

COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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1.6. Communication Policy and Procedure

Policy Content

Aspect	Details
Regulator	Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)
Standards Referenced	
Legislation / Requirements	

Purpose

This policy ensures that all communication activities within the RTO environment are timely, accurate, professional, and compliant with regulatory requirements. It supports effective information dissemination and interaction among internal and external stakeholders, fostering clear understanding and cooperation.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to maintain structured, multi-directional communication that facilitates transparent operations and upholds the integrity and accountability of the RTO. It aims to ensure that all official communication—written, verbal, digital, and published—is managed professionally and in accordance with applicable standards.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Current, prospective, and former students
- Trainers, assessors, and RTO personnel
- Education agents
- Government agencies
- Industry and community stakeholders

Procedures

1.6.1. Types of Communication

Communication within and beyond the RTO includes diverse methods. Each mode must be clear, accurate, and approved. The types of communication recognised by the RTO are:

- **Web-based Communication:** Information shared through the RTO's website must be current and reflect the organisation's approved programs, policies, and updates.
- **Marketing and Publications:** This includes brochures, flyers, newsletters, emails, and printed or electronic student notices. All content must be authorised prior to release.
- **Social Media:** Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or others are used for updates and student engagement. Only approved staff may post content after formal review.
- **Information Sessions:** Conducted for students or agents (e.g., open days, orientation events). Any material presented (slides, handouts, speeches) must be pre-approved.
- **Induction Sessions:** Communication during staff or student induction must align with official RTO material and be consistent with current policies.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** Notifications such as location changes, student visa matters, or operational updates to authorities must be communicated formally in writing.
- **Official Meetings:** This includes agendas, notices, reports and records of board, department, or compliance meetings.
- **Grievances and Complaints:** Communication in response to or concerning complaints must follow the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Policy and be documented.
- **Internal Upward/Downward Communication:** Correspondence between staff, PEO, management, and board members must be consistent, respectful, and structured.
- **External Stakeholder Communication:** All interactions with regulators, law enforcement, the media, and public bodies must be conducted via the PEO or authorised delegates only.

1.6.2. Dissemination of Information

To maintain consistent messaging and accuracy:

- **Website Management:** The RTO website is regularly reviewed. Any updates or uploads must be reviewed and authorised before publishing.

- **Social Media Platforms:** Managed by delegated staff. Posts must be reviewed and comply with branding and factual accuracy protocols.
- **Printed Marketing Collateral:** Brochures, posters, and advertisements must be approved before printing or distribution.
- **Public Events and Info Days:** All materials used in such events must be pre-approved by senior management.
- **Staff and Student Inductions:** The induction content must be standardised and aligned with approved policy documents.
- **Official Notices and Announcements:** Any notice distributed (e.g., timetable changes, events, class updates) must be written on RTO letterhead, approved, and signed before circulation.
- **Meeting Documentation:** Minutes, reports, and agendas must be formally documented and securely stored.
- **Student or Staff Disciplinary Notices:** These must be delivered in line with the Disciplinary Policy, documented appropriately, and kept confidential.
- **Telephone and Email Communication:** Voicemail greetings and email signatures must follow standard RTO templates and be updated regularly.

1.6.3. Communication Channels and Authorisation

- **RTO Board Communication:**
The PEO must provide the Board with regular updates, including meeting agendas, minutes, strategic directives, and compliance reports. These must be distributed in advance to enable informed discussions.
- **Executive-to-Staff Communication:**
Communication from the PEO or Board (e.g., Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plans) is formally distributed via internal bulletins, notices, intranet updates, or scheduled meetings.
- **Committee Communication:**
Committees like the Management Committee or Quality & Compliance Committee must document decisions and share relevant outcomes with affected staff via meeting minutes and circulars.
- **Official Correspondence Protocol:**
Only the PEO or their authorised delegate is permitted to issue formal

written communications on behalf of the RTO to external parties. No staff member is to issue formal documents independently.

- **Complaints and Grievances:**
All complaints must be submitted in writing. They are reviewed by appropriate personnel in accordance with the RTO's Complaints and Appeals Policy.
- **Hierarchical Communication:**
Staff must follow the chain of command when raising concerns, requesting leave, or seeking procedural clarifications. Similarly, students must be directed to the appropriate staff member for their concerns.
- **Student Support Communication:**
Trainers/Assessors are the initial point of contact. If the issue is unresolved, students may approach the RTO Manager or Student Support Officer (SSO).

