

General Warning

The purpose of this fact sheet is to give general introductory information about the complaints process. It does not contain legal advice.

WARNING: Alternative legal action should be considered before making a complaint. What is included in a complaint may be relevant to any current or future legal proceedings. If you are involved in legal action you should immediately see a lawyer and not proceed with a complaint.

If you (or the complainant, if you are complaining on their behalf) want financial compensation, support or money you should see a lawyer before making a complaint.

General complaint information

Complaints are rarely about just one thing. When you have a problem, it may be that a number of things have gone wrong. Below are some of the common areas where issues may arise that could lead to a complaint.

Discrimination	Disability and NDIS services	Policing, Custody and Detention
Seniors and Aged Care supports and services	Consumer and Business disputes	Phone and Internet services
Banking, Insurance and Superannuation	Energy and Water services	Housing and Real Estate
Health Care services	Employment issues	Education and Training providers
Government Agencies and Departments	Child Safety and Protection	State Fines and Debts
Corruption	Privacy and Access to Information	Media and Publications

There are different complaint bodies to handle different types of complaints. You should consider the different pathways available to decide the most appropriate pathway for your circumstances. One event could lead to multiple complaints. That means you may need to lodge more than one complaint to have all of your concerns addressed.

It is usually quickest and easiest to try to resolve a complaint directly with the person or body you are having a problem with. Many complaint handling bodies will not act on a complaint unless you have tried to resolve your complaint directly. If you do not feel it is safe or appropriate to complain directly, you should contact the relevant complaint body to discuss your situation.

Complaints involving discrimination

There are state and federal complaints bodies that handle complaints that about discrimination. If your situation involves discrimination, you should consider making a discrimination complaint in addition to any other complaints. Discrimination may occur when someone is treated less favourably on the basis of: race; sex; gender; disability; age;

sexuality; relationship status; pregnancy; caring responsibilities; or having or being thought to have an infectious disease.

WARNING: The state and federal bodies that handle discrimination complaints have different rules, including time limits. You can make a complaint to both the state and federal complaint bodies, but they may decide not to address your concerns if you have already complained elsewhere. For example, if you have already lodged a discrimination complaint to anti-discrimination NSW, it is likely that Australian Human Rights Commission will decide not to act on your complaint. Please carefully review the discrimination factsheets for information about your options before making a discrimination complaint.

Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority

In this fact sheet, we introduce the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority ('VRQA') and we outline how complaints can be made.

The VRQA is Victoria's education and training regulator. It oversees schools, training providers, and other education settings to ensure they meet minimum standards and protect the safety and wellbeing of students, apprentices, and trainees.

You can complain to the VRQA about schools, senior secondary providers, training organisations, apprenticeships and traineeships, school boarding premises, and home schooling in Victoria. Common issues include care and safety in schools, or problems with training and supervision in apprenticeships.

Legislation and Key Terms

Relevant Legislation:

- [*Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)*](#)
- [*Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 \(Vic\)*](#)
- [*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)*](#)
- [*Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)*](#)
- [*Freedom of Information Act 1982 \(Vic\)*](#)

Key terms:

Complaint: includes any written complaint, grievance or accusation made to VRQA.

Complainant: a person who has made a complaint.

Delegate: the Chief Executive Officer (Director), VRQA or the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, VRQA.

Enforceable undertaking: a legally binding agreement.

Registered home schooling: home schooling registered by VRQA.

Registered school: a school registered by VRQA.

Registered school boarding premises: a school boarding premises registered by VRQA.

Registered training organisation (RTO): a registered training organisation delivers vocational education and training. A person, body or school may be registered as a training organisation by VRQA.

Non-school senior secondary or foundation secondary provider: an organisation other than a registered school which is approved by VRQA to deliver an accredited senior secondary qualification.

Student Exchange Organisation (SEO): a person or an organisation approved by VRQA to run a student exchange program.

VRQA Staff: the employees and third-party service providers contracted to VRQA to undertake the functions of VRQA.

Step 1: What type of Complaints can be made to this body?

