook located in the continuous improvement register under the continuous improvement folder on the RTO Drive.

Complaints and feedback offered by a person who does not provide their name and contact details will still be recorded in the relevant site Complaints/Appeals Register.

Complaints data will be reported monthly by the RTO Manager and included in the Quarterly Board Report by the CEO.

If students feel matters are unresolved to their satisfaction and wish to inform a third party, they should contact one of the following:

- ASQA by referring to www.asqa.gov.au
- Department of Fair Trading in their capital city
- If your course is part of the NSW Department of Education and Communities funded programs you should contact their Consumer Protection Unit for Students. They can do so at: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/consumer-protection-for-students>

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Employees must comply with this Policy at all times. If an employee is found to have breached this Policy, they may be subjected to disciplinary action in accordance with the Professional Conduct Policy. The type and severity of the disciplinary action will depend upon the circumstances of the case and the seriousness of the breach. In serious cases, this may include termination of employment.

Examples of disciplinary action that may be taken include but are not limited to:

- counselling
- a formal warning
- demotion
- transfer to another area
- suspension;
- termination of employment

Agents or contractors (including temporary contractors) of RCC who are found to have breached this Policy may have their contracts with RCC terminated or not renewed.

COMPLIANCE

The College's Access & Equity Policy and related procedures shall contribute to compliance with the following legislation and regulations:

- Competition and Consumer Act 2010
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015
- Guidelines for Smart & Skilled 2017
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

MORE INFORMATION

If an employee is unsure about any matter covered by this Policy, they should seek the assistance of the RTO Manager.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS

Standard Operating Procedures

- Complaints handling procedure

Forms

- Complaints and Appeal Form
- Code of Practice P+P

VARIATIONS

RCC reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy at any time.

POLICY VERSION AND REVISION INFORMATION

Authorised by: RTO Manager

Original issue: 1/7/2012

Maintained by: RTO Manager

Current version: 4 (1/1 /2017)