Purpose

To ensure that feedback about ETC's service is processed appropriately and professionally. Feedback, including complaints, helps ETC improve its services and the delivery of these services. Responding to a complaint is also an essential part of providing a quality and safe service.

Scope

All ETC managers, staff and contractors acting on its behalf.

Policy

The Complaint and Appeals Handling Principles and Procedures sets out a fair and transparent approach to handling complaints from the public that:

- Provides guidance for ETC employees who may be required to receive and/or address public complaints or appeals.
- Ensures complaints are handled in a manner which is fair, courteous and respectful of privacy, and in line with ETC's EEO Principles
- Reasons are provided for decisions made in relation to any complaint or appeal received.
- All employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding handling complaints.
- All reasonable assistance is given to those who choose to make a complaint.

Definition

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, policies, procedures, costs, or staff of ETC.

An appeal (Registered Training Organisation (RTO) only): All students have the right to make an appeal against an assessment decision where they feel the decision was unfair or does not reflect their competence.

There are three levels of complaints at ETC, as listed below. All complaints are to be registered using the Laserfiche workflow.

- **Low Level Complaint:** Minor verbal complaints that occur and managed onsite. Complaints and handled at the time.
- **Level 1 Complaint:** Written or verbal complaint that requires further assistance, complaint cannot be resolved at front line. This includes complaints through our website, via phone, direct email or through formal channels such as ASQA or NCSL.
- **Level 2 Complaint:** Serious nature or escalation of complaint that has been referred from Level 1 or not resolved from Level 1 or a child safety related issue that is directed to the HR Manager and CEO.

Type of Complaint:

Complaint from public: If a member of the public is dissatisfied about the standard of service, policies, procedures, costs, or staff of ETC, they can make a complaint either:

- verbally over the phone or in person

- through the feedback form on the ETC website
- via social media platforms or
- in written form to an employee.

If it is a Workforce Australia complaint, there is a National Customer Service Line (NCSL) that Participants can contact. Free call: 1800 805 260

A downloadable complaints form is available on the Department's website or a hard copy is available from reception in all ETC offices.

Procedures

Managing Feedback & Complaints

For many customers, just asking for help can be difficult and stressful. Customers have a right to know they can complain, and how to go about it. ETC is also aware that customers may have diverse needs, such as people with a disability, or those who have difficulty speaking or understanding English well and will ensure they have equitable access to the complaint process.

Fixing a problem early not only increases customer satisfaction, but it also makes the most effective use of our limited resources. We need to be fair and impartial; handling a complaint in that way also reduces the risk of it escalating further.

Effective communication with complainants throughout the process can help avoid complaints escalating further. All complaints will be acknowledged, and complainants kept informed about the progress of their matters, particularly when delays occur.

Upon accepting a complaint, employees should clarify with the customer the outcome they are seeking, especially if it has not been clearly specified. A written response to the complainant is also important.

Keeping accurate records enables a complaint to be reviewed efficiently. It means ETC has reliable data about complaints, so we can use to improve services and help identify areas that need improvement. Careful analysis of complaint sources and trends will also assist decisions about planning and resourcing those improvements.

Employees must respect requests from a customer for a complaint to be handled confidentially or anonymously.

Any complaints that require a change in process, procedure or improvement will require the manager dealing with the complaint to lodge this suggested change through the MAD program and lodged in the MAD register.

All complaints relating to Child Safety (affecting a young person under the age of 18 years) are considered serious complaints and will be dealt with as Level 2 complaints. The HR Manager and CEO must be notified as soon as possible if a complaint relating to Child Safety is received.

All complaints, regardless of the level are to be recorded using the Laserfiche process. This is to be done by the staff member or line manager responsible using the Laserfiche workflow.

LOW LEVEL COMPLAINTS

A low-level complaint is best resolved informally by the people involved with notes added to the Customer's file. The complaint is to be added to the low-level complaints register the same day with a view to resolve also within the same business day.

Complaint	Descriptor	Action	Timelines
Low Level Complaint	Minor verbal complaints that occur and managed onsite. Complaints and handled at the time	Resolved by Site Manager that do not escalate to level 1 or above	Acknowledged at time

LEVEL 1 COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

Wherever possible, complaints are best resolved informally by the people involved. If a complaint falls within the scope of this Principle, it should firstly be directed to the person responsible for the decision, conduct, policy or procedure about which the complaint is being made, or their immediate Manager.

Once a complaint is received, the person handling the complaint should ensure they fully understand the issue before endeavouring to resolve it directly with those involved or, if they are not the best person to deal with it, refer the complaint to the Manager of that area.

In all cases, the complaint must be dealt with in a fair, prompt and professional manner. The complaint is to be recorded using the Laserfiche Feedback/Complaints process. A response whether it be verbal or written should normally be provided within 5 days, otherwise the complainant should be provided with an explanation as to when a response will be forthcoming.

Most complaints should be able to be resolved without progressing beyond a low-level or first level complaints handling process.

Complaint	Descriptor	Action	Timelines
Level 1	Written or verbal complaint that requires further assistance, complaint cannot be resolved at front line. This includes complaints through our website, via phone, direct email or through formal channels such as ASQA or NCSL.	Resolve informally by persons involved. If unsure, direct complaint to RM/State Mgr. in the area. Document in Feedback register by HR Manager.	Acknowledge within 24 hrs, Resolve within 2 or 5 business days

LEVEL 2 COMPLAINTS (SERIOUS NATURE OR ESCALATION OF COMPLAINT)

A complaint may be dealt with by way of a more formal internal review or investigation if it:

- Is of a very serious nature; or
- Relates to Child Safety (affecting young person under 18 years); or
- Has been referred by an employee who was handling the complaint at Level 1, or if they have suggested to the complainant that they submit the complaint for more formal review; or
- Has already been dealt with at Level 1 and the complainant is not satisfied with the process or outcome.

