



# Client Complaints Policy and Process

## Purpose and scope

This policy and procedure applies to all clients wishing to provide feedback on the services provided by South Regional TAFE and outlines the way in which the college will manage and respond to complaints involving the conduct of:

- a) South Regional TAFE, its trainers, assessors or other staff
- b) A third party providing services on South Regional TAFE's behalf, its trainers, assessors or other staff, or
- c) A student of South Regional TAFE

This policy does not relate to:

- Academic Appeals by students (eg student progress, assessment, curriculum in a VET course of study). Refer to the *Academic Appeals policy*
- A staff grievance. Refer to the *Grievance Resolution policy*
- Appeals or feedback regarding decisions relating to actions covered by the provisions of the *Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management*.

A separate policy and procedure document is in place for students and clients under the age of 18 (minors) who wish to make a complaint.

## Informal Complaint

Informal resolution is encouraged before commencing formal action. You may approach a member of staff (eg Student Services) to discuss a concern. This does not need to be in writing and it is anticipated that most concerns can be resolved at this level.

## Policy

South Regional TAFE values customer feedback and is committed to resolving issues identified in feedback in a transparent and timely way. The aim of this policy is to ensure that complaints are resolved in a way that meets the interests of our clients and the college, whilst ensuring expectations of fairness are met.

## How to make a complaint

The South Regional TAFE website has a webpage on Complaints and Feedback, at <http://www.southregionaltafe.wa.edu.au> where a client wishing to make a complaint can find information on the complaints process, download a complaint/feedback form or send us an email. Our Planning & Business Services Officers can be contacted for assistance in lodging a complaint, on 6371 3331.

Where clients have individual needs, every reasonable effort will be made to provide assistance if requested and to ensure that the process of making a complaint is as flexible as possible.

## What to expect

The complaints process is free of charge. Complaints will be treated as confidential and handled within the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. At all stages of the process a complainant have the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person) and can withdraw a complaint at any stage. The resolution process will be documented to provide a clear account of the complaint and the college's response.

A complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five (5) business days of it being lodged via the college website, by email, or as a hardcopy form. The complainant will receive a response from the manager handling the complaint within ten (10) business days of the initial acknowledgment and we aim to resolve complaints within twenty eight (28) business days. If the college considers more than 60 calendar days are needed to finalise the complaint, the complainant will be informed in writing, including the reasons why more than 60 days are required. Regular updates on the complaint progress will also be provided. Where necessary, the Managing Director will be consulted and have the final determination in the outcome of a complaint.

If a client wishes to lodge a complaint anonymously, this will be regarded as feedback and incorporated into the college's continuous improvement processes where appropriate.

South Regional TAFE complies with the requirement to securely store and maintain records of all complaints and feedback and their outcomes.

## Appealing a complaint decision

If the complainant feels the college has not resolved their complaint and wishes to pursue the matter further, they may refer the complaint to an external agent, e.g. the Ombudsman Western Australia:

Phone: (08) 9220 7555

Freecall: 1800 117 000 (for calls outside the metropolitan area)

Email: [mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au](mailto:mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

Postal: PO Box Z5386, St Georges Terrace, PERTH WA 6831

In person: Level 2, Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street, PERTH WA 6000

Further information can be obtained by visiting [www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au)

## Definitions

**South Regional TAFE** (the college) refers to South Regional TAFE, including all its campuses and delivery centres.

**Complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern raised by a client in relation to the products or services provided by the college.

**External client** is any person or organisation accessing the products and services of the college, including students, employers, industry/enterprises, other government agencies and community groups, or those providing services to the college.

**Reasonable action** is action taken by a staff member to try to resolve a complaint that is within their area of responsibility and takes account of their level of authority and decision making.

**Resolution** is an outcome to a complaint, which seeks to reconcile the interests of the client making the complaint and the college. The parties are notified of the outcome. Students and stakeholders may appeal if they are not satisfied with the resolution.

Natural justice or procedural fairness – requires that a fair and proper procedure be used when making a decision and includes the right to be heard, the right to be treated without bias, and that any decision be based on relevant evidence.

### Related documents

Policy: Client Complaints Policy and Process – Under 18s

Form: Client Complaint

Form: Client Feedback

Policy: Academic Appeals

Policy: Student Access and Equity

Policy: Access and Diversity

### Related legislation and references

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

Race Racial Discrimination Act 1975

National Complaints Code

Policy: Student Academic Appeals

Standards for RTOs 2015

VET Student Loan Rules 2016 (Part 7, Division 1, Subdivision F, Section 88)

VET Student Loan Act 2016 (Part 5, Division 1, Section 48)

Procurement Act 2020

Western Australian Procurement Rules

### Version control

Custodian of document	Version	Date of next review
Director Organisational Services	V12	3 years from date of issue