



## Policy and Procedure for Client Complaints (CF010WP)

Issue: 1.1

Date Approved: 18/07/2022

Next Review: 07/07/2025

### 1 Objective

Central Regional TAFE (the College) values client feedback and recognises that opportunities to improve products and services arise from effective handling of client complaints. The College ensures complaints are processed in a way that reconciles the interests of clients and the College whilst ensuring expectations of fairness are met.

This policy and procedure outlines the way in which the College manages and responds to client complaints involving the conduct of:

- the College, its trainers, assessors, or other staff,
- a third-party providing services on the College's behalf, its trainers, assessors, or other staff or,
- a student of the College

This policy does not relate to:

- Appeals by students against academic matters such as student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study at Central Regional TAFE (refer to Policy and Procedure for Conducting Student Appeals).
- A staff or student complaint of Sex Based Harassment (refer to Policy and Procedure for Equal Employment Opportunity).
- A staff grievance (refer to Policy and Procedure for Grievance Resolution).
- Appeals or feedback regarding decisions related to actions covered by the provisions of the Public Sector Standards in Human Resource Management.

### 2 Policy

#### 2.1 Access to the College's Complaints Policy

- 2.1.1 The opportunity for clients to provide the College with feedback, including using the complaints procedure, will be made widely available to clients through printed material and publication on the College's website:  
(<http://www.centralregionaltafe.wa.edu.au/>).
- 2.1.2 Where clients have special needs, every reasonable effort will be made to provide assistance if requested, and to make the complaint lodgement procedure as flexible as possible.

#### 2.2 Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness

- 2.2.1 Complaints will be handled fairly, recognising the rights of both the client making the complaint and the College, or the section/division of the College, or person against whom the complaint is being made. All parties concerned will be treated with courtesy and appropriate confidentiality will be maintained.
- 2.2.2 At all stages of the process, the complainant and/or respondent has the right to be represented by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person).

- 2.2.3 The College will be transparent and accountable in relation to client complaints by informing stakeholders about feedback received and actions taken to improve products and services resulting from analysis of feedback.
- 2.2.4 The complainant is to be informed of their right to be able to apply to an external agent if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process (e.g., Australian Mediation Association or Ombudsman and/or for onshore international students, TAFE International Western Australia (TIWA)).
- 2.2.5 The College agrees to be bound by any recommendations arising from the review by an external agent. The Managing Director will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the report from the external agent.

### 2.3 **Complaints are addressed in a timely manner**

- 2.3.1 In the interest of providing the most effective and timely address of client concerns and complaints, complaints should be dealt with as close to the source as possible and involve the people most directly concerned.
- 2.3.2 Where a complaint is made anonymously this will be regarded as feedback and incorporated into the College's continuous improvement processes where appropriate.

## 3 **Procedures**

A client may withdraw a complaint at any point in the procedure.

### 3.1 **Informal Complaint**

- 3.1.1 The first level of the complaint procedure is informal where a client may approach a member of staff to discuss a concern or make a complaint. This does not need to be in writing, and it is anticipated that most complaints can be resolved at this level.

A client may approach any College staff member to discuss a concern or make a complaint. The staff member has a responsibility to take prompt and reasonable action to try to resolve the complaint. If necessary, the staff member may ask for assistance from or refer the client to an appropriate officer, for example their supervisor or relevant Director.

- 3.1.2 Where the client lodging the complaint is under the age of 18 the staff member is to inform the client that their parents will be notified and asked to be involved in resolution of the complaint.
- 3.1.3 An informal response will generally be given verbally to the client within **ten (10) College working days** from when it was received. The client should be informed that a formal procedure is also available to them if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of the informal process.

### 3.2 **Formal Complaint**

- 3.2.1 Once it has been established that the complaint could not be resolved through the informal process the complaint is made formally in writing and must contain at least the following details:
  - Client's name and contact details.