VRQA investigates complaints about education and training providers in Victoria. This includes:	
Sub-category	Example
Breach of Minimum Standards for School Registration	You should make a complaint if a registered independent (non-government) school in Victoria is not complying with the Minimum Standards required for registration. All schools must be registered with the VRQA and must comply with the Minimum Standards to obtain and maintain their registration. The Minimum Standards are set out in the ETA Act and the ETA Regulations and include: - the policies of the school are based on principles of procedural fairness and do not permit corporal punishment; - the school must have clearly defined acceptance policy that complies with all applicable State and Commonwealth laws. It may give preference to Catholic children. - the school must maintain a register of students containing the student's details (including name, age, date of birth and residential address), parent/guardian details, information relating to the health or wellbeing of the student, date of acceptance of the student. - the school must maintain a record of location of students, including any reason given or apparent for the absence of any student from the school. - the school must ensure the care, safety and welfare of all students is in accordance with any Victorian or Commonwealth laws, and that all staff are advised of their obligations. - All buildings, facilities and grounds must comply with any laws that apply, including local laws and building, planning and occupational health and safety laws. - All responsible persons are fit and proper. - the school must publish a clear statement of its philosophy, and be able to demonstrate how that philosophy is enacted. If school boarding services are provided, additional Minimum Standards may apply. <i>Examples:</i> <i>Lisa is the mother of a child at a Victorian school. She made a complaint to her daughter's school about the conduct of the school's principal, but was unhappy with the school's response.</i> <i>John is the carer of Sam. Sam is a student at a Victorian school. John raised concerns with the school about accessibility issues in the school buildings but did not receive a response.</i>

	• <i>There is concerned about ongoing bullying her son is facing. She raised the issue multiple times with the school, but the school failed to respond or follow up in line with its own policies.</i>
Breach of Child Safe Standards	You should make a complaint if you believe a school is not meeting its obligations under the Child Safe Standards and you are unsatisfied with the response from the school. There are 11 child safe standards which are expressed as outcomes that organisations subject to the standards must achieve. Suspected failures by an organisation to achieve the Child Safe Standards may be reported to the VRQA. The VRQA commits to working with school proprietors across the state to ensure that schools provide a safe, nurturing and empowering culture for all children and young people in Victorian schools through: • Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people; • Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns; • Implementing rigorous risk management and employment practices. If you are concerned that a Catholic school or Catholic School Boarding Premises is breaching the Child Safe Standards, you can report it to the VRQA. The VRQA will consider the complaint and may refer it to the Commission for Children and Young People. <i>Examples:</i> • <i>Nadia is a graduate teacher at a Victorian school. She noticed a senior teacher behaving inappropriately around a student. She raised her concerns with the school, but no action was taken.</i> • <i>Bob is a carer for Molly, a young child with a disability. He raised concerns with the school after Molly was harmed by another student, but staff dismissed his concerns and didn't provide proper follow-up or policies.</i>
Inadequate Conditions in School Boarding Premises	You should make a complaint if a school boarding premises in Victoria has unsafe, unhygienic, or inappropriate living conditions that may affect the health, safety or wellbeing of students. This includes: • health and safety; • hygiene; • general living conditions; • poor communication between boarding management and parents or guardians; • facilities (such as heating, ventilation, lack of recreational areas); • poor food quality; • insufficient medical care; or

	bullying and harassment. <i>Example: Diksha's daughter, Michela, boards at a school in regional Victoria. Michela has been bullied by other boarders and boarding staff have not taken any action, despite repeated concerns raised by Diksha.</i>
Failure to Meet Obligations in an Apprenticeship or Traineeship	You should make a complaint if you are an apprentice or trainee and your employer is not meeting their legal responsibilities under your training contract. Problems may include but are not limited to: - your employer is not supervising you properly; - you are not allowed to leave work to attend your training course; - you are not getting sessions with a workplace trainer or assessor; - you are not given time to complete assessments; - you are only getting low-skilled work to do; or - your employer isn't meeting their obligations in your training contract; - unsafe working environments; - underpayment of wages and entitlements; - failing to release apprentices and trainees for training - you and your employer do not agree to cancel your training contract; - threatened dismissal; or - your employer is not meeting their training contract obligations. Your complaint could cover industries such as: - plumbing; - electrical; - carpentry; - early childhood education and care; or - business management. <i>Examples:</i> <i>Jonathan is undertaking a carpentry apprenticeship but is not being given any guidance, supervision or feedback from his employer during the program. He feels that he is not learning properly or being adequately supported. Jonathan has tried to discuss his concerns with his supervisors but has been ignored.</i> <i>Hannah is undertaking a concreting apprenticeship. During her training, she is not provided with any safety gear or safety training, nor is she directed to an appropriate way or place to source such safety equipment. She is concerned she may get injured. She has brought up her concerns with her supervisors who have told her she is too junior to worry and safety measures are overrated anyway. Despite numerous discussions with her seniors, Hannah feels she is not undertaking her training in a safe way and has a</i>

