



# Nature Care College

## Academic Grievance Procedure

### Rationale

1. Nature Care College Pty Ltd is committed to providing a safe and productive study environment free from unfair treatment, conflict, discrimination, harassment or vilification.
2. Nature Care College recognises that those who study at the College have a legal and ethical right to raise a concern or complaint related to unfair treatment, harassment, discrimination and other such issues and to have that concern, problem, complaint or grievance dealt with confidentially, fairly, effectively and in a timely manner.

### Definition

1. A grievance is a problem, concern or complaint presented by an individual or a group which relates to any of the following:
  - Academic matters: e.g. teaching standards, exclusion from a course
  - Non-Academic matters: eg Administrative/enrolment matters, discrimination, harassment, vilification and bullying
2. A grievance may involve unlawful discrimination if it contains allegations of unfair and inequitable treatment on the basis of a person's race, ethnic origin or nationality; gender; marital status; status as a carer, pregnancy or potential pregnancy; age; disability; political affiliation. Vilification on the grounds of race, sexuality and health status is also unlawful. Unlawful harassment is unwelcome and offensive or intimidating behavior, comments or images based on any of these grounds. The most common forms of harassment are racial and sexual harassment.
3. An appeal against an assessment is a request for reconsideration of that assessment.

### Principles

1. The process and procedures outlined in this policy aim to provide a fair, equitable and productive learning environment for all its students. This policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving student academic and non-academic grievances.
2. This policy does not limit the right of any student to seek the assistance of an external person or agency for the resolution of a grievance. Should the grievance be referred to an outside body, the internal processes of the College may be suspended pending the outcome of the external review.
3. A grievance will be treated seriously, expeditiously, impartially and sensitively, with due regard for procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy.
4. The grievance may be made against another student/s or staff member/s.
5. These procedures do not apply to conflict which occurs with people other than students or employees of the College.
6. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.
7. No person will suffer any disadvantage, be victimised or discriminated against because s/he raises a complaint or is associated with a grievance. However, if the complaint is found to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious, the matter may be referred to the Discipline Committee.
8. A grievance should be raised as early as possible after the incident relating to the complaint has occurred.

9. A grievance will be addressed as close as possible to the source of student dissatisfaction. This may be influenced by the nature of the complaint and the complainant's wishes. It is recognised that this is not always possible or appropriate.

10. Wherever possible, a grievance should be resolved by a process of discussion, cooperation and conciliation; that is, there shall be a desire by the parties involved to resolve the grievance in good faith.

11. Both the person raising a grievance (the complainant) and the person against whom a grievance is made (the respondent) will receive, in confidence, appropriate information, support and assistance in resolving the grievance from Student Support services.

12. Student Support services cannot act as an advocate in resolving the complaint. This does not limit the right of the complainant to seek advocacy from a third party, if desired.

13. Appropriate records of grievances will be kept and parties to the complaint shall have appropriate access to these records.

