

 <p>Catholic Regional College Institute Of Training RTO 22427</p>	<h2>Catholic Regional College Institute of Training</h2> <h3>Registration No. 22427</h3>		
Department	Vocational Education & Training		
Quality Controlled Document Title	Complaints and Appeals Policy/Procedure	Date	February 2024
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Purpose

To provide a fair, efficient and inexpensive complaints and appeals process for students.

To clearly outline the steps for handling complaints and appeals received from learners, employees, third parties and stakeholders of the Catholic Regional College Institute of Training (CRCIT).

Responsibilities

The RTO Manager is responsible for ensuring the policy is understood and followed by all RTO staff. This policy is available for staff to access via the Staff Handbook, and for transparency for all other parties via the CRCIT website.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is generally negative feedback or dissatisfaction relating to a product or service offered by CRCIT. It could relate to any one of the following:

- Application or Enrolment Process
- Quality of Training and Assessment
- Student progress, support, or assessment requirements
- The way someone has been treated
- Actions or behaviour by another student

A complaint may be received by CRCIT in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the complainant to be acted on.

What is an Appeal?

An appeal is an application by a student for reconsideration of an unfavourable academic decision or finding during training or assessment. An appeal must be made in writing and specify the details of the decision or finding in dispute. An appeal could relate to any one of the following;

- Assessment outcome/result
- Response to a complaint
- Any other type of decision offered by CRCIT

An appeal may be received by CRCIT in any form and does not need to be formally documented by the student to be acted on. Ideally, appeals should be lodged within 28 days of a student receiving their original decision, however, the RTO will respond to all requests to review assessment outcomes regardless of the timeframe.

Early Resolution

Where possible, all attempts will be made by CRCIT to quickly resolve the matter. Attempts for resolution may include advice, discussions, and general mediation concerning the issue. Any staff member can be involved in this informal process for resolution. Once a complainant has lodged a formal complaint, the complaints handling procedure will be followed. In all cases, the RTO manager will document the issue on the Appeals/ Complaint register.

Complaints Handling Process

The following procedure is to be followed when a Formal Complaint is received:

- A Complaints and Appeals Form is received by CRCIT and is to be immediately recorded into the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- Complaints, which are received in other forms such as phone or email, are to be detailed on a Complaints and Appeals Form and then recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
- The Complaints and Appeals Form is to be forwarded to the RTO Manager who is to review the matter and make a recommendation as to how to respond. The RTO Manager may choose to consult with others within CRCIT or relevant agencies external to CRCIT in determining his or her recommendation.
- The RTO Manager may choose to make inquiries about the matter or may task another person to research the matter against relevant policy.
- The RTO Manager is to finalise his or her response to the complainant and provide the complainant with a response within ten working days from when the complaint is received at CRCIT.
- The response to the complainant must include information that demonstrates that the matter was thoroughly reviewed and what actions and outcomes have been identified as a result of the complaint.
- Opportunities for improvement that were identified as a result of the complaint are to be recorded on the Continuous Improvement Register and be recorded on the agenda for discussion at the next RTO Governance Meeting. The RTO Manager may, at his or her discretion, follow up with the complainant after consideration by RTO Governance to inform the complainant of the improvement actions identified.
- The Complaints and Appeals Register is to be kept up to date at all times to accurately reflect how the matter was responded to and the duration from the date, the complaint was received to the date the complaint was resolved.

Following the finalisation of the RTO's internal complaints or appeals process, should the complainant still feel dissatisfied with the outcome, and/or feel the RTO has breached its contractual obligations; a complaint can be submitted to the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) via the online form.

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/complaints/Pages/making-a-complaint.aspx>

Appeals Procedure

Applications by students for reconsideration of an unfavourable decision or finding are to be treated with the highest importance. An appeal should be made in writing and specify the particulars of the decision or finding in dispute.

Appeals should be lodged within 28 days of when the decision or finding is communicated to the student, however, the RTO Manager will respond to all requests to review assessment outcomes regardless of the timeframe.

