



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**  
 Therapeutic Goods Administration

Regulatory  
 Engagement,  
 Education  
 and  
 Planning  
 Branch

**Standard operating procedure / Policy document**

Name of procedure/policy	Process for managing feedback against the APS Values, Employment Principles, Code of Conduct and/or TGA Customer Service Standards
Applicable to	TGA-wide
Number	TRIM Ref no R12/1066147
Written by	Business Capability and Committee Support
Authorised	██████████ First Assistant Secretary, Regulatory Support Division
Date issued	TBA
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**Version history**

Version	TRIM Reference	Description of change	Author/s	Effective date
V1.0	R12/1066147	Original SOP/Policy	██████████	April 2015

# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline how the TGA will manage feedback received from people outside the TGA in relation to where the TGA has exceeded or not met expected standards according to the:

- [Australian Public Service \(APS\) Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#);  
and/or published
- [TGA Customer Service Standards](#).

**Feedback relating to regulatory decisions or business processes are to be referred to the relevant regulatory or business area for investigation, follow up and tracking.**

# Responsibility

The Parliamentary and External Relations (PER) team within the Business Capability and Committee Support is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of this SOP.

# Introduction

TGA staff members are required to comply with the:

- [APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#)  
published
- [TGA Customer Service Standards](#)

At times, the TGA receives feedback that a TGA staff member has exceeded or not met these standards. This SOP outlines the process that is to be followed when feedback is received via:

- email;
- phone call; or
- letter.

The TGA recognises that feedback:

- is about accountability;
- is an important part of customer service;
- is inevitable and must be managed effectively;
- reflects badly on the agency if not handled properly; and
- can and should lead to business improvement.

## INTERNAL USE ONLY

The following principles<sup>1</sup> apply to the TGA's feedback management processes:

Fairness	Each person providing feedback should be treated fairly, with respect, impartiality, confidentiality and transparency.
Visibility	Information about how and where to provide feedback should be well publicised.
Accessibility	The process for providing feedback should be easily accessible – information should be made available on the details of providing and resolving feedback
Responsiveness	A feedback handling process should be responsive to the needs of people providing the feedback (eg persons with health and safety issues; vulnerable people; people with behavioural issues).
Objectivity	Each person should be addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner.
Efficiency	A feedback handling process should recognise varying degrees of simplicity/complexity of feedback and deal with them accordingly, and as quickly as possible. The process should ensure that there is ongoing monitoring and reporting, and appropriate communications with the person providing the feedback.
Integration	A feedback handling process should be integrated within the agency's core business activities and reflect a client/customer focus.
Charges	Access to a feedback handling process should be free of charge.
Accountability	The agency should ensure that accountability for, and reporting on, the actions and decisions in regard to feedback handling are clearly established.

The TGA is committed to:

- ensuring that feedback is dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, fair and economical way;
- acknowledging the right of people to provide feedback when dissatisfied with a service;
- ensuring that staff are 'feedback friendly' and not defensive or negative about feedback;
- recognising that properly handled and analysed feedback helps the TGA to improve its business processes;
- developing procedures for escalation of feedback where needed;
- dealing with feedback confidentially and with due respect;

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<sup>1</sup> The Principles have been extracted from the Australian Standard (AS ISO 10002-2006 Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations) and the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling

## INTERNAL USE ONLY

- dealing with all feedback in a timely manner;
- tracking feedback and monitoring timeframes for resolution;
- where applicable, advising people of the outcomes as soon as possible after a decision is made in relation to feedback that has been provided;
- advising those providing feedback:
  - of review options (e.g. Ombudsman)
  - that any internal problem revealed by feedback will be communicated to the area responsible for possible systemic improvement (and a senior officer will have responsibility for following this up); and
- where appropriate, offering remedies that:
  - attempt informal resolution and compromise wherever possible
  - consider the remedy sought by the person/s providing feedback as a first option
  - are fair to both the person/s providing feedback and the TGA
  - are offered to all persons in the same situations.

## Procedures

1. Feedback relating to regulatory decisions or business processes are to be referred to the relevant regulatory or business area for investigation, follow up and tracking.

All feedback relating to where the TGA has exceeded or not met expected standards in relation to the:

- a. [APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#); and/or
- b. published [TGA Customer Service Standards](#)

is to be sent to the PER team - [REDACTED]@tga.gov.au. Phone calls are to be transferred to the Assistant Director, PER, on [REDACTED]

2. The PER team will:
  - a. register the feedback on the Feedback Register;
  - b. send the person who provided the feedback an acknowledgement of the feedback within 5 working days. For compliments it is generally expected that no further follow up with the person providing the feedback will be required;
  - c. refer the feedback to the appropriate Branch Head for investigation/action. The relevant First Assistant Secretary will also be copied into the email. If the feedback is about a Branch Head or a member of the Executive it will be escalated as appropriate; and
  - d. assign a priority to the investigation of the feedback as follows:
    - i. For information – usually positive feedback for noting or a complaint that has been resolved by the PER team. (Under this priority the response to the person/s providing the feedback will be provided within 5 working days)
    - ii. Moderate – issues that require investigation.
    - iii. Major – significant issues or issues that may cause lasting detriment that require immediate attention.

## INTERNAL USE ONLY

3. The relevant Branch Head will delegate the feedback, so that an investigation can be conducted, and provide a proposed deadline of two weeks for advice to the PER team on the outcomes of the investigation.
4. The investigation of feedback should be conducted as follows:
  - a. feedback will be handled in accordance with this SOP unless special circumstances exist
  - b. the person investigating the feedback is to:
    - i. be independent of, and no less senior than, the person the feedback is about
    - ii. have the necessary expertise to review particular matters
    - iii. have ready access to relevant agency material and personnel
  - c. the outcomes of the investigation are to be provided to the PER team so that the person who provided the feedback can be advised of the outcome.

If a person conducting an investigation requires guidance on how to conduct the investigation the following resources may assist:

- d. Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office website – [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)
5. The relevant Branch Head is to advise the PER team:
  - a. If the deadline for advising the outcomes of the investigation is not expected to be met, and what the next steps will be.
  - b. If the matter will be investigated further (with revised timeframes if applicable).
  - c. The outcomes of the investigation.
  - d. If there are any process improvements that are to be implemented to prevent the issue recurring.
6. Where the feedback is a compliment:
  - a. the PER team will contact the staff member (and relevant Branch Head) to see if they are comfortable with their efforts being publicly recognised; and
  - b. consider any process improvements that could be implemented from the positive feedback.
7. The PER team will then advise the person/s providing the feedback of the outcome of the investigation, including the action that has been taken, and (if requested) any appeal mechanisms that are available. The target timeframe for providing this response is 20 working days from when the feedback is first acknowledged.
8. The PER team will update the Feedback Register to reflect the outcome of the investigation.

## References

- [Customer satisfaction—Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations \(ISO 10002:2004, MOD\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman - Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling](#)
- [Australian Public Service \(APS\) Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#)
- [TGA Customer Service Standards](#)
- Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office - [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)