



Complaints Policy & Procedure: Lodging a Complaint Against an Approved Program Provider

Complaints regarding an HCANZA Approved Program Provider:

All HCANZA Approved Program Providers (APP) are bound by behaviour standards enshrined in the HCANZA Approved Program Provider Code of Conduct and Approved Program Provider Terms & Conditions

Whether you are a student or graduate of an APP's program, a health care professional or a concerned member of the public and you believe a HCANZA APP is in breach of these standards, you can lodge a formal complaint with HCANZA. A complaint may relate to a member of the program faculty, management team or to a perceived breach of business management integrity and honesty.

If you are dissatisfied with a service you have received from a HCANZA APP, we encourage you to first raise this with the Program Provider. Each APP is required to have and display publicly a Complaints Policy & Procedure. Complaints are often more easily and quickly resolved informally.

If the informal approach has not worked or you do not feel comfortable approaching the APP, then you can lodge a written complaint for HCANZA to investigate. This will be undertaken in a fair and impartial manner with a view to conflict resolution and redress action where possible.

Only formal, written complaints received via the complaint form available on the HCANZA website will be reviewed. We can only investigate complaints made against program providers that are listed as HCANZA approved.

Important considerations before making a complaint:

- All **formal complaints must be in writing and cannot be anonymous**. You can, however, ask that your identity not be disclosed to the subject of the complaint, although this may limit our ability to take specific redress action.
- A **complaint can be made by a student, a graduate, a member of the public considering becoming a health coach, a health consumer or general member of the public**.
- In addition, complaints **can be initiated by a HCANZA APP in relation to another HCANZA APP**, if they become aware of a breach of our Code of Conduct, Scope of Practice Standards or the APP Terms & Conditions.
- You must give **sufficient detail of the circumstances** to proceed (see section "How to make a complaint")
- The complaint will ideally be **lodged within six (6) months of your concern arising or an actual incident**.
- If your complaint is upheld, HCANZA can issue redress recommendations to an APP, including but not limited to:
 - a) Requesting changes to programs content, assessment or marketing

- b) Temporary suspension from HCANZA Approved Program status, or
- c) Removal from the Approval status altogether.
- For more detail, please see the redress section below under "What happens when HCANZA receives your complaint?".
- Where an APP is in breach of any government laws, regulations or business requirements HCANZA will direct you to the best authority who can deal with that complaint.
- We consider any breach of ethical business conduct a breach of the APP Terms & Conditions and have the ability to review that program's accreditation status.

Other avenues to complain:

Making a complaint to HCANZA does not prohibit you from making a complaint to the Commissioner or body in your Australian State or New Zealand. Where the APP appears to be in breach of contract law, commercial trading law or consumer protection law we recommend you consider taking action through legal or tribunal means.

How to make a complaint:

To fill out the complaint form you will need to:

- consider our APP Code of Conduct and Terms & Condition standard documents available on our website. This will help clarify what ethical standard an HCANZA APP must adhere to.
- provide a clear account of what happened and what went wrong.
- provide the date/s of the incident and name of the APP and the type of breach.
- decide if you are prepared for your identity to be known to the management of the APP, understanding that withholding your identity may limit the actions we can take. It is also important to understand that even if you do not wish your identity to be disclosed, the nature of the complaint may mean the APP will be able to determine your identity.
- Email your completed form to: admin@hcanza.org

What happens when HCANZA receives your complaint?

On receipt of the completed complaints form, the Executive Officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.

The Executive Officer will then verify that the subject of the complaint is a HCANZA APP, and that the incident being reported is a breach of our APP Code of Conduct, Scope of Practice and/or APP Terms & Conditions.

If the relevant organisation is not a HCANZA APP, OR the matter is not a breach of our standards, you will be notified of this outcome and the case will be closed. You are entitled to make a formal complaint to other government regulatory bodies.

If your complaint can be investigated, the Executive Officer will discuss the complaint with the Board Chairperson and then email you again to:

- inform you that HCANZA will investigate the matter.
- provide an estimate of the timeframe for the complaint to be responded to
- advise you of your rights if you are not satisfied with HCANZA response.

At this stage only you, the Executive Officer and the Board Chair know the complaint details.

Next, the HCANZA APP against whom the complaint has been made will be contacted in writing by the Executive Officer. They will receive a summary of the complaint made against them and the name of the person making the complaint unless you have asked to remain anonymous.

They will have up to 28 days in which to prepare a written reply to the complaint. This must be emailed to the Executive Officer.

The Executive Officer and the Board Chair will consider both your complaint and the response from the APP. If the matter is clear, they will make a determination for action or redress within 28 days. If the matter is complex/unclear, they may seek further information from both parties and/or they may refer the matter to the full Board for its consideration.

If the matter goes before the full Board, the names of both the HCANZA APP and the person complaining will be excised from any documentation. The decision of the Board will be final, and you will be notified of the outcome, usually within 90 days of our receipt of your complaint.

If your complaint is upheld

If your complaint is investigated by HCANZA and upheld we will email you a report of your complaint, outlining the investigations, conclusions and redress actions that were applied.

Redress actions may include but are not limited to:

- Censure of the APP
- Advising the APP to stop the activity that breaches the standards set by HCANZA
- Changes to documentation or training content to rejuvenate the program or website to a standard of compliance with HCANZA stated policies, business regulations and industry standards.
- Temporary suspension from HCANZA as an APP for a certain period until rectification is achieved.
- Removal of the Approved Program Status.

Our general approach when a complaint is upheld is to help Program providers who are the subject of a complaint to improve their knowledge, resources, and business practices

If your complaint is not upheld

If your case is investigated by HCANZA but not upheld, the Executive Officer will email you with an outline of your complaint, the investigations we undertook and the reason why it was not upheld.

Complaints involving inappropriate relationships.

When a complaint involves an inappropriate relationship with a student, graduate, or related third party HCANZA will recommend termination of APP status if the complaint is upheld. An inappropriate sexual relationship, coercive control by any member of the APP's faculty, would automatically invoke termination of HCANZA APP.

Terminating membership

If we terminate APP status, all mention of HCANZA must be removed from the former programs written, web or social media-based material within one month.

Upheld complaints

All complaints that are upheld will be recorded in the APP's file. The same confidentiality as is provided with a written complaint is kept in relation to the filing of the complaint. The Board may, at its discretion, impose more stringent redress requirements upon APP's previously found to be in violation of the APP Code of Conduct, Scope of Practice and Terms & Condition standards (in the case where this is not the first offence).