	<i>bad feeling her training provider is not complying with training standards.</i>
Breach of Training Standards by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	You should make a complaint if a VRQA-registered RTO is not delivering accredited training properly or is failing to meet training and assessment standards. This includes failure to provide qualified trainers, access to proper facilities, or correct certification. <i>Examples:</i> • <i>Alan is studying a business course through an RTO. He realises that many of the course materials are outdated and the trainer is unqualified.</i> • <i>Priya completes her accredited course, but her RTO fails to issue her qualification certificate even after multiple requests.</i>
Breach of Standards by a Non-School Senior Secondary Provider	You should make a complaint if a non-school provider delivering senior secondary or foundation secondary programs is not meeting the required standards for education or student wellbeing. This includes issues with curriculum delivery, teacher qualifications, or lack of proper support services. <i>Example: Alisha is enrolled in a VCAL program run by a community centre. She finds that several of her classes are frequently cancelled and the program does not follow the required curriculum.</i>
Failure to Comply with Home Schooling Requirements	You should make a complaint if a parent or guardian registered for home schooling is not providing regular and efficient instruction to the child. The VRQA may investigate if there are concerns that the child is not receiving an adequate education. <i>Examples:</i> • <i>Sam is a neighbour to a family that home-schools their children. He notices the children are rarely engaged in learning and often unsupervised during the day.</i> • <i>Fiona is concerned that her ex-partner, who is the registered home-schooling parent, is not teaching their child and there is no evidence of education being provided.</i>
Non-Compliance by a Student Exchange Organisation	You should make a complaint if a student exchange organisation registered with the VRQA is not meeting its responsibilities to students or host families. This includes failing to monitor students, place them in safe homes, or ensure proper educational support. <i>Examples:</i> • <i>Jorge is hosting an international student through an exchange program. He has not received any contact or support from the exchange organisation since the student arrived.</i> • <i>Mei participated in a student exchange program but was placed with a host family that provided unsafe and unsuitable living conditions.</i>
Misconduct or Poor Conduct by	You should make a complaint if a VRQA staff member or authorised officer has acted unprofessionally or failed to follow proper process during a review, audit, or investigation. This also

VRQA Staff or Contractors	includes poor service from the VRQA, such as delayed responses or misinformation. <i>Examples:</i> • <i>A school principal feels that a VRQA authorised officer conducted an audit in a biased and unprofessional manner, including making personal comments and not following correct procedure.</i> • <i>Leila contacted the VRQA multiple times with questions about registration, but received conflicting information and no clear follow-up.</i>
Exclusions	The VRQA does not handle complaints about: • Complaint about a teacher’s conduct or performance: The VRQA does not investigate individual teachers. Complaints about misconduct, incompetence, or fitness to teach must go to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). • Complaint about a government (public) school: The VRQA does not regulate public schools. Complaints about government school teachers, principals, policies, or administration must be directed to the Department of Education Victoria (DE). • Complaint about a Catholic school: Catholic schools are not regulated by the VRQA. Complaints should first go to the school itself, and if unresolved, to the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV). • Complaint about fees, refunds, or financial disputes: The VRQA does not resolve financial disputes (e.g. tuition refunds, overcharging). These should be directed to Consumer Affairs Victoria or dealt with through the school or provider’s internal process. • Complaint about student behaviour or bullying between students: The VRQA only investigates bullying where a school’s response or policy breaches minimum standards. The VRQA does not handle one-off behaviour complaints between students unless they reflect broader school failure. • Complaint about school policies you disagree with: The VRQA does not enforce personal opinions about policy choices unless they breach the Minimum Standards (e.g. disciplinary approaches, dress codes, religious content). • Complaint about employment or HR issues: The VRQA does not deal with internal staff disputes, workplace bullying, or employment contract issues. These should go through the relevant workplace procedures, unions, or WorkSafe. • Complaint about vocational training providers that are not VRQA-registered: Most RTOs in Australia are regulated by ASQA (Australian Skills Quality Authority), not the VRQA. The VRQA only handles complaints about RTOs solely registered in Victoria or Victoria and WA.

	• Complaint about safety risks in the workplace (for apprentices/trainees): Workplace health and safety issues, including injuries or unsafe conditions, must go to WorkSafe Victoria, not the VRQA. • Complaint about underpayment or workplace rights (for apprentices/trainees): The VRQA does not handle wage disputes. These must be directed to the Fair Work Ombudsman or a union. • Complaint about higher education institutions (e.g. universities): The VRQA does not regulate universities or TAFEs. Complaints should be directed to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) or the provider directly. • Complaint about early childhood services or kindergartens: The VRQA does not regulate early learning or childcare centres. These are regulated by the Department of Education – Early Childhood Division or the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). • Complaint about a child’s learning level or academic achievement: The VRQA does not assess how well a student is performing. Academic progress concerns should be directed to the school, provider, or teacher. • Complaint about international students or CRICOS-registered providers: These providers are usually regulated by ASQA, TEQSA, or the Commonwealth Department of Education, depending on the provider type. • Complaint about curriculum content or education policy (statewide): The VRQA does not control the school curriculum or education policy decisions. These concerns should go to the Department of Education Victoria or the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). • Complaint about delays in qualification recognition: If the issue relates to assessment of foreign or interstate qualifications, the VRQA is not responsible. These matters are handled by the National Recognition Information Centre or relevant professional bodies.
Additional Info	VRQA’s focus is on compliance, not personal disputes: The VRQA investigates whether a provider has breached the laws or standards it is required to meet. It does not resolve private disagreements unless they demonstrate a systemic or regulatory breach.