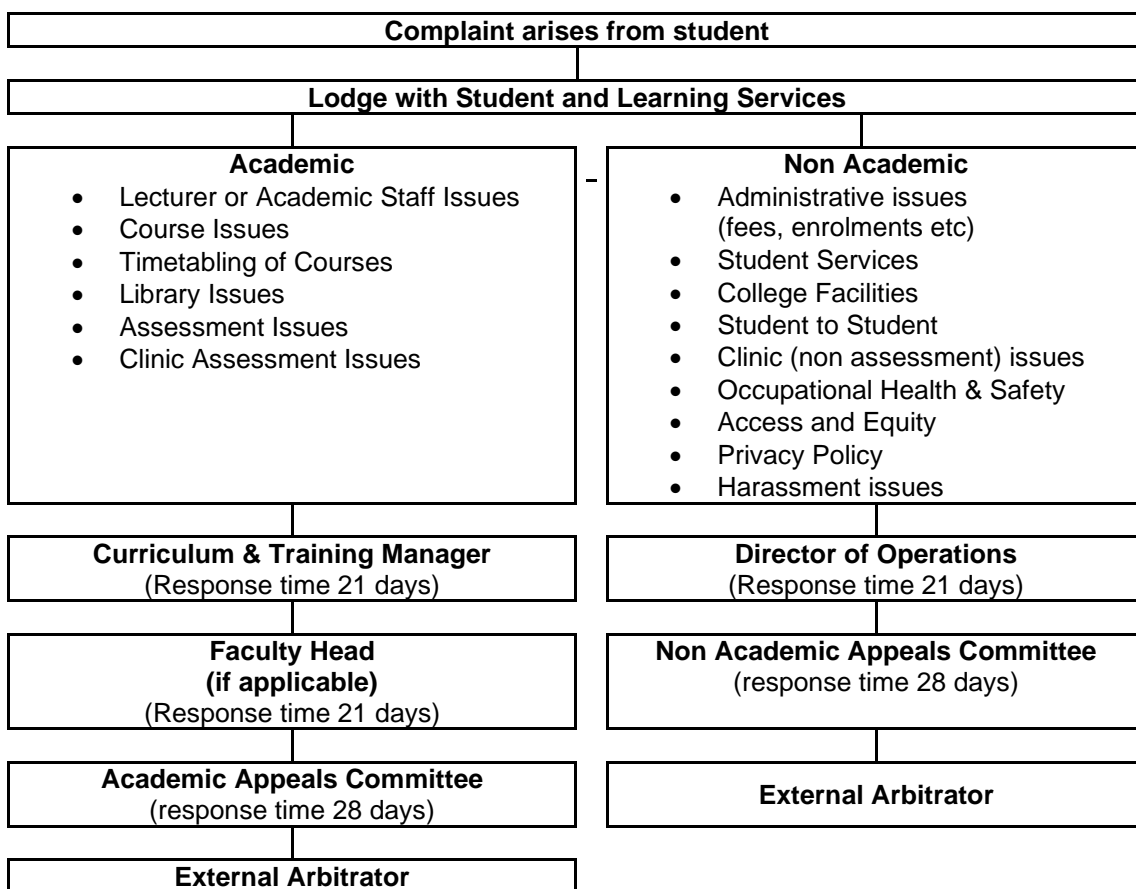
14. Confidentiality shall be observed by all participants and at all stages of the grievance procedure.

15. At any time during the grievance process, the complainant may withdraw their complaint by notification in writing to the Director of Operations. Once withdrawn, the complainant cannot raise the matter again unless significant new information concerning the complaint is provided.

16. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the complaint or grievance must be made within six [6] months of the action or outcome that has resulted in the complaint or grievance.

17. The complainant and all relevant parties will be informed of the outcome of the complaint or grievance in writing within fourteen (14) days of the decision.

### Overview of Complaint Procedure



## ACADEMIC GRIEVANCE POLICY

1. All students of the College or those seeking to enrol in a course of study with the College are entitled to access the grievance and appeal procedures set out in this policy, regardless of the location of the campus of the College at which the grievance has arisen, the student's place of residence or the mode in which they study.
2. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.
3. The *Academic & Non-Academic Grievance Policy* is published in the *Student Handbook*, available on the Nature Care College website: <http://www.naturecare.com.au>
4. This policy is intended to cater for academic grievances that are not restricted to and may encompass any of the following:
  - a. Assessment matters, where it becomes an appeal against an assessment
  - b. Teaching standards
  - c. Exclusion from a course
  - d. Course content
5. This policy is communicated to academic staff through the *Academic Staff Handbook* and to support staff through the *Staff Handbook*. The *Curriculum & Training Manager* is responsible for the training of academic staff in the application of the policy. The *Director of Operations* is responsible for the training of support staff in its application.
6. The policy provides any student enrolled in a course of the College with three stages at which a complaint may be addressed.
7. The complainant and respondent will not be victimised or discriminated against in any of the three stages set out in this policy.
8. At all stages of the process, reasons and a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the procedures must be given if requested by the complainant and/or respondent (as per Standard 8.1d of the National Code 2007).
9. All records of all grievances and appeals and applications for review of decisions must be kept and be accessible to all interested parties (as per Standard 8.1a of the National Code 2007). Records of grievances and appeals and their outcomes will be kept strictly confidential and filed in a separate file (not kept on the student or staff file) and stored in the office of the Director of Education for a period of 5 years. Parties to the complaint will be allowed supervised access to these records.
10. Each party may be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings (as per Standard 8.1c of the National Code 2007).
11. If the student chooses to access the registered provider's complaints and appeals processes, Nature Care College Pty Ltd will maintain the student's enrolment while the complaints and appeals process is going on (as per Standard 8.4 of the National Code 2007).
12. If the internal or any external complaint handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the student, Nature Care College Pty Ltd will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the student of the outcome (as per Standard 8.5 of the National Code 2007).