- A description of the complaint, including where, when and who was involved.
  - A description of the steps already taken to try to resolve the complaint.
  - An indication of the client's desired outcome.
  - Clients may use the Client Feedback/Complaint Form ([CF005F1](#)) however in the interests of making the procedure as accessible as possible, provided the complaint is in writing, and contains the above details, this form is not mandatory.
- 3.2.2 Staff will provide assistance to clients in using the procedure and putting their complaint in writing, if this is requested. Staff may record a formal complaint over the phone into an email for actioning as a formal complaint. Clients may also ask a friend/colleague or fellow student to assist them in lodging a complaint.
- 3.2.3 Where the client lodging the complaint is under the age of 18 the staff member is to inform the client that their parents will be notified and asked to be involved in resolution of the complaint.
- 3.2.4 Planning and Quality will issue a written acknowledgement to the client's supplied email address advising that the complaint has been received and lodged as a formal complaint as per this policy. Also included is the expected outcome resolution date, and the name of the nominated Director, Manager or staff member who will be contacting them.
- 3.2.5 The Director, Manager or nominated staff member, will liaise with the client and relevant staff to ensure the complaint is resolved.
- 3.2.6 The client making the complaint will have the opportunity to formally present their case. This can be in writing or verbally and may involve clarification of the initial complaint. The Director, Manager or the nominated staff member, will facilitate this.
- 3.2.7 Upon completion of the investigation, the Director or Manager will provide the client with a response in writing, informing them of the outcome of the complaint and the reasons for any decisions.
- 3.2.8 The client will normally be provided with a written response within **thirty (30) College working** days from when the formal complaint was received. The Director or nominated staff member should keep the client informed of the progress of the complaint resolution or if there are any delays in the resolution process.

Where the College considers more than 60 calendar days is required to process and finalise the complaint, the College will:

- a. inform the client in writing, including the reasons why more than 60 calendar days is required; and
- b. regularly update the client on the progress of the matter

The written response will include the outcome of the complaint, reasons for the decision, any changes which have resulted from the complaint, an apology where appropriate, and information about the option to have the complaint reviewed by an external agency, such as the Ombudsman and will provide the contact details.

**For onshore international students** who are not satisfied with the outcome of the College's complaints process, they may lodge a request for a review with TIWA and additional contact details for TIWA will be provided.

- 3.2.9 All relevant information regarding the complaint is to be made available to all parties to assist in the resolution process. However, appropriate confidentiality must be maintained.

## 4 Definitions

**Central Regional TAFE, "the College"** – refers to Central 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** – 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.

**Ombudsman** – is an independent officer of Parliament with responsibility to investigate the actions of public authorities.

**Reasonable action** – 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** – an outcome to a complaint which seeks to reconcile the interests of the client making the complaint and the College.

**TAFE International Western Australia (TIWA)** – is the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and the registered Commonwealth Register of International Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) holder for the delivery of training to international and multijurisdictional students in Western Australia, and comes under the auspice of the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). TIWA delivers training in partnership with the Western Australian TAFE colleges.

## 5 References

AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaints Management in Organisations

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

[WA Public Sector Code of Ethics](#)

[Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986](#)

[Racial Discrimination Act 1975](#)

[Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#)

[Sex Discrimination Amendment \(Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status\) Act 2013](#)

[Ombudsman's guidelines for Effective Handling of Complaints made to your organisation](#)

Policy and Procedure for Conducting Student Appeals

Policy and Procedure for Equal Employment Opportunity

Policy and Procedure for Grievance Resolution

[Vocational Education and Training Act 1996](#)

[Higher Education Support Act 2003](#)

[Standards for RTOs 2015](#)

[TAFE International WA - International Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)

6 Documentation

Client Feedback/Complaint Form

7 Responsibilities

<b>Responsible Director</b>	Director Organisational Services
<b>Responsible Officer for implementation and monitoring</b>	Manager Planning and Quality
<b>Approved by</b>	Director Organisational Services