The following procedure is to be followed when an application for Formal Appeal is received:

- A Complaints and Appeals Form is received by CRCIT and is immediately recorded in the Complaints and Appeals Register
- Person lodging appeals in other forms such as phone or email, are to be provided with the Complaints and Appeals Form and advised of the correct format for submission.
- The Complaints and Appeals Form is to be forwarded to the RTO Manager who is to review the matter and make a recommendation as to how to respond. The RTO Manager may choose to consult with others within CRCIT or relevant agencies external to CRCIT to determine his or her recommendation.
- The RTO Manager may choose to make inquiries about the matter or may task another person to research the matter against relevant policy. The RTO Manager is to consider applications for appeal based on procedural fairness. In most cases, this should include a careful examination of the system that the applicant is required to negotiate (e.g., the assessment system), the information they have been provided which has led to the disputed situation and the timeframes involved.
- The RTO Manager is to finalise their response to the applicant and provide the applicant with a response within 10 working days from when the appeal is received at CRCIT along with an expected date for resolution.
- The response to the applicant must include information that demonstrates that the appeal was thoroughly reviewed and what actions and outcomes have been identified as a result of the appeal.
- Should a resolution to the appeal take longer than the expected timeframe advised in the initial communication, further communication should be sent to the applicant outlining the reasons for the delay and providing an update on the expected resolution date.
- Opportunities for improvement that were identified as a result of the appeal are to be recorded in a Continuous Improvement Report and recorded on the agenda for discussion at the next RTO Governance Meeting. The RTO Manager may, at their discretion, follow up with the applicant after consideration by RTO Governance to inform the applicant of the improvement actions identified.
- If the applicant is satisfied with the response, the appeal is to be closed in the Complaints and Appeals Register. If the applicant is not satisfied with the response, the applicant is to have the opportunity for a person or a body that is independent of CRCIT to review his or her complaint or appeal following the internal CRCIT complaint or appeals process. This service is to be provided by CRCIT at no cost to the applicant. The applicant is however required to meet their own costs in relation to travel, time and in preparing any submission to an independent person or body.

- At the conclusion of the review, decisions or outcomes of the appeals process that find in the favour of the student or otherwise shall be implemented immediately.
- The Complaints and Appeals Register is to be kept up to date at all times to accurately reflect how the matter was responded to and the duration from the date the appeal was received to the date the appeal was resolved.

Relationship to Continuous Improvement

On occasions, the complaints and appeals handling process will expose weaknesses in the training and assessment system that can flow into the continuous improvement system as opportunities for improvement. This outcome of complaints and appeals handling is positive and should be actively applied by all persons involved.

CRCIT undertakes to apply the following principles to its complaints and appeals handling:

- A record of all complaints and appeals is to be kept by CRCIT including all details of lodgement, response and resolution.
- A complainant or person lodging an appeal is to be provided with an opportunity to formally present his or her case at minimal or no cost.
- Each complainant or person lodging an appeal may be accompanied and/or assisted by a support person at any relevant meeting.
- The handling of a complaint or appeal is to commence within 10 working days of the lodgement of the complaint or appeal and all reasonable measures are taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- The complainant or person lodging an appeal is to be provided with a written statement of the outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome.
- The complainant or person lodging an appeal is to have the opportunity for a person or a body that is independent of CRCIT to review his or her complaint or appeal following the internal CRCIT complaint or appeals process. It is noted that a review of findings by an independent person or body will generally only relate to the appeals process and is less likely to be required in complaints handling.
- CRCIT shall maintain the enrolment of the complainant or person lodging an appeal during the complaint or appeals process.
- Decisions or outcomes of the complaint or appeals process that find in the favour of the student shall be implemented immediately.
- Complaints and appeals are to be handled in the strictest of confidence. No CRCIT representative is to disclose information to any person without the permission of the Chief Executive Officer. A decision to release information to third parties can only be made after the complainant has permitted this to occur.
- Complaints and appeals are to be considered on the basis of procedural fairness and lead to opportunities for improvement

Related Policies

- Continuous Improvement Policy/Procedure

Related Forms

- Student-Complaints and Appeals Form

Related Documents

- Student Handbook
- Staff Handbook

Registers

- Continuous Improvement (tab 1) and Appeals and Complaint Register [\(tab2\)](#)