



AARP Complaints Policy – Complaints About AARP

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1. Introduction

The **Australasian Association and Register of Practicing Nutritionists (AARPN)** is committed to maintaining transparency, fairness, and accountability in all aspects of its operations. This policy outlines the process for handling complaints made **against AARPN as an organization**, including complaints about its governance, committees, administration, or procedures.

This policy **does not cover complaints about individual Certified Practicing Nutritionists (CPNs)**.

Complaints about CPNs must be lodged under the standard **AARPN Complaints Policy for Practitioners**.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints regarding:

- **AARPN's governance and administration**, including policies, decisions, and operational processes.
- **Actions or decisions made by AARPN's Board, Certification Committee, or Ethics & Complaints Committee.**
- **Mismanagement, procedural errors, conflicts of interest, or breaches of organizational policy.**
- **Allegations of unfair treatment or bias by AARPN representatives.**

This policy does **not** apply to:

- **Disputes about AARPN's policies or standards in general**, unless they involve procedural errors.
- **Complaints about individual CPNs**, which must follow the practitioner complaints process.
- **Matters falling outside AARPN's jurisdiction**, which may be referred to external authorities.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

AARPN Administration

- Receives and acknowledges complaints within **10 working days**.
- Assigns a **reference number** and forwards complaints to the relevant decision-making body.

AARPN Board

- Ensures complaints about AARPN are investigated fairly and transparently.
- Provides oversight of complaint resolution and **confirms or implements corrective actions**.
- Handles **appeals** if the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution.

AARPN Ethics & Complaints Committee

- Reviews complaints that involve **ethical concerns, conflicts of interest, or procedural fairness**.
- Conducts **investigations**, gathers evidence, and recommends resolutions to the AARPN Board.

Independent Appeals Panel

- Reviews appeals and ensures fairness in the complaints process.
- Issues final decisions on complaints when an appeal is submitted.

4. Complaints Process

Step 1: Lodging a Complaint

- Complaints must be submitted in writing via **email to admin@aarpn.com** or by post.
- The complaint must include:
 - A detailed description of the issue.
 - Relevant dates, records, or supporting evidence.
 - The desired outcome sought by the complainant.

Step 2: Acknowledgment & Initial Assessment

- Complaints are acknowledged within **10 working days**.
- A preliminary assessment is conducted within **4 weeks** to determine:
 - If the complaint falls within AARPN's jurisdiction.
 - Whether mediation or conciliation is appropriate.
 - If the complaint should be referred to external bodies (e.g., legal authorities if applicable).

Step 3: Opportunity for Reply

- AARPN representatives involved in the complaint are informed of the allegations and given **21–28 days** to respond.
- Respondents may provide supporting documents, witness details, or explanations.

Step 4: Mediation & Conciliation (if applicable)

- If deemed suitable by the **AARPN Board or Ethics & Complaints Committee**, mediation is offered.
- If successful, the complaint is resolved, and the process ends.
- If unsuccessful, the complaint proceeds to a formal investigation.

Step 5: Investigation

- The **AARPN Board or Ethics & Complaints Committee** appoints an external investigator.
- Statements, evidence, and records are gathered over **4–6 weeks**.
- The complainant and respondent receive regular updates.

Step 6: Decision & Resolution

- The **AARPN Board or Ethics & Complaints Committee** reviews the investigation report.
- Possible outcomes include:
 - **Complaint dismissed** if no breach is found.
 - **Corrective action taken** (e.g., procedural changes, staff retraining).
 - **Formal apology or policy revision** if errors are identified.

Step 7: Notification & Appeal Option

- The complainant is notified of the outcome in writing.
- Appeals must be lodged within **14–28 days** if there is **new evidence or a procedural error**.

Step 8: Appeals Process

- The **Independent Appeals Panel** reviews the appeal within **4–6 weeks**.
- Possible appeal outcomes:
 - **Original decision upheld.**
 - **Corrective action modified.**
 - **Decision overturned.**
 - **Case reopened for further investigation.**
- Once the **final decision** is made, no further appeals are allowed.

5. Transparency & Continuous Improvement

- AARPN reviews complaints data **annually** to improve governance and policy processes.
- **Serious procedural failures** may be publicly reported for accountability.
- This policy is reviewed **annually** to incorporate stakeholder feedback and legislative changes.

6. Contact Details

- **Email:** admin@aarpn.com
- **Website:** www.aarpn.com
- **Postal Address:** [Insert Official Mailing Address]

Process Diagram

[A] Complaint Lodged



[B] Acknowledgment (within 10 working days)



[C] Initial Assessment (~4 weeks)

└─▶ Dismissed (Out of Scope) ✕

└─▶ Referred Externally (e.g., Legal Authorities) ↗



[D] Opportunity for Reply (21–28 days)

- AARPN representatives are informed

- Respondents submit documents, witness details, or explanations



[E] Mediation & Conciliation (if applicable)

└─▶ If resolved, process ends ✓

└─▶ If unsuccessful, proceed to investigation ▼



[F] Investigation (4-6 weeks)

- Investigator appointed (may be external if warranted)

- Statements, evidence, and records gathered

- Complainant & respondent receive updates



[G] Decision & Resolution

└─▶ Complaint Dismissed ✕

└─▶ Corrective Action Taken (Policy Revision, Training) ✓

└─▶ Formal Apology or Governance Changes 🏠



[H] Notification & Appeal Option (14–28 days)

└─▶ No Appeal → [I] Final Outcome ✓

└─▶ Appeal Submitted → [J] Appeals Panel Review (~4–6 weeks)



Possible Appeal Outcomes:

└─▶ Original Decision Upheld ✕

└─▶ Corrective Action Modified ▼

└─▶ Decision Overturned ✓

└─▶ Case Reopened for Further Investigation 🔄



[K] Final Decision (No further appeal)

The AARPN Complaints Process for Complaints About AARPN begins when a complaint is lodged in writing via email or post. AARPN acknowledges receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and assigns a reference number. The complaint then undergoes an initial assessment within 4 weeks, where it is reviewed to determine if it falls within AARPN’s jurisdiction. If it is out of scope, it is dismissed with an explanation. If it requires external oversight, such as legal authorities or regulatory bodies, it is referred accordingly. If the complaint is valid, the opportunity for reply is given to AARPN representatives involved, who have 21–28 days to provide a written response, including any supporting documents, evidence, or witness statements.

Following this, the Chair of the AARPN Board or the Ethics & Complaints Committee determines if the complaint is suitable for mediation and conciliation. If mediation is successful, the complaint is resolved, and the process ends. If mediation is unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate, the case moves to formal investigation. An investigator is appointed (may be external if warranted), evidence is gathered, and regular updates are provided to both parties over 4–6 weeks. The AARPN Board or the Ethics & Complaints Committee then reviews the investigation findings and makes a final decision. If no breach is found, the complaint is dismissed. If a procedural issue, governance failure, or ethical concern is substantiated, corrective action is taken, such as policy revisions, governance improvements, or formal apologies.

Both the complainant and respondent are notified in writing of the outcome, and they have 14–28 days to appeal if they believe there was a procedural error or if new evidence emerges. If no appeal is lodged, the decision stands as the final outcome. If an appeal is submitted, the Independent Appeals Panel reviews the case within 4–6 weeks. The panel can uphold the original decision, modify corrective actions, overturn the decision, or order further investigation. Once the final decision is reached, no further appeals are allowed, and the complaint process is officially concluded.