



P051 Procedure for the management of formal complaints regarding ACSEP Members

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a process for the submission, management and resolution of complaints relating to the conduct and/or breaches of ACSEP policy by ACSEP members in accordance with *P050 – Complaints Handling Policy*.

2 SCOPE

Complaints managed under this procedure include the following matters:

- Complaints regarding breaches of policy by ACSEP Members (e.g., *P015 – Code of Ethics and Professional Behaviour*, *P001- Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy*, etc.)

This procedure does not apply to:

- Applicants seeking reconsideration, review or appeal of a decision made by ACSEP (refer to *P019 – Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*)
- Complaints regarding ACSEP members' clinical or business practices.
- ACSEP service delivery (including, but not limited to, concerns regarding staff conduct, the quality of a service or its accessibility) (refer to *P052 - Administrative Complaints Handling Procedure*)
- ACSEP's management of a matter (including, but not limited to, delays, not responding to communications, incorrect or unfair handling of a matter and the reasons for a decision not being clearly provided) (refer to *P052 - Administrative Complaints Handling Procedure*)
- Policies, processes and their application (including, but not limited to, concerns that a policy or process is unfair, incorrect or inadequately explained) (refer to *P052 - Administrative Complaints Handling Procedure*)
- ACSEP staff grievances regarding human resources matters.

3 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this procedure:

Term	Definition
Complaint	An implied or express statement of dissatisfaction made where a response is sought, reasonable to expect or legally required.
Feedback	Comment, criticism or compliment, made directly or indirectly, where a response is not sought, or reasonable to expect.
Complainant	A person, organisation or representative who makes a complaint.



Respondent	A person against whom a matter is raised or a complaint is made.
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4 PROCEDURE

4.1 Making a complaint

Complaints can be addressed to the ACSEP Chief Executive Officer via email, telephone or post, using the contact details below:

Medium	Contact details
Email	ceo@acsep.org.au
Post	Suite 5.02, 425 Smith Street, Fitzroy, VIC, 3065, Australia
Telephone	+61 3 9654 7672

Complainants should provide as much detail as possible, including the following:

- Name and preferred contact details (optional for anonymous complaints)
- The subject/respondent of the complaint
- Details of the issue or concern, including a description of what occurred, date/timeframe of the incident/s, and whether there are any witnesses.
- Details of any previous attempts to resolve the issue, including reports made to other bodies (employers, regulators, etc.)
- The outcome they are seeking
- Any supporting documentation
- Whether the complaint relates to Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment or Unacceptable Behaviour, or a breach of the ACSEP Code of Ethics and Professional Behaviour.

4.2 Acknowledging receipt of a complaint

The ACSEP CEO will aim to acknowledge receipt of a complaint within five business days. The ACSEP CEO will then convene a Complaint Review Panel comprising of the ACSEP President, ACSEP Board Chair and the Chair of the ACSEP Professional Standards Committee. If any of these members are a respondent of the complaint or have declared a Conflict of Interest, the ACSEP CEO and ACSEP Board Chair may nominate another suitable member to be involved in the assessment and investigation process.

4.3 Assessment of the complaint

The Complaint Review Panel will assess the complaint and determine whether the complaint:

- Is suitable for an informal resolution in the first instance, or
- Requires a formal resolution.

Where appropriate, ACSEP may refer the complaint to another authority such as an employer or regulatory authority. Where a complaint has been referred to a third party, ACSEP may elect not to initiate its own investigation until the other party/ies have conducted their investigations.



4.4 Notifying the respondent

The Chair of the Professional Standards Committee will advise the respondent of the complaint in writing of the allegations and request their cooperation in the investigation and resolution process.

4.5 Resolution of a complaint

Informal resolution

The Complaint Review Panel may recommend an information resolution process for the complaint where appropriate, this process may include, but is not limited to:

- Facilitating a discussion or mediation between the complainant and respondent
- Facilitating an apology from the respondent
- Facilitating a commitment to improvement or undertakings from the respondent.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution, they may request a formal resolution of the matter.

Formal resolution

To facilitate a formal resolution, additional background information may be gathered from the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses (with appropriate consent). This will be reviewed by the Complaint Review Panel and the ACSEP Board.

The ACSEP Professional Standards Committee will then meet to review the complaint, evidence, and response provided by the respondent. The ACSEP Professional Standards Committee Chair will then produce a final report with recommendations to the ACSEP Board for ratification.

Once ratified, the ACSEP Professional Standards Committee Chair will advise the complainant and the respondent/s of the outcome of the complaint and reasons for the decision/s.

ACSEP will endeavour to resolve all complaints within sixty (60) days of receipt. Where this timeframe is not possible, the CEO will advise the complainant of the expected timeframe for resolution.

4.6 Escalation pathways

If the complainant is dissatisfied with ACSEP's response to a formal complaint, they may escalate the complaint to the Chair of the ACSEP Board. The Board will consider the complaint and engage an external independent review of the case. The outcome of the external independent review will be communicated to all concerned parties by the Chair of the Board and the ACSEP President.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the complainant may also choose to escalate the complaint to the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman (Australia) (www.nhpo.gov.au), the Health and Disability Commissioner (Aotearoa New Zealand) (www.hdc.org.nz) or the relevant state Health Complaint Commissioner.

4.7 Mandatory reporting

If the complaint raises issues that require the College to notify regulators under law, the College will make a notification to the relevant regulatory authority (e.g. Ahpra, MCNZ). The respondent will be informed of the notification, provided this does not create additional risk.



5 KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- ACSEP Constitution
- P004 – Privacy Policy
- P012 – Records Management Policy
- P015 – Code of Ethics and Professional Behaviour
- P019 – Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy
- P033 – Membership Policy
- P041 – Whistleblower Policy
- P045 – Conflict of Interest Policy
- P050 - Complaints Handling Policy
- P052 - Administrative Complaints Handling Procedure.

6 NOTES

6.1	Contact Officer	Chief Executive Officer
6.2	Implementation Officer	Chief Executive Officer
6.3	Approval Authority / Authorities	ACSEP Board
6.4	Date Approved	August 2026
6.5	Date of Commencement	August 2026
6.6	Date for Review	July 2029
6.7	Documents Superseded by this Policy	P002 – ACSEP Grievance Policy and Procedure
6.8	Amendment History	N/A