

Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy

Approved by: Chief Student and Community Officer

Approval date: 18 July 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, TAFE NSW acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

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Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate how TAFE NSW manages complaints and feedback made about its services, systems or facilities in a fair, effective, and timely manner.

Application of this policy will help identify significant and/or recurring causes of complaints, or areas of feedback that will be used to prioritise systemic corrective actions and support continuous improvement.

Section 2. Scope and Audience

2.1 In Scope

This policy applies to all complaints, feedback and compliments provided by any domestic or international TAFE NSW student, community member, stakeholder or member of the public about TAFE NSW, its agents, or engaged Third Parties, including but not limited to its services, systems and facilities. Anonymous complaints will be investigated to the extent possible and where sufficient information has been provided.

2.1.1 Complaints

A complaint is when a student, community member, stakeholder or member of the public tells us they are unhappy with something at TAFE NSW. This could be about our services, systems, facilities, how we deliver services, or how we manage complaints. The person usually expects us to respond and fix the issue, and in considering a solution, TAFE NSW will need to follow policy, procedure, and legislative requirements.

2.1.2 Feedback

Feedback is when a student, community member, stakeholder or member of the public share their thoughts, opinions, or suggestions about their experience with our training, facilities, or services. It helps us proactively make improvements and fix any problems. Feedback can be solicited, for example when students are sent targeted survey invitations asking for feedback on their course. Feedback can also be unsolicited and provided proactively.

2.1.3 Compliments

A compliment is a message from a student, community member, stakeholder or member of the public that shows praise, support or thanks. It is usually about a person, team or service, and shows appreciation for a job well done.

2.2 Out of scope

TAFE NSW may determine that a complaint is more appropriately managed through alternative mechanisms. These types of complaints may include:

- a. Staff complaints

- b. Assessment and other academic decisions
- c. Decisions about student conduct and discipline or other matters where other policies apply
- d. Public Interest Disclosures
- e. Complaints that require a separate response due to legislative requirements e.g. mandatory reporting for Working with Children
- f. Referring the complaint to another, duly authorised organisation e.g. the NSW Police.

In these cases, the person making the complaint will be advised that their complaint will be managed according to another TAFE NSW policy and/or referred to the appropriate third party.

Section 3. Policy statements

3.1 Principles of Complaint Management

3.1.1 Complaint management will be fair, effective and timely, and TAFE NSW will:

- a. Address each complaint in an objective, equitable and impartial manner.
- b. Manage a complaint in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- c. Ensure that every complaint is handled confidentially to the extent that is practicable. To investigate a complaint thoroughly, ensure procedural fairness and/or meet any legal requirements, TAFE NSW may be required to disclose some or all the information provided in the complaint.
- d. Manage any personal information that TAFE NSW is required to disclose during the complaint process, in accordance with TAFE NSW's Privacy Policy.
- e. Ensure that people are advised of the substance of any complaint that they are asked to provide response / input into. Respondents will be able to have a support person accompany them to any meeting and be provided with information regarding any other support services available.
- f. Where appropriate, offer complainants the opportunity to invite a support person to participate in the complaint process and provide the person making the complaint with information regarding other support options e.g. counselling services.
- g. Have an expectation that people making a complaint will treat TAFE NSW staff with respect at all stages of the complaint process, act in good faith and not behave in an unreasonable or inappropriate manner. This will also include responding to any requests for additional information in a timely manner, being honest and not provide any information that is false or misleading.
- h. Take reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because of their complaint.

- i. Manage conflicts of interest, real or perceived, by:
 - i. Ensuring that complaints made about individuals are handled independently; and
 - ii. providing an opportunity for an independent, internal review, where appropriate.
- j. Not charge any additional fee or other charge in handling the complaint.

3.2 Complaints Handling

- 3.2.1 TAFE NSW will ensure that the information on how to make a complaint is publicly available, easy to find and uses plain English. This policy and the supporting information and forms will be located on the TAFE NSW website.
- 3.2.2 A person making a complaint should provide sufficient detail to ensure the matter can be investigated, for example: what occurred, what they are seeking, what action (if any) that they have already taken to try and resolve the matter and any supporting evidence, if available. TAFE NSW staff may contact the person to gather sufficient details, if required.
- 3.2.3 Complaints should be submitted promptly to allow for a timely and effective resolution. They can be submitted in writing or captured on your behalf during a verbal conversation with a staff member. Complaints should be made within a 12-month period unless there are exceptional circumstances. TAFE NSW will have sole discretion to determine circumstances under which they will investigate complaints older than 12 months.
- 3.2.4 TAFE NSW will acknowledge receipt of complaints within two business days and commence initial assessment within ten business days.
- 3.2.5 All staff at TAFE NSW will attempt to resolve a complaint in a timely and direct manner, as close as possible to the first point of contact with the complainant.
- 3.2.6 TAFE NSW will aim to resolve complaints within a reasonable timeframe, usually within 30 business days. The complainant will be notified of the outcome in writing, including reasons for the outcome and their options for review.
- 3.2.7 Following the initial assessment of the complaint, a designated case manager will be assigned to ensure the complaint is resolved and to keep the complainant informed of progress.
- 3.2.8 Where TAFE NSW considers more than 30 business days is required, the person making the complaint will be advised in writing, including information on the reasons for the delay.
- 3.2.9 A person making a complaint will be:
 - a. Provided with information about TAFE NSW's Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy.
 - b. Listened to and treated with respect by staff and are expected to extend the same respect to staff.
 - c. Actively involved in the resolution process where possible and appropriate.