Step 2: What is the Jurisdiction of the complaints body?

Jurisdiction	Description
State	The VRQA has powers to hear complaints under the law of Victoria.

Jurisdiction	Description
Geographical Scope	The VRQA has the power to hear complaints regarding schools and home schooling, VET providers, registered training organisations (RTOs), and organisations that provide school education, traineeships and apprenticeships in Victoria.
Time Limitations	VRQA is not required to investigate a complaint that is not made in writing or is made more than 12 months after the date of the facts giving rise to the complaint.¹ If you have an unresolved dispute with an employer and your employment ends, you can ask VRQA to consider it. You must do this within 30 days of the end of your employment.² When VRQA receives an application from one party to cancel a training contract, a letter is sent to the other party seeking consent or otherwise. Where a response is not received within 30 days, consent is deemed to have been received and the training contract is cancelled. This allows the apprentice to continue their apprenticeship under a new training contract with a different employer.
Exclusions	VRQA cannot investigate complaints about: • Outside Victoria: The VRQA only regulates providers based in Victoria. It can't deal with complaints about interstate or overseas providers. • Nationally regulated training providers: Most RTOs are regulated by ASQA, not the VRQA. The VRQA only oversees RTOs that operate solely in Victoria, or Victoria and WA. • Too much time has passed: The VRQA may not investigate old complaints, especially if the provider has closed or records no longer exist. • Already resolved elsewhere: The VRQA won't reopen complaints that have already been decided by the provider, a court, tribunal, or another regulator. • Not part of a registered program: The VRQA only deals with formal education or training programs it regulates — not tutoring, extracurricular activities, or informal learning.
Exercise of discretion	Discretion to not investigate a complaint: The VRQA generally has discretion to not investigate a complaint if it is deemed to fall outside its jurisdiction; is trivial, vexatious or lacking in substance; or there are insufficient details provided to enable to VRQA to conduct a thorough investigation into the complaint. The VRQA will notify you in writing of this outcome. Referral of a complaint:

¹ [Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 \(Vic\) reg 98.](#)

² [What we can do for apprentices and trainees | vrqa.vic.gov.au](#)

Jurisdiction	Description
	The VRQA may refer your complaint where it is appropriate that appropriately addressed by another person, body, court, or tribunal,. The VRQA will notify you in writing of this outcome and provide details of the relevant person, body, court, or tribunal.

Step 3: Who can you make a complaint against?

Respondent	Description
Teachers, staff or the principal	You can complain about school staff, including teachers or the principal, only when the complaint relates to the school's compliance with the Minimum Standards or Child Safe Standards. The VRQA does not investigate personal misconduct or performance issues of individual teachers.
VRQA-registered schools	You can complain about a registered education provider if they are regulated by the VRQA. This includes: • Registered independent schools: Non-government schools in Victoria registered directly with the VRQA. • Registered boarding schools and school boarding premises: Includes concerns about student safety, living conditions, and wellbeing. • Non-school senior secondary or foundation secondary providers: Community or alternative providers offering VCE, VCE-VM or similar programs. • Registered student exchange organisations: Bodies approved by the VRQA to coordinate international student exchange programs. • Parents or guardians of children registered for home schooling: Where there are concerns the child is not receiving regular or efficient instruction.
VRQA-approved employers of apprentices or trainees	You can complain about an employer who is party to a VRQA-registered training contract, such as: • Trades employers (e.g. carpentry, plumbing, electrical) • Childcare centres or business offices with trainees Complaints must relate to breaches of training contract obligations (e.g. no supervision, no release for training).
VRQA-registered training organisations (RTOs)	You can complain about a VRQA-registered RTO delivering accredited training to domestic students in Victoria only (or in Victoria and Western Australia only). Complaints must relate to breaches of training delivery or certification standards.
Exclusions	VRQA will not handle complaints relating to: • Government schools (public schools): Complaints about staff, principals or operations at government schools must go

