



Complaints and Appeals

Policy Statement

To be compliant with the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations*, Hervey Bay State High School has a publically available complaints and appeals policy.

Hervey Bay State High School has a complaints and appeals policy specific to its RTO operations.

The Principal (as the chief executive officer) is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school RTO complies with the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. This includes the complaints and appeals policy and procedures.

A **complaint** can be made to the school RTO regarding the conduct of:

- the school RTO, its trainers, assessors or other school RTO staff
- students of the RTO
- any third parties providing services on behalf of the school RTO (if relevant).

Complaints may be made to any member of staff.

An **appeal** can be made to the school RTO to request a review of a decision, including assessment decisions.

Complaints and appeals should be made to the trainer/assessor in the first instance to resolve. If the complaint or appeal cannot be resolved at the trainer/assessor level, the complaint should be forwarded to the Faculty HOD. Complaints can also be provided to the HOD Senior Schooling, or the Principal.

Hervey Bay State High School will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaints and appeals process.

1. Any staff member can receive a complaint or appeal. Complaints can be made verbally, in writing or electronically.
2. All complaints and appeals are heard and resolved within 60 calendar days of receipt. If the school RTO considers that more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the complainant or appellant will be informed of the reasons for the extended timeframe in writing and will be regularly updated on the progress of the matter.
3. The school RTO will maintain a secure Complaints and Appeals Register, documenting all complaints and appeals received, as well as actions taken and decisions made.
4. The school RTO will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes reviewing both the details in the Complaints and Appeals Register, and the complaints and appeals policy and procedures, and taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.

Complaints

The RTO identifies two types of complaint:

- a. **Type 1** – allegations of inappropriate behaviour and/or child protection, or a student who is at risk of harm or there is a safety concern. These allegations are processed according to the mandatory Student Protection Reporting Procedures as required by the Department of Education.
- b. **Type 2** – all other complaints.

Procedures

1. On receipt of a verbal or written complaint, the faculty HOD will be asked to investigate the allegations and:
 - provide written acknowledgement to the complainant
 - inform both the complainant and the respondent of their right to be assisted by a support person or representative throughout the complaint process and the investigation
 - communicate the progress of the proceedings to the complainant and the respondent throughout the complaint process
 - if the complaint relates to the conduct of a third-party service provider, the relevant RTO Officer (either HOD Senior Schooling or Deputy Principal) informs the third party on receipt of the complaint and communicates progress on the proceedings with the third party.
 - on resolution of the complaint, the Complaints and Appeals Register is updated with details of the allegations and resolution.
 - review the issues that instigated the complaint. This should aim to identify corrective actions that will eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of a similar complaint occurring in the future.

All communication by the RTO complies with the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

2. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the faculty HOD, a group of staff will review the evidence via a Complaints Committee. The committee must not have had previous involvement with the complaint, and must include:
 - the Principal
 - one or more representative/s of the teaching staff
 - an independent person.

The Committee will:

- review the evidence from the investigation and source additional evidence if needed
 - communicate the outcome/decision to all parties in writing within 60 days of receipt of the complaint/appeal
 - document the complaint/appeal — including the cause, actions taken, and decisions made — in the Complaints and Appeals Register.
3. If the complaint is not finalised within 60 calendar days of its receipt, inform the complainant of the reasons in writing and regularly update them on the progress of the matter.
 4. If the procedures fail to resolve the issue/s, the complainant may have the outcome reviewed (on request) by an appropriate party independent of the RTO.
 5. If the complainant is still not satisfied, the Principal will refer them to the QCAA website for further information about making complaints (<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/vet/rto-registration-audits/appeals-complaints-enforcement>).

6. The school RTO will undertake a continuous improvement process that includes:
 - reviewing the details in the Complaints and Appeals Register
 - reviewing the complaints and appeals policy and procedures
 - taking appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.

If the processes fail to resolve the complaint, a review by an independent party will be provided if requested.

Appeals

The RTO also provide avenues for appeal:

- a. Appeal of final assessment decision.
- b. Appeal of any other RTO decision.

Procedures

1. On receipt of a verbal or written appeal, the faculty HOD will investigate and:
 - provide information to the appellant on avenues for review
 - co-ordinate the appellant's trainer/assessor to review the decision
 - or, if requested by the appellant, organise an independent party undertakes a review of the decision
 - document the appeal in the Complaints and Appeals Register
 - securely retain all records of appeals and communicates outcomes to the appellant
 - review the appeal process to identify corrective actions that eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of the same problems occurring again.
 - if the appellant is still not satisfied, the faculty HOD refers the appellant to the RTO's Complaints policy.

Note:

For assessment results appeals, the faculty HOD ensures the appeals process is informed by the:

- assessment requirements of the relevant training product
- ***Principles of Assessment***
- ***Rules of Evidence.***

2. For all other appeals:
 - the HOD Senior Schooling reviews the original decision and consults school and department policies and procedures
 - if requested by the appellant, an independent party undertakes a review of the decision
 - if the appellant is still not satisfied, the appellant will be referred to the RTO's Complaints Policy.