

## **Complaints and Appeals Policy**

### **1 Commitment**

FFTR is committed to providing fair and expedient hearing and resolution to complaints and appeals. This applies to learners/students, suppliers, host companies, other related third parties and staff alike. A complaint may be in any form, written or verbal.

### **2 Scope**

This Policy is intended to apply to any complaint, regardless of who makes it. We regard a complaint as any formal expression of dissatisfaction about our organisation, our staff, our volunteers, our partners, our contracted service providers or anyone else acting on our behalf. A complaint may be made by a person to whom we deliver services or who is affected by our services, a partner, a host organisation with which we work, our staff, volunteers, or a member of the public.

### **3 Publication**

The policy and procedures concerning complaints and appeals are provided to all learners/students prior to course commencement. The policy is also available for viewing on the Future Force website and on display in FFTR offices. Procedures are in easy to follow flowchart style and include expected timeframes, and can be provided upon request.

### **4 How complaints may be made**

Complaints can be accepted as a formal complaint as a result of written correspondence (e.g. e-mail), the completion of an FFTR Suggestion form, or completion of any alternate organisation's complaint form (providing it is relevant). Verbal complaints may also be considered a formal complaint requiring action under this policy.

### **5 Minor complaints**

A complaint would be considered minor if it can be responded to and resolved in the initial communication. This may be as simple as clearing up a misconception which can be easily corrected by a phone call, e-mail or indeed, any communication method appropriate to the incoming complaint method. Such a complaint should be recorded on the minutes of the staff meeting, including resolution. No further documentation is required.

### **6 Complex complaints**

A complex complaint is one that requires acknowledgement, initial assessment and investigation and may require remedial action e.g. change to the way in which we operate, training, counselling or disciplining of staff or volunteers etc. or even the involvement of regulatory/enforcement authorities.

Such a complaint would require further documentation in accordance with the procedure.



## **7 Responding**

Timeframes and methodologies for responding to complaints or appeals are detailed within the respective procedure. However the general rule is that for complaints that are not resolved within 5 days, our standard good practice is to acknowledge the complaint either by telephone or in writing, including an estimated resolution/response time.

Where 60 days or more are required to process and finalise a complaint or appeal, the complainant must be notified in writing, including being provided reasons for the expected timeframe. In addition, updates should be provided to the complainant at least fortnightly.

Where resolution is not deemed satisfactory, FFTR shall arrange an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party (if requested by the complainant) to review. The finding of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party shall be adhered to.

## **8 3rd Party Arbitration**

Future Force acknowledges the need for an appropriate independent party to be appointed to review a matter where this is requested by the complainant or appellant and the internal processes have failed to resolve the matter. Costs associated with independent parties to review a matter must be covered by the complainant/appellant unless the decision to include an independent party was made by Future Force.

The independent party recommended by Future Force is the Melbourne Commercial Arbitration and Mediation Centre (<http://www.vicbar.com.au/>) who have a set cost per matter; however complainants and appellants are able to use their own external party at their own cost.

Future Force will provide complete cooperation with the external party investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of this process.

Future Force will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within twenty (20) days of being notified of the recommendations. You will also be formally notified in writing of the outcome of the mediation.

## 9 ***Additional Avenues for Registering Complaints***

### *National Complaints Hotline*

The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/ authority/ jurisdiction to assist with their complaint. Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:

Calling: 13 38 73, Monday–Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.

Email: [skilling@education.gov.au](mailto:skilling@education.gov.au)

For more information about the National Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: [www.dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline](http://www.dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline)

### *Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):*

You may also complain to our RTO's registering body: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

However, ASQA will only use the information you provide to inform its regulatory approach and will not contact us on your behalf or act as your advocate. For more information, refer to the following webpage:

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/about/complaints>

### *Department of Education and Training (Victoria only)*

Complaints relating to government funded training under the Skills First Funding Contract can be made to the Department of Education and Training. The Department is principally concerned with complaints regarding RTO misconduct including unethical and fraudulent practices. If a party wishes to make a complaint to the Department, they can do so by:

– Downloading the Department's complaint form, available at <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/StateRegister/Public.aspx/lodgecomplaint>;

or

send letter to: Manager, Complaints Unit, VRQA, GPO Box 2317 Melbourne VIC 3001

or

call 03 9637 2806



**10 Confidentiality**

FFTR undertakes not to reveal complainant's name or personal details to anyone outside the organisation without the complainant's permission.

All complaint appeals details are maintained securely within the FFTR office and are not available for public viewing without the express permission of the Director/s the complainant, and the appellant.

**11 Recording**

All 'complex' complaints and appeals shall be recorded on the Complaints and Appeals register. This register records the date, nature (complaint or appeal), details of the appeal, the person responsible for resolution and the outcome, including external mediation details if required.

**12 Reporting**

All complex complaints must be notified to the Director/s who shall have ultimate responsibility for ensuring the correct handling.

**13 Continual improvement**

Notwithstanding clause 10, complaints shall be reviewed at the regular staff meetings as part of the ongoing validation of our materials and processes. They shall be used, along with other information sources, to continually improve our operations.

**14 Resources**

Australian Standard: Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations (ISO 0002:2004)  
Future Force Assessment Appeals Procedure  
Future Force Complaints Procedure

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