



**NATIONAL DOULA  
CERTIFICATION BOARD**

# **APPLICANT & CANDIDATE HANDBOOK**

2023-2024

National Doula Certification Board  
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## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to ensure compliance with regulations and give guidance to applicants and candidates with all pertinent information regarding application, certification, scope of certification, policies and procedures, complaints, and appeals, and to provide clear expectations.

Data contained in this handbook or website accurately reflects information at the time of publication or posting. However, the National Doula Certification Board reserves the right to make changes at any time deemed necessary.

The most current version of this handbook will be available on National Doula Certification Board website.

### HANDBOOK VERSION RECORD

Version 1	Handbook Creation	01/20/2021
Version 2	Updated	11/01/2022
Version 3	Updated	06/01/2023

## SECTION 1: OUR COMPANY

### 1.1 Introduction

The National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) exists as a private entity 501C-6 corporation. The NDCB has specific duties and responsibilities pertaining to Board activity and does not participate in any training activities.

The NDCB is solely responsible and retains authority for all decisions related to certification, including authority for granting, maintaining, recertifying, expanding, and reducing the scope of certification and suspending or withdrawing certification.

### 1.2 Company Information

National Doula Certification Board  
PO Box 630894  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80163  
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Phone: 720-901-4150

Email: [info@doulaboard.org](mailto:info@doulaboard.org)

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## SECTION 2: OUR MISSION

### 2.1 Mission

The National Doula Certification Board's mission is to set the standard for the professional practice, training, and learning outcomes for the doula profession. This is achieved by creating a standard of professionalism, preparedness, knowledge, and skill for doulas and establishing a national certification process that can be used with confidence by any interested party as a measure of an individual's qualification to practice as a doula.

### 2.2 Purpose

The National Doula Certification Board exists to create a standard of professionalism, preparedness, knowledge, and skill for doulas and establish a national certification process that can be used with confidence by any interested party as a measure of an individual's qualification to practice as a doula.

The Certified Professional Doula (CPD) credential issued by the National Doula Certification Board is seeking accreditation by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI/ANAB) under the ISO 17024 standard for certification programs. The purpose of this certification program is to establish a standard of competency, skills and professionalism necessary to practice as a Certified Professional Doula.

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## SECTION 3: SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

### 3.1 Scope of Certification

The Certified Professional Doula (CPD) Certification is awarded to candidates that demonstrate successful completion of all requirements for initial certification, including successful passing of 80% or higher on the CPD Certification Exam. The CPD certification is valid for three (3) years and may be renewed every subsequent three years if conditions are met. The initial certification application and exam do require separate fees.

The Certified Professional Doula credential was created to help raise the level of professionalism, preparedness, knowledge, and skill in this field. The CPD Certification is meant to set a new standard for and regulation of the doula profession.

### 3.2 Scope of Practice

A Certified Professional Doula (CPD) provides emotional, physical and informational support through the full spectrum of life. Doulas partner with clients to create an individualized care plan. Doulas do not give medical advice or perform medical procedures or treatments, nor do they act in place of a medical provider. Doulas do not diagnose or intervene.

### 3.3 Code of Conduct & Standards of Professionalism

All Certified Professional Doulas (CPD) are required to uphold the following Code of Conduct and Standards of Professionalism while actively certified through the National Doula Certification Board. All CPD doulas must act in respect to the CPD Scope of Practice and maintain the principles and values of professionalism.

Failure to comply will result in immediate suspension of certification for further investigation and disciplinary action if necessary.

#### DISORDERLY CONDUCT

The following list of misconduct are violations of this code and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken if a doula is found in violation. This list is not exhaustive, and the National Doula Certification Board has the final authority for evaluating questionable behaviour.

- Unauthorized access to medical facility or organizational computers, documents, files, supplies or any other area not pertinent to certified doula practice.
- Conduct that restricts or prevents staff, faculty, or other medical personnel from performing their duties.
- Inappropriate language, abusive language or derogatory language used at any time towards clients, care team members or fellow doulas.
- Any action or behaviour that is an unreasonable interference with the environment or the rights of others. Examples may include, but are not limited to HIPAA violations, theft, violence, violations of local, state or federal law, medical facility regulations or false representation.
- Any action or behaviour that negatively impacts the health and welfare of others.
- Any behaviour that reflects poorly on the National Doula Certification Board, the CPD credential or the doula profession.