- d. Given an opportunity to be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings.

3.2.10 When TAFE NSW finalises the complaint, the person making the complaint will be provided with the following information:

- a. The outcome of the complaint and any action taken.
- b. The reason/s for the decision.
- c. The remedy or resolution/s that TAFE NSW has proposed or put in place; and
- d. Options for appeal e.g. internal or external review.

3.2.11 TAFE NSW will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented and monitored.

3.3 Internal Review

- 3.3.1 A person making a complaint has a right to request an internal review of the decision on their complaint, in most circumstances. An independent person will conduct reviews. Internal reviews may be limited to situations where there is new information and/or there was an error in the complaint management process or the outcome.
- 3.3.2 The outcome of an internal review must be provided to the complainant in writing and include the reasons for the decision in a reasonable timeframe. For International students this will be within ten days of the conclusion of the review to maintain compliance with the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 - Federal Register of Legislation](#).
- 3.3.3 If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the outcome, they will be advised that they can refer the matter to the NSW Ombudsman (and depending on the matter at issue, other bodies such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority).

3.4 Principles of Feedback Management

- 3.4.1 Feedback management will be fair, effective, and timely, and TAFE NSW will:
 - a. Manage all feedback in an objective, equitable and impartial manner.
 - b. Ensure that all feedback is handled confidentially to the extent that is appropriate. To investigate feedback, TAFE NSW may be required to disclose some, or all the information provided.
 - c. Ensure any personal information that is required to be disclosed during the Feedback process is managed in accordance with TAFE NSW's [Privacy Policy](#).

3.5 Feedback Handling

- 3.5.1. TAFE NSW will ensure that information on how to provide feedback is publicly available, easy to find and uses plain English. This policy and the supporting information and forms are located on the TAFE NSW website.
- 3.5.2. Unsolicited feedback can be submitted in writing or captured on behalf of a customer during a

verbal conversation with a staff member.

- 3.5.3. If the unsolicited feedback includes a Compliment, this will be delivered to the intended audience.
- 3.5.4. Solicited feedback will be gathered centrally by coordinated programs such as TAFE NSW Voice of Customer program, that consistently gathers feedback at scale from students, teachers and employers on TAFE NSW educational products and services at key points along the learning journey.
- 3.5.5. Other solicited feedback about products and services will be sought from time to time.
- 3.5.6. All feedback will be collected, collated and assessed by relevant staff for the purpose of continuous improvement.

3.6 Record Keeping and Acknowledgement

- 3.6.1 All documents and records of communication relating to complaints and unsolicited feedback will be recorded in the TAFE NSW complaint and feedback management system. Solicited feedback is recorded in the TAFE NSW Customer Voice management system. Solicited feedback is also recorded in other systems from time to time.
- 3.6.2 All complaints and feedback will be categorised to support management analysis and continuous improvement. These categories will be the basis of complaints and feedback reporting, which are provided to functional areas for review on a monthly basis.
- 3.6.3 Relevant retention periods will apply and are specified in the [Retention of Student Education Evidence Procedure, Administrative records \(GA28\) | NSW Government](#) and the [Records Management Unit Intranet page](#).
- 3.6.4 The information recorded will include:
 - a. Contact information of the person making the complaint or providing feedback
 - b. Issue/s raised by the person making the complaint or providing feedback
 - c. The outcome/s they are seeking and any other relevant information (for complaints only), and
 - d. Details of the TAFE NSW case manager (for complaints only).

Section 4. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
Person making a complaint or providing feedback	- Treat TAFE NSW staff with respect at all times and act appropriately, honestly and in good faith. - Provide sufficient information in a complaint or feedback.
All TAFE NSW staff	- Assist people who wish to make a complaint or provide feedback to access TAFE NSW's complaint and feedback process. - Respond to complaints and feedback as relevant to their role and responsibilities and in accordance with Customer

	Complaints and Feedback Policy and associated procedures.
Staff with complaints management responsibilities	Responsible for contacting the relevant areas to support investigation and resolution of the complaint, monitoring progress and ensuring there is regular communication with the person making the complaint, complaint finalisation and data capture.
Insights and Innovation, Product and Quality Group	Responsible for systematically capturing solicited feedback from students, teachers, and employers of current students throughout all phases of the learner journey. Develop and embed tools and processes to enable TAFE NSW to act on insights gained from customer feedback and close the feedback loop at scale. Responsible for qualitative and quantitative analysis of feedback around courses, learner outcomes and experiences, generating actionable insights, identifying trends and systemic issues with educational products and services, and disseminating insights to the appropriate audiences and business owners.
TAFE NSW Consumer Protection Officer	This role is held by the Executive Director Student and Campus Services. They are responsible for ensuring that TAFE NSW complies with consumer protection laws and that all consumers are treated fairly and ethically. Contact via email address: consumerprotection@tafensw.edu.au.

