



Lifeline Australia

RTO Concerns, Complaints and Feedback Policy

Lifeline Australia Registered Training Organisation Provider Number 88036

Owner: Executive Director, People & Corporate Services

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Table of contents

1	ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT	3
1.1	OVERVIEW	3
1.2	DOCUMENT HISTORY.....	3
1.3	SCOPE	3
1.4	RELATED DOCUMENTS.....	3
1.5	DEFINITIONS.....	3
2	CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PRINCIPLES.....	5
3	POLICY MECHANISMS	5
3.1	STAGE ONE - LIFELINE CENTRE	5
3.2	STAGE TWO - LIFELINE AUSTRALIA	6
3.3	WHAT LIFELINE AUSTRALIA CAN DO.....	6
4	COMPLAINTS HANDLING	6
4.1	TIME FRAMES.....	7
4.2	TYPES OF COMPLAINTS LIFELINE AUSTRALIA CAN HELP WITH.....	7
5	APPEALS	7
5.1	TYPES OF APPEALS LIFELINE AUSTRALIA CAN HELP WITH	7
5.2	TIMEFRAME FOR APPEALS	8
5.3	APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSOR DECISIONS	8
5.4	SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES	8
6	REVIEWS AND OTHER COMPLAINT MECHANISMS	9
6.1	INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF LIFELINE AUSTRALIA	9
6.2	MAKING A SEPARATE COMPLAINT OUTSIDE OF LIFELINE AUSTRALIA	9
7	OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT.....	10
7.1	FEEDBACK	10
7.2	STUDENT SURVEYS	10
8	REGULATION OF LIFELINE AUSTRALIA'S RTO.....	10
8.1	APPLICABLE LAWS.....	10
9	POLICY REVISION.....	11
10	REVIEW, AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS	11

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1 About this document

1.1 Overview

Lifeline Australia Registered Training Organisation (**RTO**) (provider number 88036) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its students and learners and is dedicated to providing an accessible and supportive learning environment. Students and learners are supported in expressing concerns, making complaints and filing appeals through a positive, fair and transparent process ensuring they can quickly and economically exercise their rights.

1.2 Document history

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
1.0	August 2024	RTO Compliance Lead	Implementation of new policy
1.1	November 2025	RTO Compliance Business Partner	Minor administrative amendment to policy approved by Executive Director, People & Corporate Services

1.3 Scope

The *RTO Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Policy* applies to all students and learners, who are enrolled in nationally accredited training with Lifeline Australia, as well as Lifeline Australia staff and contractors, and the third parties contracted to deliver training and assessment services on our behalf. In this policy, students and learners are collectively referred to as students.

This policy does not apply to complaints relating to services delivered by Lifeline including but not limited to crisis support and counselling services, or those made by employees of Lifeline Australia. Such complaints will be addressed through other mechanisms that Lifeline Australia makes available on [Contact us - Lifeline Australia](#) or under internal policies and procedures.

1.4 Related documents

Related resource	Location
RTO Certification Policy RTO Fees Refund Policy RTO VET Data Policy RTO Pre-enrolment Handbook	Lifeline.org.au