- Violation of confidentiality.
- Arguing or interfering with care providers, staff, clients, friends or family.
- Misrepresentation or misuse of the CPD credentials.

## STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONALISM

All CPD doulas are expected to uphold high standards of professionalism, respect and language when working alongside others.

## CONFLICT

Doulas shall refrain from engaging in arguments, conflict or anything that could be viewed as disruptive behaviours. If doulas find themselves in a situation that is escalating towards conflict, it is the doula's responsibility to remove themselves politely and professionally.

## CONSENT

Doulas shall obtain verbal consent/permission from all patients before assisting or completing any task related to doula practice.

Doulas shall respect the privacy and rights of clients at all times, including the right of refusal to consent to support.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Doulas shall maintain appropriate continuing education related to doula practice, including but not limited to: national standards related to doula practice (such as updated relevant policies/guidelines from American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, World Health Organization, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology), best practices, knowledge of updates to products and equipment relevant to doula practice.

## CLIENT MANAGEMENT & DOCUMENTATION

Doulas are responsible for appropriate client management and documentation procedures to ensure confidentiality and minimize liability.

## SECTION 4: OVERVIEW OF INITIAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

### 4.1 Eligibility Requirements

All applicants must be at least 18 years of age.

### 4.2 Requirements for Initial Certification

<b>Step 1 – Educational Validation</b>
<b>The Certified Professional Doula (CPD) is trained through two pathways including pre-approved training programs or an individual/prior learning pathway.</b>
➤ <b>Pathway 1: Approved Training Program Pathway</b>
<b>Current training organizations with approved programs that meet all the requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Allo Doula Academy’s CPD Training Course</b></li> </ul>
➤ <b>Pathway 2: Prior Learning/Individual Learning Pathway</b>
<b>This Pathway requires each person to complete Part 1 and Part 2:</b>
<b>Part 1-Training Requirements: The individual must complete a minimum of combined 200hrs of training (with proof of completion, within the last 4 years) in the following topic areas:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prenatal/pregnancy support</b></li> <li>• <b>Fertility/Infertility</b></li> <li>• <b>Labor support</b></li> <li>• <b>Postpartum support</b></li> <li>• <b>End of life support</b></li> <li>• <b>Business</b></li> <li>• <b>Infant Feeding</b></li> <li>• <b>Maternal Mental Health (non-clinical)</b></li> <li>• <b>Newborn care</b></li> <li>• <b>Newborn and Infant development</b></li> <li>• <b>Diversity and Cultural sensitivity</b></li> <li>• <b>HIPAA</b></li> <li>• <b>Personal Safety</b></li> </ul>
<b>Part 2 - Clinical experience requirements: The individual must complete a minimum of 75hrs of hands-on clinical experience in a medical facility with a preceptor.</b>
<b>The preceptor must be a qualified healthcare provider (RN, BSN, CPM, CNM, OBGYN), and the preceptor must agree to the preceptor requirements and hold the responsibility of validating the clinical experience.</b>
<b>The clinical experience must be non-compensated and include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>75 hours total contact hours (55 in medical facility, 20 in-home)</b></li> <li>• <b>5 live births</b></li> <li>• <b>Postpartum support (in home) 20 hours</b></li> <li>• <b>Adherence to medical protocols</b></li> </ul>

### 4.3 Initial Application Process

Applicants for initial certification are required to submit an application and fee (\$50) to the NDCB, along with all required documentation listed below.

This application is reviewed, along with all submitted documents and payment, by the National Doula Certification Board. Applicants who have completed all prerequisites will be notified by the Board after review and approval. Once approval has been issued, applicant will move to candidate status and will be eligible to register for the CPD examination.

The following prerequisites must be submitted and included with the initial application.

