



Learner Complaints / Grievances and Appeals Policy

Policy Category:	RTO Operational Policy
Policy Number: 2.019	Date written: December 2014
Related Governance / Enabling Policies:	Access and Equity Policy, OH&S Policy, Equal Opportunity Policy
Related Operational Policies:	Learner Recruitment, Enrolment and Induction Policy
Related Standards:	Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
Related Legislation:	<i>National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011, Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>
Person(s) Responsible for Policy:	Manager RTO

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the steps that learners (past, present and / or potential) would take in raising a complaint or grievance with Gowrie Victoria.

Principles

This policy applies to all Gowrie Victoria employees with responsibilities for the recruitment, enrolment, training, assessing, support and induction of learners, past, current & potential. The responsibility on employees is to ensure that all grievances from past present and potential learners are handled in transparent, consistent, fair and equitable manner.

Guidelines

Academic grievances may include: learner progress, assessment, curriculum and award matters. Non-academic grievances may include complaints in relation to the learner's personal information, harassment, vilification, discrimination, financial matters, fees and payments, application procedures, exclusions from events and facilities. Grievances about any aspect of a person's interaction with us are welcome. Gowrie Victoria is transparent about its protections for complainants and respondents and will not take any adverse action against complainants or respondents.

There is no charge for accessing our internal grievance stages.

A fee may be associated with access to an independent third party external review. This fee would be \$220 per hour. The fee is only applicable where stages 1 – 3 of our internal processes have been exhausted and a complaint cannot be resolved to the appellant's satisfaction, at which time they may request an external review. If the grievance / complaint was substantiated by the external reviewer, Gowrie Victoria would cover the cost of the external review.

Outcomes of all grievance investigations will be complete and unambiguous. As such we welcome any person who is involved in the complaint process to be accompanied and / or assisted by a third party, at any relevant meeting. Gowrie Victoria will not victimise or discriminate against any complainant or respondent.

We commit to a timely resolution of all complaints, refer to details at Complaints / Grievances staged process details on page 2 of this document.

Guidelines (continued)

We keep records of all grievances for at least five years. Parties to the complaint can gain access to records by writing to Gowrie Victoria. All records are treated as confidential and stored securely on internal systems.

All staff of the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) have the procedure communicated to them at induction, and receive re-fresher training in its application annually at the January RTO Meeting. This is full day meeting attended by all RTO staff. Ad-hoc changes to the policy / procedure will be communicated to all staff electronically.

The Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Resolution procedure is documented in the Learner Handbook and is available for all learner and staff. The Learner Handbook is provided to all current learners at enrolment, is covered in orientation classes and is available to access via: www.gowrievictoria.org.au

Complaints / Grievances staged process details

The process follows a straightforward, staged process and is initiated each time a concern is raised.

- 1. Informal Complaint** - the person receiving the complaint will aim to resolve it informally at the initial point of contact. If it cannot be resolved it must be put in writing and the grievance will become a formal complaint. Learners will be sent a copy of this policy and advised to put their complaint in writing.
- 2. Formal Complaint** - The learner will be invited to attend an appointment to discuss, and, ideally, resolve their concern with the RTO Curriculum Coordinator. The Curriculum Coordinator would identify whether the complaint can be resolved immediately or requires further investigation. Written details of the outcome of the formal complaint, including reasons for the outcomes and any solution(s) for consideration will be sent to the complainant within 5 business days of the concluded meeting. If further investigation is required, this will be notified and an additional 5 business days will be advised. This document will include the next steps in the process if the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage. The complainant will be advised of their requirement to respond and, if not resolved to their satisfaction, the matter will be internally reviewed.
- 3. Internal Review** – The learner will be invited to meet with Gowrie Victoria’s Manager RTO or other relevant Gowrie Victoria Manager. This person will have had no previous involvement in the grievance. Written details of the outcome of the internal review, appeals process, including reasons for the outcomes and any solution(s) for consideration will be sent to the appellant within 5 business days of the concluded meeting. This document will include the next steps in the process if the grievance cannot be resolved at this stage. The appellant will be advised of their requirement to respond and if not resolved to their satisfaction, the matter will be available for external review at the appellants’ request. .
- 4. External Review** – If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review. The manager RTO may arrange for the grievance to be heard by an independent third party who will mediate a meeting between Gowrie Victoria and the complainant. (a fee may apply, refer to Guidelines on page 1). If required, an external review will be heard and mediated by **Lifeworks**, for details of their process, refer to the Lifeworks website:

<http://www.lifeworks.com.au/dispute-resolution.html>

Implementing change

Recommendations arising from any complaints, grievances and / or external reviews will be reviewed by manager RTO where relevant. Any resulting systems, administrative and / or operational changes will be actioned by the Compliance / Administration team and formally discussed with all team members at the next scheduled RTO meeting.

How to Make a complaint

Complaints can be lodged via:

phone: +61 3 9349 3890

email: training@gowrievictoria.org.au

post: 16 – 20 Howard Street, North Melbourne, VIC 3051

Publication

A copy of this policy will be made available those seeking to enrol with Gowrie Victoria. A controlled version is available on our website: www.gowrievictoria.org.au

Ratification

This policy, its purpose, principles, guidelines and procedures was ratified by the CEO and Manger RTO on Wednesday 13 August 2014. This is line with the Gowrie Victoria's Board Delegations Policy and the Instrument of Delegation.

Related Procedures/Forms:

Learner Recruitment, Enrolment and Induction Policy

Location:

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Appeals Policy.doc

It is the responsibility of each employee, or those mentioned within the policy scope, to ensure that they are aware of changes and updates to policies. All employees must ensure that they have the most current version of a policy. Please refer to the electronic policy for the most current version.

Employee acceptance of and agreement with Policy content and conditions:

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Human Resource/ Manager witness:

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
December 14	1	Simon Daniel	New policy
November 15	2	Manager RTO	Policy review

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Version: 2 Date issued: December 2015

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