

## Grievance, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

RTO #40936 | Version 5.0 | Date: March 2026 | Review Date: March 2027

---

### 1. Purpose

This policy ensures that all grievances, complaints, and appeals are managed fairly, promptly, and transparently, in line with **natural justice** principles. It protects the rights of students, staff, and stakeholders, and ensures compliance with the **SRTOs 2025** and the **Skills First Contract v3.0**.

#### Linked Clauses:

- SRTOs 2025: Clauses 6.1–6.6, 8.2
  - Skills First v3.0: Sections 8.2 (Support & Access), 9.3 (Records & Reporting)
  - Legislation: Privacy Act 1988, Competition and Consumer Act 2010
- 

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- Current and prospective students.
  - Staff, trainers, and assessors.
  - Employers, placement supervisors, and external stakeholders.
  - Third parties delivering services on behalf of the RTO.
- 

### 3. Policy Statement

The RTO is committed to:

- Providing a clear, confidential, and accessible complaints process.
  - Ensuring no discrimination or victimisation occurs against complainants.
  - Resolving complaints informally where possible, but providing a formal escalation pathway.
  - Processing complaints within reasonable timeframes, with transparency at every stage.
  - Keeping complete records of all complaints, appeals, and resolutions for audit and continuous improvement.
- 

### 4. Definitions

- **Complaint:** Any expression of dissatisfaction about services, staff, students, or policies.

## VASS College

- **Appeal:** A request for review of a decision (e.g., assessment outcome).
  - **Grievance:** Broader term covering complaints and appeals.
  - **Natural Justice:** Right to be heard, unbiased decision-making, fair process.
  - **Exceptional Circumstances:** Where delays beyond 60 days occur, complainants are notified with updates.
- 

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1 Informal Resolution

- Complaints may be raised verbally or in writing.
- The RTO Manager or Training Coordinator acknowledges within **5 business days**.
- Issues should be resolved at this stage, if possible, within **28 days**.
- If unresolved, the complaint escalates to formal procedures.

### 5.2 Formal Complaint Procedure

- Student/stakeholder submits a **Complaints & Appeals Form**.
- Compliance Officer acknowledges within **5 business days**.
- Investigation begins within **10 business days**.
- Complaint resolved within **20 working days** where practicable.
- Complex matters exceeding **60 days** require written updates to the complainant.
- A written outcome is provided, with reasons for the decision.

### 5.3 Internal Appeals

- If dissatisfied, complainant may appeal to the CEO.
- Appeal reviewed by CEO or an appointed panel within **10 business days**.
- Written decision provided, with further options for external review if unresolved.

### 5.4 External Appeals

- If still dissatisfied, complainants may contact:
  - **Victorian Ombudsman** ([ombudsman.vic.gov.au](http://ombudsman.vic.gov.au))
  - **Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria**
  - **ASQA** (for compliance breaches – note: ASQA does not mediate disputes).

### 5.5 Records and Confidentiality

- All complaints and outcomes recorded in the **Complaints & Appeals Register**.

- Records retained for audit under Skills First Section 9.3.
  - Confidentiality maintained throughout the process.
- 

## 6. Responsibilities & Authorities

- **All Staff** – Treat complaints seriously, respect confidentiality.
  - **Supervisors/Trainers** – Resolve grievances informally where possible.
  - **Compliance Officer** – Manage formal process, maintain register, investigate complaints.
  - **RTO Manager** – Oversee resolution, report systemic issues to CEO.
  - **CEO** – Final decision-maker, handles internal appeals, approves external referrals.
- 

## 7. Compliance References

- **SRTOs 2025:** Clauses 6.1–6.6, 8.2
  - **Skills First v3.0:** Sections 8.2, 9.3
  - **Legislation:** Privacy Act 1988, Fair Trading Laws, Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- 

## 8. Document Control

- **Version:** 5.0
- **Approval:** CEO
- **Approval Date:** March 2026
- **Next Review Date:** March 2027
- **History:**
  - v4.2 (March 2025) – Revised timelines and escalation stages.
  - v5.0 (March 2026) – Restructured to universal template; aligned with SRTOs 2025 & Skills First v3.0.