	to the Department of Education Victoria. These schools are not regulated by the VRQA. • Catholic schools: Complaints about staff, principals or operations at Catholic schools must go to the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA). These are overseen under a separate complaints framework. • Teachers (individual conduct or performance): Complaints about a teacher's misconduct, incompetence, or fitness to teach must be made to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), not the VRQA. • Training providers not registered with the VRQA: If a training organisation is registered with ASQA (the national regulator) or another authority, the VRQA cannot investigate. This includes most RTOs operating across multiple states or delivering to international students. • Employers not party to a VRQA training contract: If the employer is not listed as a party to a VRQA-managed apprenticeship or traineeship training contract, the VRQA has no jurisdiction over them. • Universities and higher education institutions: The VRQA does not regulate universities or tertiary education providers. Complaints should be directed to TEQSA or the institution itself. • Kindergartens and early childhood services: The VRQA does not oversee kindergartens or early childhood care services. These fall under the Department of Education's Early Childhood Division or ACECQA.
Additional Info	If your complaint falls within scope of issues covered by VRQA but is about government or Schools, VRQA will refer you to the respective Review Body. Review Bodies are approved under the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i>, and defined by memoranda of understanding between VRQA and: • DET; and • the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA). Review Bodies investigate complaints against their respective schools according to their system policies and procedures and report the outcome of the investigation to VRQA.

Step 4: Are you eligible to make a complaint?

Eligibility	Description
Who can make a complaint?	Anyone that has an association with Victorian schools and home schooling, VET providers, RTOs, and organisations that provide school education, traineeships and apprenticeships can make a complaint to the VRQA.

Eligibility	Description
	The VRQA commonly receives complaints from: • parents / guardians / carers of students (past, present or proposed); • students (past, present or proposed); • mature minors; • adult students (past, present or proposed); • industry representatives; • apprentices or trainees; • employers of an apprentice or trainee; • advocates of any of the above; or • members of the public. If you're not sure if you can make a complaint to the VRQA, you can contact them on +61396372806 or by email vrqa@education.vic.gov.au to chat about your concerns.
Pre-requisite steps	Before proceeding to investigate a complaint, you should first try to resolve your concerns with the relevant person or body, and give them a reasonable time to respond to your complaint. Some ways to try and resolve a complaint could include: • a formal meeting with the provider to discuss the issues; • writing a letter or otherwise lodging a complaint using the provider's complaints and appeals process; • speaking to the teacher or trainer or a senior person in the provider (e.g. principal, director, CEO, head of department); If you have not contacted the provider about your concerns, the VRQA can still help. You will also not be required to take any pre-requisite steps if the VRQA is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for not doing so.
Can complaints be made on behalf of someone?	The VRQA can receive complaints on behalf of other people. For example, you may lodge a complaint with the VRQA: • as a parent / guardian / carer on behalf of a student (past, present or proposed); • as a student on behalf of another student; • as an advocate of any of the above (e.g. legal representative, social worker); or • a member of the public. The VRQA will record personal information solely for the purpose of addressing the complaint in accordance with its privacy policy.

Eligibility	Description
	If you make a complaint on behalf of another person, the VRQA may require the consent of the relevant person you are making the complaint on behalf of.
Exclusions	VRQA will not accept complaints if: • You're not directly involved or lack relevant information: Complaints are generally accepted from those directly affected, like students, parents, apprentices, trainees, or staff. If you're not connected and can't provide relevant details, your complaint may not proceed. • You're from a government or Catholic school: If your complaint is about a public or Catholic school, the VRQA will refer you to the Department of Education or the Catholic Education authority — unless the issue relates to something the VRQA still regulates (e.g. home schooling or training). • You want to stay anonymous but can't provide enough detail: The VRQA accepts anonymous complaints, but they need enough information to take action. If they can't verify or investigate your claim, they may not proceed. • You haven't raised the issue with the school or provider first: In most cases, you must try to resolve the issue with the school, training provider or employer before contacting the VRQA. • You're complaining on someone's behalf without consent or legal authority: If you don't have permission to act for the person affected, the VRQA may not investigate — unless there are serious safety concerns.
Additional information you need to know	<u>Privacy</u> The VRQA follows the <i>Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)</i> and protects your personal information under the Information Privacy Principles. When you make a complaint, the VRQA will: • Only collect, use, or share your personal information if it's necessary or the law says it can • Keep your personal information safe and protected from being lost, misused, or seen by the wrong people <u>Procedural fairness</u> If someone is accused of doing something wrong, the VRQA must treat them fairly. This means the VRQA must: • Base decisions on clear, reliable information • Let the person or organisation know what they're being accused of and what evidence is being used

Eligibility	Description
	- Give them a chance to tell their side before making a final decision Where possible, the VRQA will also: - Tell the person or organisation if a report might include negative comments about them - Make sure their response is fairly included in the report

Step 5: What remedies are available at this body?