1.5 Definitions

Term	Definition
Appeal	A formal application to review and reverse a decision which a student finds unsatisfactory or believes to be unfair.
Appellant	The student who seeks a review and reversal of a decision from a senior Lifeline Australia manager.
Complaint	A formal statement of something being unsatisfactory or unacceptable and may be an escalation from a concern.
Complainant	The person who makes a formal complaint about the RTO, the nationally recognised training delivered, the trainers and assessors, or other Lifeline workforce involved in its administration and management.
Complaint Handler	The individual appointed by Lifeline Australia to investigate the complaint, who is independent of those involved in the complaint and may be internal or external.
Concern	A source of worry that is relevant to a student and has an adverse effect on their wellbeing. Concerns may be personal or may reflect individual or organisational behaviours that do not align with Lifeline's purpose. or vision of an Australia free from suicide.
Feedback	Information or opinion about something about the RTO, such as course content, materials, and training delivery, or support offered during training and other related processes, Feedback from Lifeline students, trainers, assessors, employees and contractors and the public, is a valuable source for identifying improvement opportunities for the Lifeline Australia RTO.
Independent review	Involves an external skilled person or group appointed by Lifeline Australia to independently review the process and decision made by Lifeline Australia and report any findings and make recommendations.
Lifeline Centre	The term refers to a member organisation of Lifeline that operates Lifeline centres in a state or territory in Australia as well as Lifeline Australia when it provides DV-alert training via its DV-alert team.
Lifeline workforce	Includes employees, contractors, and volunteers from Lifeline Centres.
Procedural fairness	A fair and reasonable process for handling a complaint where all parties have an opportunity to be heard. Procedural fairness acknowledges that people are the heart of the complaints process.
Respondent	The individual/s of whom the complaint is made.
Appeal	A formal application to review and reverse a decision which a student finds unsatisfactory or believes to be unfair.

2 Concerns, complaints and appeals principles

Lifeline Australia respects and acknowledges that addressing concerns, complaints or appeals, involves multiple parties who may be named or otherwise involved. These parties may include individuals who provide information and guidance to students or members of the Lifeline workforce. All information will be handled confidentially and safely, with discussions limited to those directly relevant to the matter and your privacy respected.

Lifeline Australia recognises that each individual has a right to be heard, to be treated fairly, to be informed of the complaint being made, to have an opportunity to respond, and to receive updates about the status of the complaint.

Lifeline Australia will take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- concerns, complaints and appeals are resolved in a manner that is fair, sensitive, and prompt;
- the environment in which interactions take place is safe and respectful;
- complaint handling mechanisms are accessible, affordable, confidential and supportive; and
- feedback mechanisms improve the RTO's systems and processes and support continuous improvement.

Further to the above reasonable steps, Lifeline Australia:

- acknowledges and will consider all complaints submitted by students, extending to prospective and former students, as well as trainers and assessors delivering services on its behalf, and other relevant parties to the RTO;
- provides and covers the cost of independent review when needed, at no expense to a complainant,
- hears all appeals submitted by students, extending to prospective students regarding reviews of decisions related to RTO services, including special circumstances;
- allows critical peer-review in assessment appeals based on procedural fairness and will ensure valid assessment; and
- welcomes feedback from all other parties and values the insights shared.

Lifeline Australia asks that all parties including complainants and appellants, engage in the process in an open, respectful, and safe manner, with the view to accepting the outcome.

3 Policy mechanisms

Lifeline Australia has two (2) mechanisms available for students:

1. Stage one resolution through your Lifeline Centre; and
2. Stage two resolution through Lifeline Australia.

A complainant or appellant may also submit a claim or action with a regulatory body, such as a government agency, which may involve a broader investigation. This process is self-managed independently by the complainant and does not restrict their rights. See section 10.2 for more information.

3.1 Stage one - Lifeline Centre

A stage one resolution is recommended initially for its speed and the advantages of being informal, which allows for immediate, or near to, implementation of actions. Your enrolment status will remain unaffected, and you will not face any disadvantage.

Our recommendation is to discuss the concern with your trainer, assessor or approach the Lifeline Centre Training Manager or equivalent, for early resolution, where you feel safe to do so. Most administrative concerns are capable of being satisfactorily resolved directly with your Lifeline Centre.

3.2 Stage two - Lifeline Australia

If a concern remains unresolved or you prefer to immediately escalate to Lifeline Australia for formal investigation, you can begin the process by contacting Lifeline Australia directly by emailing assurance@lifeline.org.au. The complaint handler will respond to you within seven (7) calendar days.

3.3 What Lifeline Australia can do

You can initiate any of the following escalation processes regarding:

- making a formal complaint;
- filing an appeal; or
- providing any feedback outside of survey collections or direct communications to a Lifeline Centre Training Manager or equivalent.