1. CPD Initial Certification Application and fee
2. Education Validation Paperwork from Pathway 1 (Approved Training Provider) or Pathway 2 (Individual Learning Pathway). See Section 3.3 and 3.4
3. Current CPR Certification: can be issued by any qualified organization (example: American Heart Association or the American Red Cross but must be valid in the US and not expired.
4. Current Professional Liability Insurance: must be individual malpractice coverage. issued in the applicant's personal name and not expired.
5. Evidence of current professional business documentation (choose a or b):
  - a. Current professional business documents:
    - Business registration documents (e.g., articles of incorporation, LLC registration, etc.)
    - Copy of client contract
    - Bio/Resume/headshot
  - OR
  - b. Verification of employment by current employer
6. OSHA/Bloodborne Pathogens & Universal Precautions Training
7. Agreement to comply with the National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) Code of Conduct and Professional Standards and to operate within the Certified Professional Doula (CPD) Scope of Practice

### 4.4 Pathway 1 Required Documents

Each applicant must submit proof of successful completion of a CPD training course/program from one of the approved training providers. (See Approved Training Provider List). The Certificate of Completion of Training must be issued within 1 year of application date.

### 4.5 Pathway 2 Required Documents

Each applicant who pursues Pathway 2 must submit a packet with all educational documents and proof including the "Summary of Individual Learning Form" of successful completion of training in each of the listed topics, along with

Clinical Paperwork: The applicant must submit the “Clinical Experience Approval Form”. The form must be submitted and approved prior to initial application of certification. The NDCB will review the approval request and may require additional information from the applicant in order to meet the requirements. The NDCB does not guarantee approval.

The candidate will submit an hourly log, experiences checklist and a writeup detailing their clinical experience. The Clinical Director for the Academy holds a non-voting position on the NDCB and provides oversight for the evaluation of the candidate’s clinical experience. The NDCB holds the right to validate the hours log against the clinical site’s records of student rotation. Register and take the CPD Certification Exam.



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## SECTION 5: CPD CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) sets forth all exam requirements and rules and will be responsible for proctoring and grading all exams.

### 5.1 Exam Requirements

Upon successful completion of the application process and approval, each candidate will be eligible to register for the CPD Certification Exam.

### 5.2 Exam Registration and Fee

Each candidate will register for the exam via Prolydian. Each candidate will choose their desired date and time for online proctoring. Each candidate will be required to pay the \$350 exam fee upon registration. Candidates will be emailed specific instructions for exam login.

### 5.3 Exam Rules

All exams are proctored via a live proctor through ProctorU. Each candidate will be required to complete steps for authentication and attestation.

- Candidates are required to complete the identification verification procedures via ProctorU.
- Candidates must take the exam at the confirmed date and time, as indicated by Proylidian or other contracted proctor.
- Candidates must get at a minimum of 80% to receive a passing score on the exam.
- Candidates may not access their belongings at any time during the exam.
- The exam space will be cleared of any materials that may aid or give information to use to answer any questions on the exam.
- Candidates will not be allowed to leave during the exam. If an emergency arises, they will forfeit their exam and will not be eligible to retest until the next scheduled examination date.
- Candidates must complete the exam within the 2-hour time frame, (unless otherwise approved)
- Candidates are not allowed to copy or attempt to make any copies of any exam materials or exam questions or answers.
- Candidates may not share, distribute, sell, photograph, or disclose any exam questions or answers and will be subject to termination of certification and possible legal action if such actions occur.
- Candidates are expected to exhibit ethical test taking behaviour. Cheating and misrepresentation will be grounds for dismissal without refund.

*No-Shows:* Any candidate who fails to show up (without notification) to the scheduled exam will forfeit their period of eligibility and any exam fees. The candidate will be barred from making up the exam until the next pre-scheduled examination date and will be required to pay any associated re-test fees.

*Extreme Circumstances:* If any candidate is unable to take the exam because of inclement weather, terrorist acts, natural disaster, or any unforeseen emergency beyond the control of the candidate, the candidate will be allowed to take the scheduled re-test exam without the required re-test exam fee.

