



Fair and Equitable Grievance and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Nature Care is committed to providing a fair, equitable, transparent, and accessible process for managing grievances and appeals. All learners, staff, trainers, contractors, and stakeholders have the right to raise concerns, complaints, or appeals without fear of disadvantage, discrimination, victimisation, or retaliation.

This policy ensures that grievances and appeals are handled promptly, confidentially, impartially, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.

Policy Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear process for lodging and resolving grievances and appeals.
- Ensure concerns are addressed fairly, consistently, and promptly.
- Promote positive relationships and continuous improvement.
- Protect the rights of all parties involved.
- Ensure decisions are reviewed impartially where requested.

Policy Scope:

This policy applies to:

- Learners and prospective learners
- Trainers, facilitators, supervisors
- Administrative and support staff
- Contractors and consultants.
- Any individual interacting with Nature Care College

This policy covers grievances and appeals relating to:

- Educational services.
- Course delivery and administration.
- Learner support services.
- Behaviour of staff or learners.
- Discrimination, harassment, bullying, or misconduct.
- Decisions affecting participation in course programs.
- Assessment outcomes (where applicable).
- Fees, refunds, and administrative decisions.



Definitions

Grievance

A grievance is a concern, complaint, or dissatisfaction regarding services, decisions, conduct, actions, or omissions by Nature Care College, staff, learners, or other stakeholders.

Appeal

An appeal is a request for a formal review of a decision made by Nature Care College where the individual believes the decision was unfair, incorrect, or inconsistent with policy.

Procedural Fairness

Procedural fairness means all parties are given the opportunity to present their case, decisions are made impartially, and outcomes are based on evidence.

Natural Justice

Natural justice ensures:

- Individuals know the allegations or concerns being considered.
- Individuals have the opportunity to respond.
- Decisions are free from bias.
- Decisions are based on relevant evidence.

Principles

All grievances and appeals will be managed according to the following principles:

Fairness

All parties will be treated respectfully and without bias.

Accessibility

The process will be easy to understand and available to all learners and stakeholders.

Confidentiality

Information will only be disclosed to those directly involved in resolving the matter.

Timeliness

Complaints and appeals will be addressed as quickly as reasonably possible.



Transparency

Parties will be informed about the process, progress, and outcomes.

No Victimisation

No person will be disadvantaged for lodging a grievance or appeal in good faith.

Continuous Improvement

Outcomes may be used to improve organisational practices and services.

Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, individuals are encouraged to seek informal resolution before submitting a formal grievance.

Informal resolution may include:

- Discussing the issue directly with the person involved.
- Seeking assistance from a trainer, supervisor, or manager.
- Requesting mediation or facilitated discussion.

Informal resolution should generally occur within 10 business days of the issue being raised.

Where informal resolution is not appropriate, unsuccessful, or the matter is serious, a formal grievance may be submitted.

Formal Grievance Procedure

Step 1: Lodging a Formal Grievance

A grievance may be submitted:

- In writing by email
- In writing by letter
- Through another accessible format where required.

The grievance should include:

- Name and contact details.
- Description of the issue.
- Relevant dates and details.
- Any supporting evidence.
- Desired outcome.



Step 2: Acknowledgement

Nature Care College will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within **five (5) business days**.

The acknowledgement will include:

- Confirmation of receipt.
- Outline of the process.
- Expected timeframe for resolution.

Step 3: Investigation

Nature Care College will:

- Review all relevant information.
- Speak with relevant parties.
- Collect supporting evidence.
- Ensure impartiality throughout the process.

Investigations will generally be completed within **20 business days**.

Where delays occur, all parties will be informed.

Step 4: Outcome

Following investigation, a written outcome will be provided outlining:

- Findings.
- Reasons for the decision.
- Any actions to be taken.
- Available appeal options.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Mediation.
- Corrective actions.
- Changes to procedures.
- Staff development.
- Withdrawal or dismissal of the grievance if unsubstantiated.

Appeal Process

Individuals dissatisfied with the outcome of a grievance or decision may lodge an appeal.



Grounds for Appeal

Appeals may be lodged where the individual believes:

- The decision was unfair.
- Relevant information was not considered.
- New evidence has become available.
- Procedures were not followed correctly.
- The outcome was unreasonable.

Step 1: Lodging an Appeal

Appeals must be submitted in writing within **20 business days** of receiving the original decision.

The appeal should include:

- Details of the original decision.
- Reasons for the appeal.
- Supporting evidence.

Step 2: Review of Appeal

The appeal will be reviewed by a person not previously involved in the original decision where possible.

The reviewer may:

- Examine all documentation.
- Seek additional information.
- Interview relevant parties.
- Request further evidence.

Step 3: Appeal Outcome

A written outcome will generally be provided within **20 business days**.

The outcome may:

- Confirm the original decision.
- Amend the decision.
- Overturn the decision.
- Recommend further investigation or action.

The decision following appeal will normally be final within the organisation.



External Review

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting internal processes, they may seek independent advice, mediation, or review through an appropriate external body.

Nature Care College will cooperate with any legitimate external review process.

Examples may include:

- Community mediation services.
- Consumer protection agencies.
- Anti-discrimination or human rights bodies.
- Relevant government departments.

Support Person

At any stage of the grievance or appeal process, individuals may be accompanied and supported by a:

- Friend
- Family member
- Advocate
- Interpreter
- Support person

The support person may assist but may not act on behalf of the individual.

Record Keeping

Nature Care College will maintain records of:

- Grievances received.
- Appeals lodged.
- Investigation activities.
- Outcomes and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and managed in accordance with privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Confidentiality

All parties involved must maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

Information will only be shared where:

- Necessary to investigate the matter.
- Required by law.
- Authorised by the individual concerned.



Protection Against Victimisation

No learner, staff member, or stakeholder will suffer disadvantage, discrimination, harassment, or victimisation for:

- Lodging a grievance.
- Participating in an investigation.
- Supporting another person through the process.

Any victimisation will be treated as a serious breach of Nature Care College standards.

Continuous Improvement

Information from grievances and appeals will be reviewed periodically to:

- Identify recurring issues.
- Improve services and programs.
- Enhance learner experiences.
- Strengthen Nature Care College organisational systems.

Responsibilities

Directors and Management

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Allocate resources for investigations.
- Monitor outcomes and improvements.

Staff

- Treat concerns seriously and respectfully.
- Follow grievance and appeal procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Learners and Stakeholders

- Raise concerns respectfully.
- Provide accurate information.
- Participate in the process in good faith.

Quality Outcome: This policy ensures that grievances and appeals are handled promptly, confidentially, impartially, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.