

Understanding Complaints and Appeals

Complaints are allegations made by a learner or client that relate to the conduct of an RTO, its staff, a third party offering services on its behalf, or other learners in the RTO

Appeals are requests for a review or reconsideration of decisions made by the RTO. These decisions could involve assessments or access to support services.

In both situations the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness must apply.

Standards for RTOs 2015 Requirements

Standard 6 of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 states that “complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively”. This means all RTOs must implement a transparent complaints and appeals policy that enables learners and clients to be informed of (and to understand) their rights, and the RTO’s responsibilities under the Standards, and in relation to consumer complaints in general. The Standard 6 clauses summarised include:

- **Clause 6.1:** the RTO has a complaints policy to manage and respond to allegations
- **Clause 6.2:** the RTO has an appeals policy to manage requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions
- **Clause 6.3 – 6.6:** outlines conditions related to the complaints and appeals policies

There are specific requirements regarding the implementation, accessibility, content, and the response time of an RTO's complaints and appeals policy. It's suggested that RTOs are well-acquainted with all clauses in Standard Six and that they adopt a standardised policy and procedure to log, address, and keep evidence of any complaints and appeals made.

Organisations should think about how they can utilise the data from complaints and their outcomes to drive improvements.

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.