*Examination Format:* The CPD certification exam contains approximately 150 multiple choice questions. Test questions are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure up to date information and accuracy. Candidates will have 2 hours to complete the exam.

*Delivery Conditions and Non-Discrimination:* Exam conditions are standardized to the greatest extent possible, with reasonable accommodations, to ensure an equitable experience for all examinees regardless of their age, gender, nationality, religion, or disabilities, including visual, auditory, and physical impairment. Special considerations will be addressed when necessary or warranted.

*Examination Dismissal:* Any candidate who is observed engaging in any misconduct may be dismissed from the certification exam, barred from future exams, (eligibility), and may be required to forfeit current exam fee and/or period of eligibility. Proctors and/or NDCB administrators are authorized to make immediate and appropriate decisions against candidates who are caught violating examination rules and misconduct. The candidate is entitled to appeal the dismissal decision through the formal appeals process.

*Notification of Results:* Candidates will be notified by email of exam results within 10 business days of the exam.

*Accommodations:* Any Candidate who is requesting accommodations must complete the Request for Testing Accommodations Form which can be found on the NDCB website. The NDCB will make every effort to award reasonable accommodations, however, there is no guarantee.

## 5.4 Retesting

Candidates who fail the exam on the first attempt will be given the opportunity to retest with a makeup exam within 30 days for a fee of \$100. If the candidate fails the makeup exam, the candidate will have the opportunity to retest for a third and final time with additional re-test fees of \$100. If the candidate fails the third attempt, the candidate must re-apply for certification.

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## SECTION 6: CERTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATES

### 6.1 Issuing of Certificates

The National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) is responsible for issuing all CPD certifications and credentials.

All candidates who have successfully completed the steps for certification will be issued an electronic certificate, bearing their full name, issue date, expiration, certification number and will be signed by the NDCB, who retains sole ownership of the certificate and certification.

Certificates will be issued within 4-6 weeks of approval. All certificates are non-transferable. Upon recertification, students will be issued a new electronic certificate.

### 6.2 Designation and Credentials

All certified persons are granted the CPD credential as represented by the scope of practice and will be listed in the directory on the NDCB website. All certified persons may use Certified Professional Doula (CPD) as a personal credential on all marketing materials, stationary, website, business cards, bios, social media, logos and any other materials.

Certified persons are not licensed or registered, and may not imply or use any such designation, title, or term.

The following is the appropriate and acceptable way to designate such credential:

First name, Last name, Certified Professional Doula

First name, Last name, CPD

The CPD designation does not grant the certified person use of National Doula Certification Board logos, slogans, photos, content, assets, marketing materials, or any course materials and documents.

Each certified person will be given an electronic badge file to signify certification and may use the badge at their discretion on their personal marketing materials, stationary, website, business cards, bios, social media and other materials, so long as the file is not tampered with nor modified in any way. If a certified person is in partnership or a member of a group or agency, the electronic badge file must only be used in conjunction with the certified person's personal information and not used in any way to construct certification of the entire group or partnership.

Misrepresentation or misuse of the badge file and/or the CPD credential will result in suspension and may result in withdrawal of certification.

Should the certification be revoked, suspended, or terminated for any reason, the person must remove the CPD credential and badge from all use and return the certificate to the NDCB.

### 6.3 Terms of Certification Agreement

Once certification been awarded, candidates can practice as a Certified Professional Doula (CPD). They are expected to maintain high standards of professionalism and excellence of services, and to remain within their scope of practice as defined in training. This section sets forth the guidelines and requirements for how a certified person must interact with the NDCB. Acknowledging this agreement will be required before certificates will be issued.