## STAGES OF RESOLUTION

### ACADEMIC STUDENT GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES – ACADEMIC OTHER THAN ASSESSMENT

**STAGE 1:** In the first instance, complaints should be discussed with the person/s involved to:

- identify and discuss the complaint or grievance with the other party
- discuss the best outcome to the complaint or grievance
- agree to act to resolve the complaint or grievance

If you feel it is not appropriate for you to talk to the person/s involved then talk to or put your complaint in writing and address the letter to the Curriculum & Training Manager.

The complaint must be dealt within a reasonable time frame and at any rate the process will commence within 10 days of formal lodgement of the complaint and supporting information (as per Standard 8.1e of the National Code 2007), and where possible handled within the context of the relationship between the student and the person to whom the complaint is made. This arrangement is free of charge (as per Standard 8.1b of the National Code 2007) however; any costs incurred by the complainant in attending such appearance must be born by the complainant.

**STAGE 2:** If unsatisfied with the response to the complaint or the time taken to resolve the matter, the complainant may submit the complaint in writing to the Curriculum & Training Manager and/or explicitly seek the involvement of the Academic Appeals Committee. The Chairperson of the Academic Appeals Committee will deal with the complaint within a reasonable time, normally within 30 days of formal lodgement of the complaint and supporting documentation. This arrangement is free of charge (as per Standard 8.1b of the National Code 2007) however; any costs incurred by the complainant in attending such appearance must be born by the complainant. Nature Care College Pty Ltd will provide you with a written statement of the appeal outcome, including details of the reasons for the outcome (as per Standard 8.1d of the National Code 2007).

**STAGE 3:** If not satisfied with the decision of the Chairperson of the Academic Appeals Committee, the complainant may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process by the person/body appointed by the provider for that purpose Nature Care College Pty Ltd will advise the complainant of his or her right to do so at minimal or no cost (as per Standard 8.3 of the National Code 2007). If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the mediation you may appeal the decision by requesting an external independent arbitrator. one such mediator is Leadr –, [www.leadr@leadr.com.au](mailto:www.leadr@leadr.com.au) This gives you the opportunity to formally present your case. Nature care College Pty Ltd will provide you with a written statement of the appeal outcome.

#### **Informal Resolution** – ‘Round Table Conference’ (Optional)

- The College can organise a ‘Round Table Conference’ between the student and a College representative.
- Options will be discussed and the desirable result is resolution of the complaint through conciliation. The outcome of Step 4 - the ‘Round Table Conference’ will be agreed to at the completion of the ‘Round Table Conference’..
- If the complaint remains unresolved then the student can proceed to Formal Resolution.

#### **Formal Resolution** – External Professional Mediator Appointed

- Formal Dispute Resolution may be requested after all appropriate forms of informal resolution have been sought. The student can request mediation by completing an appropriate ‘Request for Mediation’ form. An external mediator will be appointed by the college one such mediator is Leadr – [www.leadr@leadr.com.au](mailto:www.leadr@leadr.com.au). Mediator will be organised within 14 working days and the outcome of this mediation will be known at the end of the mediation process.
- A support person may accompany the student during the Mediation.
- Both parties will commit to resolving the complaint.
- The Mediator will provide a report on all outcomes of the Mediation to the provider and student.
- At completion of the Mediation, both parties must sign an Agreement agreeing to the outcomes.

This agreement does not remove the right to take further action under Australia’s consumer protection laws. The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities which may arise under other higher education provider policies or under statute or any other law.

## **Student Complaints and Appeals Relating to Assessment Procedure**

**Informal Resolution –**  
'Round Table Conference'

**Formal Resolution –**  
External professional Mediator Appointed

### **Academic Appeals Relating to Assessment**

To lodge an appeal against an assessment, students should complete the *Notice of Intention to Appeal* form and return to Student Learning Services within 14 days of receipt of result.