4 Complaints handling

Lifeline Australia aims to resolve concerns and complaints promptly and respectfully. When the matter is referred to us, we will seek to understand what is important to you.

You are not required to initially submit your issue in writing, however we can assist you in documenting your complaint if requested. A complaint handler will be in contact with you within seven (7) calendar days to conduct an initial assessment and discuss available options. The complaint handler is responsible for ensuring the information handled during the investigation is stored securely and used only for the purpose it was collected. The complaint handler will be responsible for recordkeeping.

Lifeline Australia will work to finalise the complaint within 60 calendar days from the date it was first notified. If the matter is not resolved within 60 calendar days, we will write to you:

- to communicate the reasons for the delay in writing;
- to provide reasons if it has determined that the complaint cannot proceed further;
- if you need to consider referring your complaint to a government agency for additional options;
- about the opportunity to appeal to a higher authority in Lifeline Australia for a review; or
- to consider and offer independent review, if applicable.

All decisions regarding the outcome of a complaint will be provided in writing.

4.1 Time frames

Lifeline Australia will keep you informed of the progress and provide written documentation regarding specific timeframes related to your matter.

4.2 Types of complaints Lifeline Australia can help with

You can submit a complaint about any concern related to the RTO, including but not limited to:

- enrolment;
- health and safety conditions and practices within the training environment;
- facilities, resources and equipment required for training and assessment;
- effectiveness and adequacy of the training and assessment provided;
- fairness or application of Lifeline Australia's RTO policies or procedures;
- handling and protection of personal information;
- legal compliance and ethical concerns;
- support services, including requests for reasonable adjustments for people with special educational needs;
- inadequate adjustments or practices affecting equal access to the training;
- behaviour of Lifeline staff, contractors or third parties;
- behaviour or performance of trainers, assessors, or other students;
- modifications to the delivery of training and assessment services; and
- billing and refunds.

5 Appeals

If you are not satisfied with the decision regarding your complaint and how it was resolved, you have the option to escalate your matter as an appeal, to a higher authority in Lifeline Australia for additional review. This review will assess both the procedural fairness of our processes and accuracy of the original decision, with the possibility of overturning the decision.

5.1 Types of appeals Lifeline Australia can help with

Lifeline Australia acknowledges and recognises there may be instances when a student submits an appeal that includes elements of a complaint. In such matters, Lifeline Australia will inform you how your application will be handled, that may need the complaint to be managed separately.

A student may appeal a decision if they believe it negatively impacts their ability to demonstrate that the appeal is made in good faith. Appeals may consider reviews of decisions related to:

- acceptance and registration of students;
- disputes related to fees, billing, or refunds;
- requests for consideration of exceptional or mitigating factors;
- disagreements with the assessment of skills and knowledge based on the evidence;
- advancement or progression through the course;

- disputes regarding the final results or results recorded, including issues with the records held by the Unique Student Identifier (USI) Registrar; or
- fairness or application of RTO complaints handling and how a decision may have been made in error.

5.2 Timeframe for appeals

An appeal must be submitted within 30 calendar days after communication of a decision.

5.3 Appeals against Assessor decisions

Before pursuing a formal appeal, students should raise any concerns about assessments with their trainer or assessor as early as possible. If a student believes their assessment results were not valid, they should discuss the results and next steps for reattempting the assessment. Up to three (3) formal attempts are allowed to demonstrate competency in assessment tasks.

A student may appeal an assessment result if they believe the assessment was conducted improperly. Circumstances that may warrant an appeal of an assessor's decision include:

- instructions and understanding of the assessment task;
- consent to the assessment;
- the student not being prepared for the assessment;
- the assessor not following the assessment process;
- inappropriate conduct by the assessor;
- failure of the assessor to explain the assessment requirements or communicate the result;
- the student was not given opportunities for second and third attempts;
- the assessment not corresponding to the program;
- failure to make reasonable adjustment or discriminatory practices;
- breaches of Lifeline Australia's RTO policies and procedures; or
- the assessment being interrupted or stopped for reasons other than safety.