All certified persons and certificate holders agree to the following:

- Doulas only provide non-medical support, and do not diagnose, treat or intervene.
- Doulas are only certified in full spectrum doula care and must act in respect to the scope of practice as detailed in the certification program, and in the manner according to the certification.
- Any certified person will inform the certification board of any matters which affect the capability of the certified person to fulfill the certification requirements.
- Any allegations of misconduct as defined in the Code of Conduct must be disclosed to the certification board in writing within 10 days and may result in the suspension and/or revocation of the certification. During the time such a claim is being investigated, the person will not represent their certification or certification body.
- The NDCB may release confidential certified persons information if required by law, and the person shall be notified as to what information is released unless also prohibited by law.
- To provide proof of meeting all requirements for certification. Additionally, any approved training provider and/or the NDCB may ask for clarification or further verification of information submitted from the certified person or source of information.
- When seeking recertification, satisfy all recertification requirements that are listed in the Recertification section of the Student Handbook.
- To never use any National Doula Certification Board name, logos, branding materials, certificate, or marks in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute, or in a way that is misleading, misrepresenting, or unauthorized.
- Discontinue use of the certification and any claims to or references to the certification and or certification status upon suspension or withdrawal of the certification.
- Return any certificates issued upon withdrawal of the certification.

### 6.4 Suspension and Revocation

The National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) reserves the right to investigate the circumstances of any complaint against a Certified Professional Doula (CPD) that constitutes a violation of the Terms of Certification Agreement or other unprofessional behaviours including but not limited to:

- Falsifying personal information
- Improper representation of the CPD credential
- Illegal use of National Doula Certification Board's name, slogans, artwork, photos, or content from the website or classroom materials
- Any behaviour that can be considered a threat to public safety
- Any behaviour that negatively impacts the health and welfare of others
- Any behaviour that reflects poorly on the National Doula Certification Board brand, the CPD credential, or other's reputations
- Violation of a client's trust or personal information
- Operating outside the scope of practice as presented in the CPD Scope of Practice

Misrepresentation or misuse of the badge file and/or the CPD credential will result in suspension and may result in withdrawal of certification.

Should the certification be revoked, suspended, or terminated for any reason, the person must remove the CPD credential and badge from all use.

Failure to comply with suspension and revocation decisions will result in legal action by the NDCB and the doula will be held responsible for all incurred legal fees. The NDCB reserves the right to charge additional fees related to legal action.

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## SECTION 7: RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to maintain active certification and use of the CPD credential all certified persons must complete the recertification process with the National Doula Certification Board prior to the expiration of three years of initial or recertification. The recertification application will be available no sooner than six (6) months prior to the expiration.

### 7.1 Requirements for Recertification

The following list is required for recertification:

1. Complete 20 contact hours of continuing education
2. Complete a Keeping Current pathway:
  - a. Complete a pre-approved 10 contact hour Keeping Current course on current practices, research, community, and legislative updates, as well as providing a practice experience for validation of doula work and any other training updates.

OR

- b. Submit 10 contact hours of coursework covering:
    - Current research findings
    - Current training updates from the original training organization
    - Regulatory updates, any new/current legislative recommendations for practice
    - Issues in the community
    - Plan for professional development
    - Doula Practice validation (i.e., submit evidence of current practice as independent or as employed as a W2 employee)
3. Evidence of current CPR certificate
4. Evidence of current liability Insurance (by self or employer)
5. Agreement to continue to comply with the National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) Code of Conduct and Professional Standards and to operate within the Certified Professional Doula (CPD) Scope of Practice

Recertification extensions may be granted (upon special request to the NDCB) for up to 6 months past the expiration date and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If recertification is not completed within the extension window, the certification will expire, and the person is no longer eligible for recertification.

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## SECTION 8: CANDIDATE/CERTIFIED PERSONS COMPLAINTS, GREIVANCES

### 9.1 Complaints or Grievances Definition

Any complaint or grievance against a CPD certified person or candidate must be submitted to the National Doula Certification Board and must meet one of the following grievances:

- A specific violation of the Code of Conduct and Standards of Professional Practice
- Submitted in writing by the individual who is making the complaint.
- Supported by definitive and specific evidence.
- Made against a current holder of an CPD doula certification/credential.

