



# **Riverina Community College**

## **COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY**

1 July 2019

## Contents

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

# COMPLAINTS & APPEALS POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE

This Policy provides guidance on the Riverina Community College (the College) complaints handling process.

The College 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.

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

## 2. COMMENCEMENT

The commencement date of this Policy is 1 July 2019. It replaces all other Complaints and Appeals Policies, whether written or not.

## 3. APPLICATION

This Policy covers complaints about:

- Riverina Community College as a Registered Training Organisation
- The College's employees, agents, contractors (including temporary contractors) and volunteers, collectively referred to in this Policy as "employees"
- any third parties that act on behalf of the College
- clients and/or students of the College

A complaint may be any dissatisfaction in relation to:

- the quality of services and training provided by the College
- the quality of the Colleges facilities, particularly any concern for the health and safety of clients, students or staff
- an opinion that the College has not delivered what it promoted
- an opinion that a client, student or staff member has been treated unfairly, harassed or discriminated against

An appeal applies to any request to review a decision of the College, such as an assessment result.

This Policy extends to all functions and places that are work related.

## 4. POLICY

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.

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.

## 5. COMPLAINTS & APPEALS HANDLING PROCESS

Clients, students and volunteers are encouraged to first attempt to resolve their complaint by raising their concerns with their Trainer or their Training/Programs Coordinator, on most occasions, this is the most effective and efficient way to manage disagreements or complaints. If however, you have attempted this way without success, then you are encouraged to follow the process below.

## Step 1

Complaints should be made in writing, including email, or by using the Complaint/Appeal Form available on the College's website, and emailed to the RTO Manager. A College staff member can assist you to complete this form if you need support.

You may seek support from family, a friend or an independent advocate to support you in making a complaint.

All complaints will be handled objectively, impartially and promptly. Complaints will be treated confidentially, however, the nature and detail of a complaint will be shared with any party to a complaint to support the principles of natural justice and any investigation that may arise.

If your complaint relates to the RTO Manager, your matter should be lodged with the CEO.

## Step 2

The RTO Manager will review the complaint and provide acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint to you in writing (which may include email) within 2 business days. Resolution of complaints will be sought as soon as possible within a maximum of 30 business days.

The RTO Manager will review your complaint and may seek further information from you and any party to the complaint.

## Step 3

You will be informed of the final outcome of your complaint in writing. Where an outcome has not been achieved within 15 working days, or where a significant delay in its resolution is anticipated, you will be informed of the progress of your complaint until a final outcome is achieved.

## Step 4

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you are able to lodge an appeal in writing via email to the CEO (email address provided upon request).

## Step 5

The CEO will provide an independent review of your complaint and provide their response in writing. This appeals process will take no more than 30 working days (from the date the appeal is received by the College).

Following this process, if you feel matters are not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact one of the following:

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) by referring to [www.asqa.gov.au](http://www.asqa.gov.au)
- Department of Fair Trading in your capital city
- If your course is part of the NSW Department of Industries funded programs you can contact their Consumer Protection Unit for Students. You can do so via: <https://smartandskilled.nsw.gov.au/for-students/consumer-protection-for-students>
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission by referring to [www.ndiscommission.gov.au](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)

## General

A party to a complaint will be informed of the allegations and given the opportunity to put forward their position. Any party who is the subject of a complaint will be supported and kept informed throughout the investigation process and advised of the final outcome.

The complainant, their advocate and any party to a complaint must not communicate directly in relation to the matter unless directed to do so by the RTO Manager.

Riverina Community College will not tolerate any action taken against a client, student or staff member for lodging a complaint. If you feel there has been some reprisal action taken in response to

your lodgement of a complaint, you should bring this to the attention of the RTO Manager as soon as possible.

The College will deal with a complaint that is made anonymously, although it may be harder to investigate and the College will not be able to provide any feedback to the complainant on the outcome of the complaint.

There is no cost to lodge a complaint or appeal. If the investigation of your complaint proposes that a cost may be incurred, this will be brought to your attention as soon as possible.

Feedback will be recorded and managed to ensure continuous improvement action occurs in relation to these matters.

Complaints of a serious nature, such as a complaint in relation to the protection of a child or vulnerable person, or an allegation of fraud, theft or misappropriation, must be made in writing directly to the CEO of Riverina Community College.

## **6. 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 subject 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, contractors (including temporary contractors) or volunteers of Riverina Community College who are found to have breached this Policy may have their contracts with Riverina Community College terminated or not renewed.

## **7. MORE INFORMATION**

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

## **8. RELATED LEGISLATION**

The College's Complaints and Appeals 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 Operating Guidelines
- NDIS Practice Standards
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

## 9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaints and Appeal Form
- Consumer Protection Policy
- Student Handbook

## 10. VARIATIONS

Riverina Community College 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: 5 (01/07/2019)