If it becomes necessary to appoint a second assessor, Lifeline Australia will appoint an independent assessor, and their decision will be final. In matters where allegations of academic misconduct by a student have been upheld, no separate assessment appeals will be permitted.

5.4 Special circumstances

Appeals may also be requested if there are validated significant circumstances such as illness, medical conditions, disability, maternity or other personal circumstances, that affect the ability to demonstrate competency.

Special circumstances may also extend to reasonable requests for extensions for assessment submissions and completion dates. If a Lifeline Centre considers a student is falling behind and the student has raised a complaint with Lifeline Australia, Lifeline Australia will assess the student's situation to determine if a deferral is more suitable, ensuring that the student can return to the course successfully or evaluating the need for refresher training. Such decisions will be made with the student's best interest in mind

while considering all relevant factors. In some matters, re-enrolment at a future date may be the most fair and reasonable option for all the parties.

6 Reviews and other complaint mechanisms

6.1 Independent review of Lifeline Australia

Should you request for an independent review of the processes for procedural fairness used by Lifeline Australia, including reasonableness of the timeframes and the final decision made by Lifeline Australia, you may request a review by an independent reviewer. This will be at no or low cost to you. To initiate this review, please write to us.

6.1.1 Arrangements for independent review

Lifeline Australia will appoint a qualified professional to conduct the independent review. This professional will be selected either by the NSW Law Society or a professional chosen by Lifeline Australia who will use a resolution system recognised by the Australian Government Attorney General's office.

6.2 Making a separate complaint outside of Lifeline Australia

If your concern or complaint has not been met by Lifeline Australia for refunds, human rights or safety, consider escalating to other regulators tabled below. These other mechanisms for redress, including information about your rights, may be able to conciliate on your behalf.

Government agency	Complaint	How they will assist
Consumer Protection Agencies	Refund	If you believe you have been treated unfairly as a consumer regarding a refund, you can seek support from your state or territory consumer protection agency or the Australian Government Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (accc.gov.au).
Australian Human Rights Commission	Human rights	The Australian Human Rights Commission can investigate and conciliate on a range of complaints related to human rights and/or discrimination (humanrights.gov.au).
National VET Regulator	RTO obligations	The Australian Government's Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector. ASQA accepts complaints about training providers who are not meeting their registered training organisation obligations. If you believe that your complaint involves non-compliance with the regulations or obligations of a registered training organisations that warrants the attention of ASQA, go to ASQA's website (asqa.gov.au) for more

Government agency	Complaint	How they will assist
		information or ASQA's complaints portal (asqaconnect.asqa.gov.au).

7 Opportunity for improvement

7.1 Feedback

You can provide feedback directly to Lifeline Australia outside of any survey collection or direct communications with a Lifeline Centre Training Manager or equivalent. You can provide this feedback by emailing rto@lifeline.org.au.

7.2 Student surveys

All students are surveyed by Lifeline Australia about their experience. If you believe you have not been given the opportunity to participate in a satisfaction survey, you can let us know by emailing rto@lifeline.org.au.

8 Regulation of Lifeline Australia's RTO

Lifeline Australia's RTO training operations are regulated by ASQA. This regulation applies to our conduct as a training provider and accountability for the quality of the training and assessment services provided to students.

8.1 Applicable Laws

- Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
- Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW) and other Australian states and territorial equivalents
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)
- The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 (Cth)
- The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) and other Australian states and territorial equivalents
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW) and other Australian states and territorial equivalents.

9 Policy revision

Lifeline Australia may review this policy and apply variations at its discretion. The current policy will be published on lifeline.org.au.

10 Review, amendments and revisions

The RTO Concerns, Complaints and Feedback Policy will be reviewed at least once every 3 years by the Executive Director, People & Corporate Services. Any recommendations resulting from this review will be presented to the relevant Executive member or CEO for approval, as designated by the Board of Lifeline Australia.