Power	Description
Enforce compliance with standards	If a provider is found to be in breach of relevant registration standards, the VRQA can require them to take corrective action to meet those standards in the future.
Deployment of authorised officers	VRQA may send authorised officers to inspect a school, workplace, training provider or boarding premises to assess compliance with relevant laws and standards. These visits may arise from: - A complaint - Risk-based scheduling (planned visits to high-risk sites) - Concerns raised during apprenticeship/traineeship programs
Investigation	VRQA will notify the education or training provider of the complaint and ask for their response. Once VRQA have completed the investigation, they will report the outcome and determine if any rectifications or further action is required. VRQA will then provide its decision to you and the education/training provider. An investigation may lead to a review or audit of the education and training provider outside the normal review cycle. <i>Example: if you are an apprentice or a trainee in a dispute with your employer, VRQA authorised officers may visit the workplace and interview the people involved as part of the process to reach a resolution.</i>
Review or audit	VRQA can conduct: - Routine reviews (typically every 5 years for schools) - Out-of-cycle reviews (triggered by complaints or risk factors) During a review or audit, the VRQA may: - Assess documents and policies - Interview relevant individuals - Identify non-compliance and issue a rectification plan

Power	Description
	If non-compliance is not addressed, further regulatory action may follow.
Issue a Rectification Plan	If a provider is found to be non-compliant, VRQA may issue a written plan requiring them to take specific actions by set deadlines. The provider must implement these actions to retain registration or approval.
Impose Regulatory Conditions	If non-compliance is identified, VRQA can impose conditions on a provider's registration, such as: • Conditions on operations for a set period • Interim conditions during an investigation or review • Restrictions on student enrolments (e.g. prohibiting new enrolments)
Require Public Notification of Non-Compliance	VRQA may require a school to notify parents or the public that it has failed to meet regulatory standards.
Accept Enforceable Undertakings	A provider may offer to enter into a formal undertaking to take corrective actions. VRQA can accept and enforce these legally binding agreements.
Suspend or Cancel Registration	If a provider fails to meet standards or does not comply with required actions, VRQA may: • Suspend registration temporarily • Cancel registration entirely • This applies to schools, training organisations, and other registered entities.
Sanction	VRQA's main sanctions are the power to: • revoke an employer's approval to employ apprentices and trainees in Victoria; and • cancel training contracts. To deter non-compliance VRQA will independently, assertively and responsively pursue and publicise sanctions to drive changes in behaviour and deliver justice for those harmed.
Revoke Employer Approval	For apprenticeship and traineeship programs, VRQA can revoke an employer's approval to take on apprentices/trainees in Victoria.
Cancel Training Contracts	VRQA has the authority to cancel a formal training contract if an employer or apprentice fails to meet their obligations, or if continuation is not appropriate.

Power	Description
Negotiate or Support Informal Resolution	In some cases, disputes between the complainant and the provider/employer may be resolved through negotiation, facilitated by VRQA or on the parties' own initiative.
Make a Determination in a Contract Dispute (Apprenticeships/ Traineeships only)	In disputes between apprentices/trainees and employers, VRQA may: • Make a determination without a formal proceeding (based on written submissions and reports) • Hold a formal proceeding (similar to a hearing) to obtain more information and then issue a binding decision This is only available for apprenticeship/traineeship contract matters.
Exclusions	The VRQA cannot: • Provide compensation or damages • Force an apology • Order a provider to refund money • Discipline individual teachers or staff (this is handled by other bodies, such as VIT or the Department of Education)

Step 6: Preparing your complaint. What should it include?

Requirement	Description
Format	All complaints must be made in writing no more than 12 months after you first became aware of the facts giving rise to your complaint. VRQA registers all complaints that are received in writing. VRQA receives complaints through the complaint portal on VRQA website, email, fax and the post. A VRQA staff member may help draft and register a complaint if you are unable to put the matter in writing due to language or accessibility issues. Complaints received in writing by VRQA are registered by the Complaints and Student Services Unit on the VRQA register.
Personal Details	<u>General complaint</u> The personal details required in the online form include: • title; • first name; • last name; • phone number; • email address; and