### 9.2 Complaints or Grievances Process and Procedure:

A complaint must be submitted in writing to the National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) within 30 days of the occurrence of an incident via email with the word "Complaint" and the complainant's name in the subject line of the email and emailed to [INFO@doulaboard.org](mailto:INFO@doulaboard.org). The complaint and all related documentation will be handled discretely and all information pertaining to the complaint will be kept confidential, including personal details that could be used to identify the person making the complaint. A receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged, and NDCB will provide progress reports as applicable.

Once a complaint is filed, the complainant agrees to keep all information pertaining to the complaint completely confidential. They will not discuss the matter on any social media platform and will not discuss any details of the complaint with anyone.

If it is determined that more information is required, this will be requested of the complainant and a specific time in the future will be set as a date by which the information or evidence must be submitted. If the information is not received within that time, a decision will be made based on the evidence initially provided. If it is determined that no further action is warranted, the complainant will be informed of the decision in writing of the outcome of the initial evaluation. If the preliminary investigation supports the complaint, the NDCB chairperson will decide how to respond to that complaint. Each case will be handled individually depending on the details of the case. If the preliminary investigation of the evidence supports a valid complaint, the individuals named in the written complaint will be sent a "Notice of Complaint" by email. Within ten (10) days of a final decision being rendered, the findings will be communicated to the subject of the complaint.

## SECTION 9: APPEALS (For Candidates or Certified Persons)

### 10.1 Appeal Definition

An appeal is a formal request to the National Doula Certification Board (NDCB) for any individuals who want to get special consideration of accommodation related to their certification status. Appeals will be considered for:

- Denied eligibility requirements
- Examination irregularities
- Suspension/revocation of certification

The one appealing must have a sound rationale regarding the need to be considered by the board for special consideration to be awarded. Also, an appeal is not an avenue for requesting a passing score on a failed exam.

### 10.2 Appeal Process and Procedure

An appeal must be submitted within 10 days of the notification of a decision by the NDCB. Individuals must submit a completed Appeals Application and send via email to the chairperson of the NDCB with the word "Appeal" and the student's name in the subject line of the email.

The form that must be used for all appeals is called The Candidate & Certified Person Appeals Application and it can be found in the Forms section of this handbook or from the NDCB. Appeals are not accepted without this form. All relevant supporting documentation must be included, and copies must be included with the submission.

All appellants will be treated fairly and equitably, and decisions shall not result in any discriminatory actions.

#### **Initial Review**

NDCB chairperson will review the appeal and a response will be sent to the appellant via email within ten (10) days of receipt.

#### **Initial Response**

The response will be either:

1. Appeal has been GRANTED by the NDCB along with any other instructions or requirements on the part of the student.

Or

2. Appeal has been DENIED by the NDCB, along with an explanation for the denial and any information about alternate courses of action if that is applicable for the situation. The denial will also include information on appellant's further recourse if they wish to pursue the appeal any further.



- In the case that an appeal is denied, and the appellant wishes to pursue the appeal further, they can appeal to the Appeals Committee.
- The appeal will then be forwarded to the Appeals Committee, and the appellant will be given information about whether the committee feels the need to meet with them in person, and how to set up a time and place to present the appeal. It must be within the following thirty (30) days.
- The appeal will be delayed providing time to gather further information. Within ten (10) days of that appeal meeting, the applicant will be sent either a letter informing them whether their final appeal was granted or denied.

### **10.3 Appeals and Complaints Committee Composition**

The Appeals Committee shall be formed at the discretion of the NDCB chairperson and members will be determined by the nature of the appeal and shall not include persons involved in the initial decision being appealed. Each appeals committee will be formed on an as-needed basis, and only for the duration of the appeal.

**Process:** Upon receipt of the appeal, the Appeals Committee shall review the appeal within 10 days and if the matter can be handled, a decision will be made, and the appellant will be informed. If the Appeal Committee decides they need more information and want to meet in person with the appellant, they will contact the appellant to set up a time and place for that meeting. Upon the conclusion of that meeting, the Appeals Committee will discuss any new information they received and arrive at a decision within 3 business days and the appellant will be informed by email immediately of the final decision.

The final decision of the Appeals Committee cannot be contested.

Appeals and complaints are kept confidential, and no discriminatory action will be taken against the appellant.