

Support to deal with complaints

March 12, 2020

Federation has recently received a number of inquiries from members seeking support in relation to complaints against teachers in TAFE.

Deputy Secretary Post Schools Maxine Sharkey said all TAFE teachers and related employees are entitled to procedural fairness in relation to complaints and Federation regularly supports members to ensure this occurs.

“Naturally it can be a very difficult time if you have a complaint against you or feel the need to make a complaint yourself,” Ms Sharkey said.

“It is therefore important to discuss the matter with a local Fed Rep or Federation Officer in the first instance.”

Federation works to ensure the decision makers:

- inform members of the complaint against them
- give members the right to respond to the complaint against them
- do not have a personal interest in the outcome
- make the decision based on evidence.



The union can support members and give advice to members about:

- the new One TAFE complaint handling policy and procedures
- complaints about conduct and performance
- complaints by students or community members
- concern or complaints about work health and safety issues
- anonymous complaints
- making a complaint
- managing unreasonable complainant or staff behaviour during the complaint-handling process
- investigations into serious misconduct.

Ms Sharkey said all members are entitled to have a support person present in any meeting during a complaint handling process.

“Local Federation branch members and Federation Officers play an important role in providing support,” she said.

“The support person will act impartially, can act as a witness to meetings and any resolutions, may take notes of the proceedings, and is able to pause or stop meetings if necessary.”

Members must contact their Federation TAFE Organiser as soon as possible (and before making any statement), when an allegation or complaint is made against them.

Only financial members can seek the union's support.