Requirement	Description
	relationship to the body against which the complaint is made. <u>Anonymous complaint</u> VRQA accept anonymous complaints. However, it may limit their ability to investigate your complaint. You have the option to discuss the issue anonymously with VRQA before making a formal complaint. If you have concerns about privacy issues, you can raise this with the VRQA complaints team. If you want to submit your complaint anonymously on the online form, that is permissible, the only personal information you need to give is your relationship to the body against which the complaint is made. In all cases, VRQA will contact you to ascertain whether you wish that your identity be kept confidential, and whether it will be practicable to do so In most circumstances, VRQA will need to disclose your identity to the respondent to afford them the ability to respond to allegations in full. VRQA will check with you before they talk to the person or organisation your complaint is about in order to be fair to everyone involved. In exceptional circumstances, VRQA may investigate complaints without disclosing your identity. However, as a consequence, the information provided to the complainant regarding the VRQA's actions may be limited. VRQA must comply with subpoenas issued by courts or tribunals that require it to produce documents. Therefore, in some cases, your identity may be disclosed where documents are produced to courts or tribunals.
Complaint details	You should provide as much detail as you can about the following: - Who your complaint is against - The online form requires you to give the name of the person/body to which your complaint relates. This may include contact details. - If applicable, what you are studying or training - What your complaint is about - Details of your complaint - Details of how the issue has affected you - Supporting documentation, if you have any If you have supporting documents, you can email them to vrqa@education.vic.gov.au - Evidence of attempts to resolve the complaint - Evidence of how the provider responded, if applicable - What you want to achieve by making the complaint

Requirement	Description
Consent to disclosure of information	You may indicate to VRQA the extent to which you consent to disclosing information to the provider, or other organisations as part of the complaints procedure.
What NOT to include	Do not include false or misleading statements. If there are certain things you are not sure of or cannot remember, that is ok, you can flag this.
Additional information you need to know	You will be required to fill in a security code to submit the complaint .

Step 7: Lodging your complaint and next steps.

Step	Description
Where to lodge your complaint	Online: State Register - Lodge complaint Post: Send a letter to: Manager, Complaints Unit VRQA, GPO Box 2317 Melbourne VIC 3001 Email vrqa@education.vic.gov.au While your complaint should be in writing, if you have questions or issues, you can call VRQA on 03 9637 2806.
Acknowledgement	When VRQA receive your complaint and you have given your contact details, VRQA will take the following steps: 1. Within 5 business days, send an acknowledgement that your complaint has been received. 2. Determine if your complaint can be addressed and confirm the details in writing. 3. If they can help, VRQA will decide how to proceed, whether it be an investigation, audit, review, or another action. 4. VRQA will inform you if they cannot investigate.
Investigation	If VRQA proceed with an investigation, they will only collect, use and disclose personal information where it is necessary to do so or where authorised or required by law. VRQA will then notify the education or training provider of your complaint and ask for their response. Once VRQA have completed the investigation, they will report the outcome and determine if any rectifications or further action is required. VRQA will then provide its decision to you and the education/training provider.

Step	Description
Additional information you need to know	- It is a good idea to keep a copy of the complaint made. - You should update VRQA about any changes that impact on your complaint. - You should try to provide all relevant information at the outset. If you drip feed information over time, that can slow your complaint down. 80 per cent of complaints are generally resolved within 45 days.

Step 8: Post-complaint – what if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint?

Avenue	Description
Internal review opportunities	If you are not satisfied with a VRQA decision, you can appeal by requesting an internal review by the VRQA subcommittee. The request should be in writing and should explain why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. Requests for review must be made within 28 days. The Delegate will determine if an internal review will be conducted or the complainant referred to the Victorian Ombudsman.
External review/ remedies	If you are unhappy with the result of your complaint you can make a complaint to the Victorian Ombudsman . The Victorian Ombudsman is an external authority which investigates complaints about the administrative actions and decisions taken by government departments and agencies. You do not have to request an internal review before contacting the Victorian Ombudsman.
Additional information you need to know	If you are concerned about VRQA's handling of your personal information, contact the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner .

Step 9: Other bodies that handle complaints about education and training related complaints

Complaint body	Description
Victorian Ombudsman	The Victorian Ombudsman handles complaints about the general conduct of Victorian government organisations, local councils, statutory authorities, and Victorian universities and TAFEs. Phone: 03 9613 6222 or 1800 806 314 (Regional) Visit: https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/ Access the complaints form here.
Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)	VIT functions to regulate members of the teaching profession to ensure quality teaching, and provide for the safety and wellbeing of children.

