

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Description of policy	This policy outlines Living & Learning Nillumbik's approach to dealing effectively with complaints and appeals. It is supported by the <i>Complaints and Appeals Procedure</i> which details how complaints and appeals are to be managed.
Policy applies to	Living & Learning Nillumbik VET team staff.
Policy category	Revised Policy
Description of revision and Version Number	Version Number: V3

Approved by	Living & Learning Nillumbik Committee
Effective date	July 2018
Date of last revision	July 2018
Date of next review*	May 2021

*Unless replaced, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Related internal procedures and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints and Appeals Procedure
Related policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance Policy Training and Assessment Policy Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy
Related legislation, standards and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers AQTF 2010 Essential Standards for Continuing Registration ESR 2.6, 3.3 Australian Qualifications Framework

Overview

Despite all efforts of Living & Learning Nillumbik to provide a high level of service to its participants and other persons, complaints and appeals may occasionally arise requiring formal resolution.

Living & Learning Nillumbik seeks to:

- Manage complaints and appeals fairly, efficiently and consistently.
- Respect the views of each complainant and respondent.
- Ensure that any party to a complaint or appeal is not discriminated against or victimised.
- Develop a culture that views complaints and appeals as an opportunity to improve the organisation and how it works.

Definitions

Appeal – a request to review a decision that has previously been made.

Complaint – a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any service provided by Living & Learning Nillumbik.

Formal complaint – a concern which has not been resolved informally, and which is then addressed formally in writing, and forwarded to the Coordinator Living & Learning Nillumbik.

Informal complaint – a concern which is discussed directly with the person(s) involved, or indirectly with the support of a Living & Learning Nillumbik staff member. An informal complaint can be made and discussed verbally or via written forms of communication such as email.

Scope

This policy applies to all participants, prospective participants, clients, staff and other stakeholders of Living & Learning Nillumbik.

Policy

1. Complaints and appeals processes

- 1.1 Participants and clients are encouraged to resolve concerns informally by directly discussing them with the person(s) involved, wherever possible. This can help prevent issues from escalating. Living & Learning Nillumbik's trainers, program coordinators and administration

team are available to assist participants to resolve their issues at this level.

- 1.2 Living & Learning Nillumbik encourages parties to approach complaints with an open mind and to resolve problems through discussion and conciliation. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout to protect the rights and privacy of those involved.
- 1.3 All formal complaints and appeals and their outcomes will be recorded on the *Complaints and Appeals Registers*. The Registers will be regularly reviewed by management and used as an opportunity for improvement and reflection.
- 1.4 All complaints and appeals will be considered and responded to in a timely fashion.
- 1.5 Appeals must be lodged within the timeframe set out in the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
- 1.6 Where a participant chooses to make a complaint or appeal, Living & Learning Nillumbik will maintain the participant's enrolment while the relevant process is ongoing.
- 1.7 There is no cost to access the complaints and appeals processes with Living & Learning Nillumbik.

2. **Making a complaint**

- 2.1 Informal complaints may be made verbally or in writing directly with the person(s) involved, or indirectly with the support of a Living & Learning Nillumbik staff member.
- 2.2 Formal complaints are to be made in writing to the Coordinator Living & Learning Nillumbik.

3. **Appealing the outcome of a complaint**

Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the handling of a complaint by Living & Learning Nillumbik or the proposed resolution, he/she has the right to lodge an internal appeal of the decision.

4. **Appealing an assessment decision**

An appeal of an assessment decision, stating why the assessment is disputed, may be lodged in writing to the Coordinator Living & Learning Nillumbik.

5. **Other internal appeals**

A participant or prospective participant may appeal the outcome of other decisions made by Living & Learning Nillumbik, including but not limited to decisions relating to:

- Applications for entry into a qualification course.
- Applications for special consideration under Living & Learning Nillumbik's Fees, charges and refunds policy.

6. **External complaints and appeals**

6.1 Complainants are encouraged to follow the internal processes above before making an external complaint or appeal. Nonetheless, they may lodge a complaint or an appeal with an external organisation at any stage, at their own cost. Options for external complaint handling are provided in the *Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

6.2 Living & Learning Nillumbik will cooperate fully with the organisation investigating the complaint/appeal and will be bound by the recommendations arising out of that process. The Coordinator Living & Learning Nillumbik will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within the prescribed timeframe.

7. **Non-limitation of policy**

This policy and related procedures do not replace or modify those or any other responsibilities which may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and related procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under Australia's Consumer Protection laws. This policy does not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.