In all cases, complaints are to be recorded through Complaints/Feedback LF form from the complainant or line manager. This request is automatically reported to HR for further action. Regardless of how a complaint is made, information must be provided/collected in relation to the details of the complaint must be registered using the Laserfiche process. The names of any employees within ETC who may have already attempted to address the complaint and the complainant's desired outcome/remedy are required to be included.

A formal investigation of the complaint may need to be conducted by the Executive Manager/CEO or in limited circumstances, a person from outside ETC, appointed by ETC. Child Safety complaints may be subject to mandatory reporting requirements and will be investigated by the Child Safety Reference Group, which includes the CEO.

ETC or the external investigator will provide all reasonable assistance to those who need help to effectively communicate in relation to the complaint. Assistance may include, for example, access to an interpreter service or agreement to a personal interview during which the details of the complaint can be written down on the complainant's behalf.

ETC is committed to handling complaints in a manner that respects the confidentiality and privacy of those involved. It is important that to appropriately address complaints, it may be necessary for those handling the complaint to contact others to seek and clarify information. If the complainant has any concerns relevant to the confidentiality and privacy of their complaint, they need to be immediately made known to those responsible for handling the complaint.

An investigation generally involves collecting information about the complaint and then making a finding based on the available information. Once a finding is made, the CEO or the external investigator will make recommendations about resolving the complaint.

Complaint	Descriptor	Action	Timelines
Level 2	Written or verbal complaint that requires further assistance, complaint cannot be resolved at Level 1 level.	Complainant asked to put complaint in writing through the LF Feedback/Complaints form provided to them or available on our website. This	Acknowledge within 24 hrs, attempt to resolve within 5 business days. Written notification if

	Complaint is serious nature or escalation of complaint referred from Level 1 or not resolved from Level 1 This can include complaints through our website, via phone, direct email or through formal channels such as ASQA or NCSL.	request is automatically reported to HR for further action.	delayed. Resolution within 28 working days.
Level 2	Complaint relates to Child Safety matter	CEO and HR Manager notified about all Child Safety complaints through Complaints/Feedback LF form. HR Manager refers complaint to Child Safety Reference Group HR Manager/CEO investigates complaint. Child Safety Reference Group investigates Child Safety complaints and instigates mandatory reporting process, if required.	Within 5 days

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) only

Assessment Complaints, Appeals and Disputes **Steps and actions**	**Responsibility**	**Details**	**Timeline**
1. Discuss your results and concerns with your Assessor	Student /Assessor	If the student has a grievance about the results, the assessor will provide further feedback to clarify the decision of Not Yet Competent. Reinforce opportunity for re-submission.	Within 5 working days from the date of the result
2. Further Review	Student/ Training Manager	If the student is not in agreement with re-submission, they can request a re-marking by another Assessor by submitting a request in writing through the LF Feedback/Complaints form provided to them or available on our website. This request is automatically reported to HR for further action.	This must be done within 14 days of the final result being received

3. Continued Appeal	General Manager or Operations Manager	If the student is still dissatisfied with the re-marking result, then a meeting will be conducted with the General Manager or Operations Manager, Student and Assessor to discuss the details regarding the assessment decision.	This must be conducted within 14 days of the re-marking result being received
4. Appeal resolution	External	If the student is still dissatisfied with the final outcome then they are able to appeal to our RTO registering body: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) www.asqa.gov.au	

Responsibilities

The **employee** is to deal with the complaint in a professional, timely and courteous manner and respect the privacy of the complainant. Where appropriate, they provide assistance and information to people looking to make a complaint in accordance with this Principle.

While employees may not agree with the behaviour of a complainant, our focus must be on resolving the substance of the complaint.

Human Resources Team is responsible for:

- Receiving and reviewing complaint to determine next steps
- Forwarding the complaint onto the relevant Manager to be actioned.
- In the case of a Child Safety complaint, ensuring the LF complaint/feedback form is used and HR Manager notifies Child Safety Reference Group.
- Monitoring progression of open complaints to ensure they are closed out within set timelines.

Executives & Managers are responsible for:

- The complaints being effectively addressed in accordance with this Principle.
- Working in a constructive manner to address and identify opportunities to resolve complaints as promptly as possible, and to avoid their escalation.
- Ensuring appropriate annotations are recorded in the complaint/feedback form.
- The process to be followed at all times.
- The complainant being communicated to, in line with this Principle.
- Notifying the Human Resources Manager if any change is required to this Principle.
- Notifying the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of any lapse in process outlined in this Principle.

RTO Assessors are responsible for:

- Being the first point of contact in the event of an assessment appeal
- Responding to students regarding assessment feedback

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Reviewing the available information and determining the most appropriate approach to addressing serious complaints.
- Monitoring the progress of serious complaint processes and ensuring complainants receive a response/decision within 5 days, or otherwise receive an explanation as to when a response will be provided.

Related Documents and Policies

- Department Customer Feedback Guidelines (available from Provider Portal)
- Department Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions Form (Making a Complaint about Employment Services - Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government (dewr.gov.au)
- ETC Complaint Notification (feedback form on ETC's website)
- ETC Feedback Register