Complaint body	Description
	This may be an appropriate body to contact if your complaint concerns school teachers. Phone: 1300 888 067 Visit: https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/
WorkSafe	WorkSafe is Victoria's workplace health and safety regulator. If your complaint is about occupational health and safety breaches, they may be an appropriate body. If you have problems with workplace safety, bullying, harassment or exploitation, hazards or physical safety contact WorkSafe. Phone: 1800 136 089 Visit: https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/
Social Services Regulator (SSR)	Social Services Regulator (SSR) is the Victorian regulator for providers of disability services, housing services, family violence and sexual assault services, and support services for parents and families. They also regulate out of home care services. Visit: https://www.vic.gov.au/ssr-reporting-notifiable-incident Access the complaints form here.
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights	The role of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is to protect your human rights, to promote fair treatment for all Victorians, and advocate for a diverse and inclusive state. If you are experiencing discrimination (based on disability or any characteristics protected in the Equal Opportunity Act), sexual harassment, racial or religious vilification and victimisation, they may be able to assist. Phone: 1300 292 153 or (03) 9032 3583 Visit: https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/ Access the complaints form here.
Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)	CCYP is an independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people, with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people. If your complaint relates to child protection and welfare, they may be suitable. Phone: 1300 78 29 78 (9.30–11.30am and 2.00–4.00pm Monday to Friday, except on public holidays) Visit: https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/ Access the complaints form here.
Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)	ASQA is the national regulator for vocational education and training. If your complaint relates to a RTO not registered with VRQA, they may be an appropriate body.

Complaint body	Description
	Phone: 1300 644 844 Visit: https://www.asqa.gov.au/ Access the complaints form here.
Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner (OVIC)	The OVIC can handle complaints about the way personal information has been handled by Victorian Government agencies and some private organisations. The OVIC can also review freedom of information decisions that are made by Victorian Government agencies and ministers. Phone: 1300 006 842 (1300 00 OVIC) Visit: https://ovic.vic.gov.au/ Access the complaints form here.
Consumer Affairs Victoria	Consumer Affairs Victoria is Victoria's consumer marketplace regulator. It provides services to support Victorians to exercise their consumer rights and ensure that businesses and rental providers do the right thing. This may be an appropriate body if your complaint concerns refunds, fees or charges. Phone: 1300 55 81 81 or 132 VIC (132 842) and select option 4 Visit: https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/
Courts and Tribunals	You may want to seek legal advice about the option of pursuing your complaint at court if it relates to: compensation (including workers compensation claims), development application decisions, orders made by local councils, decisions, fines and orders of regulators and licensing authorities and disputes over expert assessments.

Need help to preparing or pursuing your complaint?

Below are organisations that may be able to help you to make your complaint, provide support or advocacy during the complaint process or give you more information.

Organisation	Contact Details	How they can help
VRQA	Website: Make a complaint vrqa.vic.gov.au Email: vrqa@education.vic.gov.au Phone: +61 3 9637 2806	You can contact the VRQA directly if you have any further questions or need assistance with your complaint.
Translating and Interpreter Service	Website: www.tisnational.gov.au Telephone: 131 450	Provide support to people if English is not their first language.
National Relay Service	Website: www.accesshub.gov.au	Provides a range of services to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment to communicate.
Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU)	Website: Find an Advocate - Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) Email: admin@daru.org.au Telephone: (03) 9639 5807	You can contact DARU and contact them with a request should you require an advocate.

Self-help tools and additional resources

Resource	How this helps
Where to make a complaint	A link to the complaints process on the VRQA website.
VRQA Complaints Management Policy	The Complaints Management Policy guides the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority's (VRQA) response to, and management of, the complaints it receives in relation to organisations registered by the VRQA and home schooling.
What VRQA can do for apprentices and trainees	Guidance for apprentices and trainees on the scope of VRQA assistance.
Dispute Resolution Policy Apprenticeships and Traineeships	The Apprenticeships and Traineeships dispute resolution policy outlines VRQA's role in resolving training contract disputes in Victoria. It is a guide to the VRQA's responsibilities under the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> .
Law Society: Know Your Rights	Guidance for individuals who are uncertain about where to start when seeking legal advice.

Citations here:

- [Make a complaint | vrqa.vic.gov.au](https://vrqa.vic.gov.au)
- [VRQA-Complaints-Management-Policy.docx](#)
- [What we can do for apprentices and trainees | vrqa.vic.gov.au](https://vrqa.vic.gov.au)
- [Apprentices-and-trainees-dispute-resolution-policy.docx](#)
- [Regulatory Approach Statement 2022](#)
- [Apprenticeships and traineeships compliance and enforcement framework | vrqa.vic.gov.au](https://vrqa.vic.gov.au)
- [VRQA_2023-24_AnnualReport_0.docx](#)
- [Understand school reviews | vrqa.vic.gov.au](https://vrqa.vic.gov.au)