Section 5. Monitoring

- 5.1.1 The implementation, effectiveness, and relevance of this policy will be regularly monitored, reviewed, and maintained by:
- User feedback and regulatory reporting.
 - Provision of monthly reports to leads in each functional area.
 - Audit and reporting requirements in legislation and compliance obligations, and
 - Policy review periods if different to the default of every 3 years.

Section 6. Where To Get Help

- 6.1.1 For more information about this policy or help, you can:
- Visit the [TAFE NSW Complaints and Feedback](#) web page
 - Contact the TAFE NSW Complaints Referral Specialist
 - Contact TAFE NSW on 131 601 or the TAFE NSW website contact form [Enquiry](#)
 - Contact the Executive Director Student and Campus Services in their role as dedicated TAFE NSW Consumer Protection Officer on consumerprotection@tafensw.edu.au

6.1.2 TAFE NSW customers may also wish to seek assistance or a review from an independent organisation such as:

- a. Training Services NSW: Phone 1300 772 104. See [Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection](#) and [Contact Training Services | NSW Government](#) for more information
- b. [Australian Skills Quality Authority \(ASQA\)](#) : Phone 1300 701 801
- c. [NSW Ombudsman](#) : Phone 02 9286 1000
- d. [NSW Fair Trading](#) : Phone 13 32 20

6.1.3 TAFE NSW staff may also refer to:

- a. [Customer Relations and Complaints](#) intranet page
- b. [Handling Complaints from an External Customer](#) intranet page
- c. [Customer Voice](#) intranet page

Section 7. Governance Information

Governance	Details
Legislation, regulations, and standards	This policy is governed by: i. National Code Standard 10. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 - Federal Register of Legislation. ii. Revised RTO Standards National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 - Federal Register of Legislation iii. Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines
Related procedures	This policy governs the following procedures: i. Customer Complaints Management Procedure
Related documents	This policy is to be read together with: i. Customer Complaints Management Procedure ii. Managing unreasonable conduct by Complainants Procedure iii. Student Conduct and Discipline Policy iv. TAFE NSW Assessment Appeals Policy v. Assessment Appeals Procedure vi. Academic Integrity Policy
Accountable Officer	Chief Student and Community Officer
Responsible Officer	Executive Director Student and Campus Services
Content Manager number	PROJ17/55538

Governance	Details
Next review date	18 July 2028

Section 8. Definitions

Word	Definition
Student	In the context of this policy, a student is someone who has completed the enrolment process. They may be in different states of engagement, e.g. Active, Withdrawn, Complete etc.
Student Support Person	A support person may assist a student in understanding the process and the questions that are being asked of them, relating to their complaint. The support person may be a: i. TAFE NSW Disability Teacher Consultant ii. TAFE NSW counsellor iii. Aboriginal Student Support Officer iv. parent/guardian (for students under the age of 18) v. friend or family member
Public Interest Disclosure	A public interest disclosure is a disclosure about wrongdoing in the public sector that serves the public interest.
Records Management	The discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations. This work includes a range of activities (creation, capture, maintenance, use through to eventual disposal, planning, directing, organising, training) to ensure appropriate and trustworthy records in any format and generated by any process are available to the organisation.
Conflict of Interest	A conflict of interest occurs when a public official is in a position to be influenced or appear to be influenced by private interests when doing their job. A conflict of interest can involve avoiding personal disadvantage as well as gaining personal advantage. Private interest may include social and professional activities with individuals and groups including family and friends as well as financial interests. Conflicts of interest are not wrong in themselves. The important thing is to manage them properly by declaring any actual, potential, or perceived conflict.
Australian Skills Quality Authority	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector.

Word	Definition
Retention	A retention period is an aspect of the information management lifecycle that identifies the duration of time for which the information should be maintained or "retained" irrespective of its format (paper or electronic).

Section 9. Document History

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
5.0	18 July 2025	Chief Student and Community Officer	Updated to align with and reflect self-assurance as per revised ASQA standards 2025 with inclusion of feedback handling, compliments and reporting cadence. Updated to align with National code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018. Updated to accurately reflect role titles and responsibilities.
4.1	31 July 2023	Chief Product and Quality Officer	Minor updates to content
4.0	20 March 2023	Chief Product and Quality Officer	Updated to respond to internal audit findings
3.0	25 June 2022	Managing Director	Accountable Officer responsibilities assigned to Chief Product & Quality Officer
2.0	18 March 2019	General Manager, Governance, Legal and Risk	Update to reflect transition to One RTO
1	15 February 2019	General Manager, Governance, Legal and Risk	Initial release of procedure to align with commencement of the One RTO model.