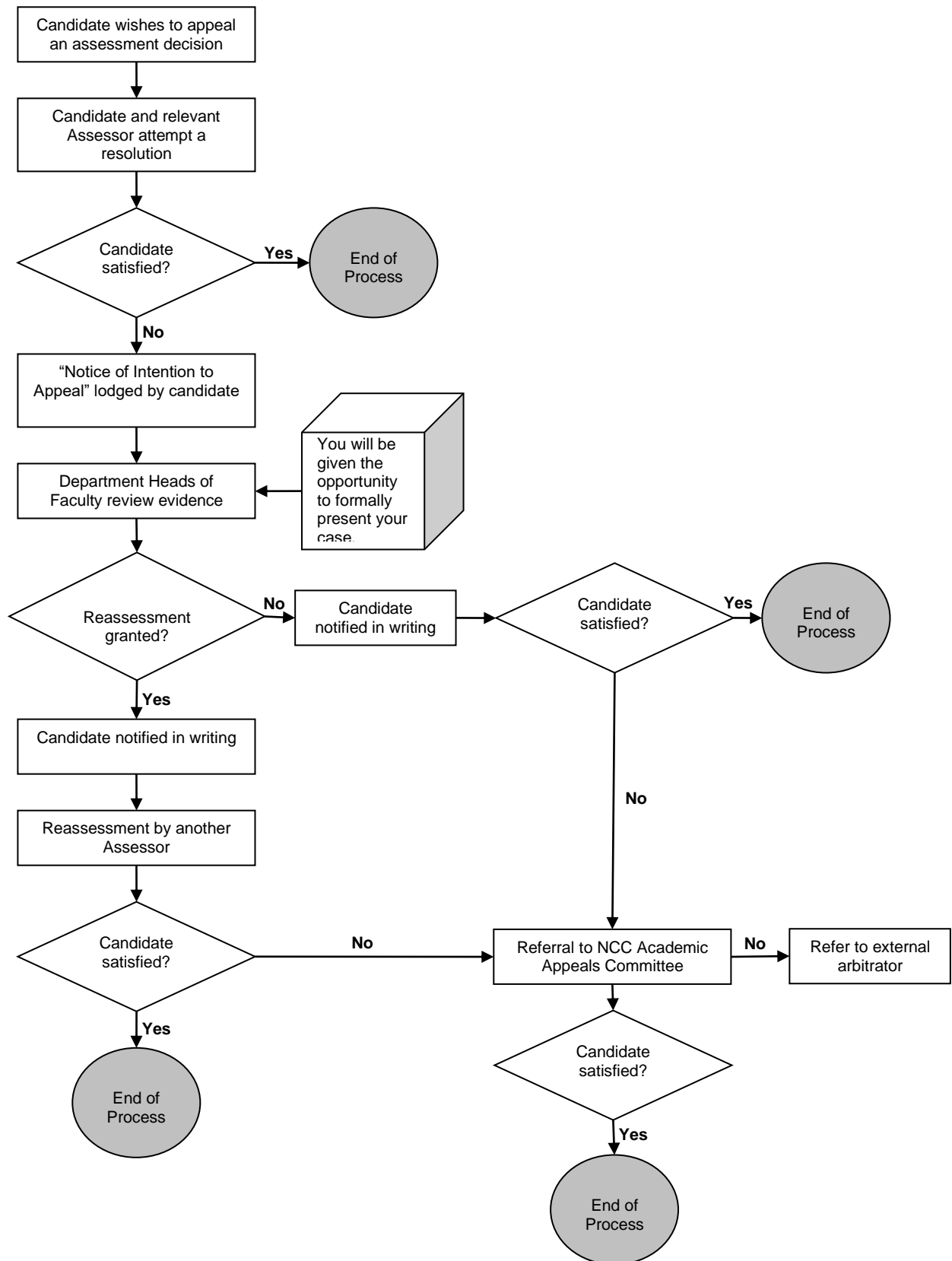
Prior to taking this step you should make every effort to resolve the matter with your assessor.

Upon receipt of the *Notice of Intention to Appeal* form, the College will convene a panel of independent assessors to review the assessment. You will be given the opportunity to formally present your case.

The Appeals Process is set out below. All appeals regarding assessment will follow this process.

### **Notification of Outcome**

The Curriculum & Training Manager will formally advise you in writing of the outcome of your appeal. Should students be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academic Appeals Committee, as in other cases of complaint, an external arbitrator may be appointed.



**The College will keep appropriate records of grievances and appeals for at least five years, and allow parties to the complaint appropriate access to these records.**