

Complaints and Appeals Policy

The team at FTA work hard to ensure all our interactions with our clients and employers goes as smoothly as possible, however we know that on occasion this may go off track, so we need to give our clients the ability to make a complaint or appeal a decision.

All complaints and appeals are taken seriously and in fact we will always use them as a way to continuously improve.

It is our goal with any complaint or appeal that we resolve the issue efficiently to your satisfaction, however in the event you are not satisfied with the outcome on genuine grounds, you have the right to appeal that decision with a senior member of FTA or take it to an external impartial party via [mediation](#).

All complaints and appeals are responded to in accordance with this policy and procedure to ensure transparency and consistency, and are dealt with promptly, objectively and with sensitivity and confidentially.

Principles

- Students (complainant/appellant/you) have the right to make a genuine complaint about any parties involved in the delivery of their course including any staff member, student, third parties associated with the RTO, assessment outcome or stakeholder who they believe have acted outside of FTA's policies and procedures.
- When a complaint is made, the student and any involved parties will be informed, and given the opportunity to present their case at each stage of the process.
- The principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of this complaints and appeals process.
- You shall have access to both the informal and formal stages of this complaints, appeals and grievance procedure at no cost. If no resolution is reached internally, you will have the right to request external mediation (only after all internal resolution mechanisms have been exhausted). The RTO will choose the mediator through 'Australian Mediation Association' and nominate a date, time and location of the mediation session which suits all parties. All associated costs for mediation are shared equally by FTA and you, with fees due prior to attending the mediation session/s.
- You and any respondent attending mediation has the option of being accompanied/assisted by a third person (such as a family member, friend, counsellor or other professional support person, or a legal practitioner) if they so desire.
- No parties involved will be subjected to discrimination or harassment resulting from raising their grievance, complaint or appeal.
- FTA will make all attempts to respond to formal complaints or appeal applications within the time limits set out in this policy.
- At all stages of the process, discussions relating to grievances, complaints and/or appeals will be recorded in writing and/or verbal recordings, with reasons and a full written explanation outlining decisions and actions taken to be provided to you or your authorised respondent throughout the process.
- FTA maintains records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes within the Student Management System (ARTA), Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software and on the Complaints and Appeals Register, stored within secure company data files only accessible by authorised personnel.

- All communications and records arising from the complaints and appeals process will remain confidential in accordance with this policy; all relevant records are stored on secure company data drives only accessible by authorised staff members for a period of five years. Students have the right to access copies of their records at any time by emailing the Compliance team at info@fta.edu.au.
- Students are entitled to access the complaints and grievance procedures regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence, their mode of study, or the manner in which the student was enrolled.
- If a student chooses to access this policy and procedure, FTA will maintain the student's enrolment whilst the grievance and appeals process is underway.
- Where the organisation considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, you will be informed in writing, provided with reasons why more than 60 calendar days are required. In this circumstance, you will receive regular updates on the progress of the matter.

The steps in the complaints and appeals process are:

Step 01- Initial process

In all initial grievance or complaint matters, students should first attempt to resolve the issue informally by contacting FTA direct on 1300 990 064 or info@fta.edu.au to discuss the issue with our Learning and Engagement team. If this is unable to be resolved informally, the complainant will be asked to supply all available evidence before an investigation proceeds. The concern will then be attended to by our Chief Operating Officer. This is considered the formal stage. Decisions made at this stage are in accordance with the relevant policies and information outlined within the Learner Handbook. All formal complaints should contain a personal statement from the student outlining the relevant timeline of events, a clear statement about the preferred outcome, and all available evidence to substantiate the claim. Complaints about a particular incident should be made within 60 calendar days of the incident or event occurring. All genuine complaints are taken seriously and investigated in full, with complainants advised of the outcome in writing as soon as practicable (generally within 10 business days), and no more than 60 days without cause.

Step 02- Making an appeal (academic and non-academic)

Formal appeals should be lodged in writing addressed to Margie Bradbury - Chief Operating Officer at info@fta.edu.au, or by surface mail addressed to the Chief Operating Officer at PO BOX 7322 East Brisbane QLD 4169. When lodging a formal appeal, the appellant is required to provide all relevant information or evidence to ensure the efficiency of a full independent investigation. The appellant is advised of the appeal outcome in writing including the reasons for the decision/s and action/s taken as soon as practicable (generally within 10 business days), and no more than 60 days without cause.

Step 03 – Mediation

In cases where the complainant or appellant believes that the result of a formal appeal was made contrary to policy, or the decision maker was biased in their decision making process, upon request by the student, an independent mediator will be sourced by FTA through 'Australian Mediation Association'. The independent mediator will assess all of the available evidence from both parties and make a formal judgement on the matter. FTA agrees to be bound by the recommendations which arise from the external review of the complaint or appeal. FTA's CEO, Heather Gardner or Delegated Authority will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within 30 days of receipt of the recommendation. Mediation costs will be shared equally by the complainant/appellant and FTA. Requests for mediation assistance are to be made in writing addressed to Foundation Training Australia's CEO either by email info@fta.edu.au or surface mail to PO BOX 7322 East Brisbane QLD 4169.

Assessment Appeals

Appeals relating to an assessment decision (competent/not yet competent) must be lodged with your trainer and assessor within 21 days of receiving notification of the assessment outcome. All assessment appeals will be reassessed by an independent trainer and assessor (validation process). If the same outcome is yielded, the original assessment outcome stands, with the results communicated within seven days. If the student believes that the decision was made contrary to policy, terms and conditions, or the relevant training product, and can evidence this, a formal appeal can be lodged with the Quality and Compliance Officer for independent review, see complaints and appeals section of this document.