A close up of a building

Description automatically generated

RTO Complaints Management System – Self-Audit

Please use this document and it’s companion guide ***Excellence in Complaint Management for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)*** to help you to identify any gaps in the plan or implementation of your complaints management plan and systems.

The self-audit reviews across eight critical areas. We encourage you to consult with your team to evaluate your complaint management system implementation.

**Do they know about your plan and how to respond if a complaint is made?**

The cross section should include senior leaders, training staff and first level management as well as support roles such as human resources and compliance managers. If your RTO engages contract trainers it would be informative to find out if they know how to engage with your Complaint Management System.

Poorly managed complaints are a risk to your business and one of the hidden waste’s that may be affecting your RTO.   
  
Without an effective system in place productivity is negatively impacted, hours are wasted talking about other staff members or teachers rather than resolving the issues. Without effective resolution, internal complaints can escalate into increased absenteeism, harassment and worker’s compensation claims and student complaints can result in complaints to the regulator. With the current “risk based” audit system in place complaints increase the likelihood of an unscheduled audit of your RTO.

An effective complaints management system harnesses complaints from all stakeholders and uses that information to support continuous improvement and innovation.   
  
Employee satisfaction and collaboration increases and training products, services and systems are improved by early identification and resolution of issues. Student satisfaction and engagement increases and training services are improved if students can provide feedback about their training experience.

# **Complaint Management System - Self Audit Checklist**

This self-audit will help you to identify the areas of strength and weakness in your complaints management system. Please read our **Excellence in Complaint Management Guide for RTO’**s if you are unsure of how to grade your RTO against any of the questions.

You can obtain a copy of the Excellence in Complaint Management Guide for RTO’s by calling 03 9503 9931 or emailing [office@mediationcentre.com.au](mailto:office@mediationcentre.com.au). Please return this self-audit to Joanne Law [joanne.law@mediationinstitute.edu.au](mailto:joanne.law@mediationinstitute.edu.au) for a benchmarking report about your organisation compared to others in your industry.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RTO Name |  | RTO Code |  |
| Contact Person |  | Phone |  |
| Email for report |  | | |
| Site Name / Location |  | # employees |  |

**Answer Scale**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 5 | the service is rating at the highest level and your processes are best practice. |
| 4 | the service is meeting and exceeding the indicator. |
| 3 | the service is complying with the guidelines. |
| 2 | the service does not comply with guidelines or benchmark but you have policies and processes in place to reach the indicator. |
| 1 | the service has not yet met this indicator and does not yet have a plan in place to reach the indicator. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Leaders commitment to improvement | | | | | |
| 1.1 Are your leaders responsible for communicating and promoting the complaints handling plan? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.2 Are there policies on effective communication and dispute management that are understood and used by staff? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.3 Are staff trained, resourced and supported when handling disputes? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.4 Does the RTO make it easy for all stakeholders to complain and is information made available on the disputes processes? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.5 Do you provide assistance to those who need it and encourage those who might not otherwise complain as a result of culture? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.6 Do you ensure complaints can be made anonymously? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.7 Is feedback actively sought from all stakeholders? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Accessibility | | | | | |
| * 1. Is information about the complaint system simple and easy to understand and presented in a clear, uncomplicated, large-print format identifying how, when, where and to whom complaints can be made? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are there simple and accessible arrangements for lodging complaints? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are staff responsive and do they treat all complaints seriously? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Does your organisation promote and advertise your complaints service and provide information for potential users? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you ask for feedback when talking to users of your services and with staff? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you have verbal complaint forms and written dispute forms available? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Responsiveness |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Can all staff recognise a complaint and assist in initiating the complaint handling process? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Is it made clear that complaint handling is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are all complaints that are escalated acknowledged within a set timeframe and are complainants told about the system and what to expect? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are complaints resolved within reasonable timeframes set out in your policy? Are all disputes tracked and complainants informed about what is going on? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Assessment and accountability | | | | | |
| * 1. Do you assess all complaints to work out which complaint handling process is most appropriate? Assessment should consider complexity, seriousness and the wishes of the disputant? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you have a rapid notification system so that senior management can be notified quickly? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Does your policy set out for when complaints will have an independent Complaint Manager allocated? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you have a policy set out for when complaints will have an external Complaint Management Service allocated? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Effective resolution | | | | | |
| * 1. Does your approach to complaint handling emphasise joint problem solving? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are all complaints investigated to determine what happened, the underlying causes and any corrective strategies? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Is any investigation process clear so that everyone can follow it? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are the processes fair and equitable? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you provide appropriate outcomes that are objectively fair? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Privacy and confidentiality |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Do you manage investigations in a confidential manner according to service guidelines? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you ensure complainants and staff know how their personal information will be used? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you store complaint records separately from other records and only use personally identifying information for complaint resolution? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you provide complainants and staff with known facts during an investigation, a summary of factors contributing to the dispute, information about what changes have been made (or will be made) and how those changes will be monitored? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Gathering and using information |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Do you record all complaints so that individual complaints can be tracked and to identify trends and patterns? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you monitor your system against the policy set out in your Complaint Handling Plan? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you regularly provide information to staff and other stakeholders about complaints so that they learn about how recommendations have been implemented and monitored? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do you know your regulatory obligations, comply with process and report relevant information to the regulators? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. Monitoring and improvement |  |  |  |  |  |
| * 1. Do leaders and senior staff use complaints information in planning, quality improvement and to inform professional development offered to staff and members? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are senior management quickly notified of all complaints with significant or severe risk and is action taken? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are policies and practices on complain handling regularly reviewed with stakeholders to ensure that they are effective? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Are complainants satisfied with the processes? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| * 1. Do the complaint processes work and are they monitored and audited against criteria? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Rating per area** *(add up the scores and divide by the number of questions in each section)*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Leaders commitment** |  | **5. Effective resolution** |  |
| 1. **Accessibility** |  | **6. Privacy and confidentiality** |  |
| 1. **Responsiveness** |  | **7. Gathering and using information** |  |
| 1. **Assessment and accountability** |  | **8. Monitoring and improvement** |  |

# The next steps

Mediation Institute has several services available to assist RTO’s to improve their complaint handling and compliance with Standard 6 of the Standards for RTOs 2015.

**Independent Complaint Handling Service**

This service provides the opportunity to escalate complaints to an independent mediator or investigator for mediation, investigation or root cause analysis facilitation

**Implementation support**

Half, full and two day workshops available to support customisation and implementation planning to deploy your Complaint Management Plan.

**Complaints Handling Advice and Support**

This service provides help for HR and other managers who need some independent advice on dealing with complaints. For a low monthly retainer fee you can email or phone for confidential and independent guidance on how to deal with specific issues that arise in your business.

**Training**

Training in mediation, root cause analysis, complaint management, interpersonal communication and related interpersonal skills.

Contact us on 1300 781 533 or email [office@mediationinstitute.edu.au](mailto:office@mediationinstitute.edu.au%20) to discuss how we can help you to improve your Complaints Management System.

*The audit reviews requirements against the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 as well as obligations under Fair Work Australia and best practice standards for high performance workplaces.*