1.6.4. Media and External Communication

- **Communication with Media:**
Only the PEO is authorised to communicate with any form of media. Staff are strictly prohibited from commenting publicly on RTO matters without formal authorisation.
- **External Contact Etiquette:**
Staff interacting with suppliers, guest speakers, or excursion providers must obtain prior approval from the relevant manager and maintain professional communication standards.
- **Privacy and Information Disclosure:**
The RTO collects personal data only with consent and only uses it for the stated purpose. Any disclosure of personal or confidential information must be authorised by the PEO.
- **Freedom of Information Requests:**
All external requests for information must be referred to the PEO or their nominee. Formal requests may require submission under the Freedom of Information Act.
- **Requests from Police or Government Bodies:**
These must be immediately referred to the PEO. No staff member may provide information or conduct interviews without PEO direction.

- **Legal Requests and Subpoenas:**
If the RTO receives a court subpoena or legal notice, the PEO must be consulted immediately. Staff must comply with legal instructions under the PEO's direction.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role/Position	Responsibilities
PEO (Principal Executive Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authorise all formal and external communications on behalf of the RTO- Approve content for website, marketing, media, and legal notices - Handle all media inquiries and ensure compliance with public communication protocols - Provide updates to the RTO Board and ensure communication flow between Board and staff - Authorise disclosure of personal or confidential information to external bodies - Oversee implementation of communication standards and respond to Freedom of Information requests and subpoenas
RTO Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervise internal communication across departments - Ensure all staff and students receive accurate and timely information - Oversee induction communication for students and new staff - Approve notices, bulletins, and meeting documentation - Assist PEO in coordinating communication with external parties, including agencies and legal authorities
Student Support Officer (SSO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve student-related communication (e.g., notices, disciplinary advice) - Respond to student concerns and escalate issues per the communication hierarchy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversee communication on student welfare and induction content
Compliance and Marketing Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare and review communication material for compliance and branding- Ensure all public-facing communication (web, social media, marketing) is current, accurate, and approved - Manage content updates and publications following regulatory changes
Trainers and Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Act as the first point of communication for students with academic or personal concerns - Ensure students are informed of key updates (e.g., timetable changes, assessments) - Guide students through communication pathways and escalate unresolved issues
RTO Staff (All)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain professionalism in all internal and external communications - Follow approved communication formats and authorisation protocols - Direct sensitive or external enquiries to the RTO Manager or PEO - Comply with hierarchy for addressing concerns and requests
Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receive and review reports, directives, and updates from the PEO - Contribute to strategic communication planning and governance decisions

Retention of records

The RTO retains communication-related records in accordance with **Clause 10 of the Standards for RTOs 2025** and relevant ESOS requirements. This ensures transparency, traceability, and audit readiness.

Aspect	Requirement
Retention Period	All communication records including meeting minutes, email notices, media releases, and regulatory correspondence are retained for a minimum of five (5) years, unless otherwise required under specific legislation or contract.
Record Types	Includes: official emails, internal notices, student induction materials, published content approvals, meeting documentation, complaint responses, marketing sign-offs, and external correspondence.
Storage Format	Records are stored securely in approved digital platforms with restricted access and version control. Hard copies, if used, are stored in access-controlled cabinets.
Access and Retrieval	Access to records is restricted to authorised staff such as the RTO Manager, Compliance Officer, and PEO. Records are maintained in an audit-ready format and retrievable upon request.

Review Process

- **Review Frequency:** This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if significant changes to standards, regulations, or operational procedures occur.
- **Responsibility for Review:** The RTO Manager, under the direction of the PEO, is responsible for initiating the review process.
- **Review Method:**
 - **Gather feedback from internal staff and stakeholders on the effectiveness of communication channels and practices.**
 - **Assess compliance with relevant Standards for RTOs and the ESOS National Code.**
 - **Identify gaps, inaccuracies, or improvements required in communication systems.**
 - **Ensure updates are aligned with new marketing materials, enrolment procedures, and information systems.**

- **Amendment Record:** All amendments must be documented in the version control register and approved by the PEO before implementation.
- **Stakeholder Notification:** All staff and stakeholders will be informed of any significant changes via email and internal meetings. Updated versions will be uploaded to the RTO's intranet and website.

Confidentiality and Privacy Statement

- The RTO is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all stakeholders.
- Any communication involving personal, academic, or sensitive information will be conducted in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles.
- Staff must not share personal information without written consent or a lawful reason, such as a formal request from a government body or court subpoena.
- All external information requests must be directed to the PEO. Unauthorised disclosure of information may result in disciplinary action.
- Personal information collected during communication processes will be used solely for its intended purpose and handled securely.

Publication and Accessibility

- The approved Communication Policy and Procedure will be made available:
 - On the RTO's official website for prospective students and stakeholders.
 - On the RTO intranet for internal staff access.
 - During staff and student inductions as part of orientation materials.
- Printed copies will be made available upon request.
- A reference to this policy is included in the Student Handbook and Staff Handbook for transparency.