

# ACCE COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by:

- Anyone who has sought or received a service provided by a member or ACCE itself.
- Any third party who can demonstrate sufficient interest, or who speaks on behalf of another vulnerable person/s, and who has been directly affected by the actions of an ACCE paid member, and where there is corroborating evidence of unethical conduct.

## Lodging a Complaint:

Please notify ACCE promptly if you are aware of any violations of law, professional standards, ethical code of conduct or ACCE policy.

## Confidentiality and Privacy:

Confidentiality and privacy are critical to ensure all concerns and complaints are reviewed and investigated objectively and fairly. Subject to all laws and ACCE policies, ACCE will keep the complainant informed of developments. It is important to note that in some circumstances ACCE may not be able to share the resolution or specific actions taken by ACCE with a complainant.

## Anonymous Complaints:

All complaints are reviewed and handled with concern. Those reported anonymously may require further information and it is important to note that anonymous complaints may affect ACCE's ability to investigate and respond effectively.

## No Retaliation:

ACCE has a whistleblower policy to ensure that any person or person's reporting any issue or complaint will be treated fairly and without discrimination or repercussion. ACCE encourages reporting of complaints or concerns.

If anyone that has filed a complaint is receiving any type of negative treatment as a result of notifying ACCE of a concern, they should immediately email [admin@acce.org.au](mailto:admin@acce.org.au) . If they believe their concern has not been addressed, they can contact any of the following: ACCE Membership services, the CEO, Operations Manager or the ACCE Board at [acceboard@acce.org.au](mailto:acceboard@acce.org.au) .

## Conflicts of Interest:

ACCE will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. Complaints will only be shared with company individuals who need to know about an issue in order to adequately review and investigate the concern.

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly. Where a complaint involves an individual who would be involved in the investigation, ACCE will take all reasonable steps to avoid any conflicts of interest. Any complainant who believes there is a potential conflict of interest should raise this as an issue at the time of lodging the complaint.

### **Timing:**

Each complaint is unique and important to us. Therefore, it is impossible to provide a specific timeline for resolution of all complaints and concerns. However, ACCE will usually review the complaint within 3 business days of receipt. Depending on the number of individuals involved and complexity, the investigation can take up to 4 weeks to complete.

### **Complaints against non-Members:**

ACCE cannot deal with complaints against individuals who were not ACCE paid members at the time of the alleged misconduct. In the case that ACCE receives a complaint in relation to the safety or welfare of a person, child or vulnerable individual, ACCE will adhere to its ethical and legal reporting requirements regardless of whether the individual was a member at the time.

### **Procedure:**

A complaint must be in writing and ACCE may request that a further report be completed by the complainant to conduct a proper inquiry. Complaints are reported to the ACCE Board and ACCE staff have the discretion to interview or request additional information from the complainant before deciding whether to accept the complaint where:

- Additional information may be required
- Insufficient information is available to validate the complaint against the required criteria
- There is a question about the legitimacy of the complaint
- There is a question as to whether the complainant had been unduly influenced by a third party.
- The ACCE Board at its discretion, may investigate the issue.

### **The complaint must satisfy the following:**

- The complaint must concern the professional conduct of an ACCE paid member or relate to the services delivered by ACCE.
- A professional relationship entailing ethical responsibility must exist between the complainant and the respondent.
- The allegations in the complaint must, if upheld, constitute a breach of the ACCE Code of Ethics & the CICA Professional Code of Conduct for Career Development Practitioners.

### **Notification of Complaints Procedure:**

Where the formal Complaints Procedure is not instigated because it did not meet the criteria, ACCE will notify the Complainant of the decision and the reasons for that decision in writing. Where a formal complaints procedure is instigated, ACCE will notify the Complainant and Respondent that a formal complaint has been received and accepted, and the process involved in the investigation.

ACCE will record the complaint and its supporting information:

- the contact information of the person making a complaint
- issues raised by the person making a complaint and any outcome/s

### **Addressing complaints:**

After assessing the complaint, ACCE will consider how to manage it. To manage a complaint ACCE may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation.
- Gather information from the service, person or area that the complaint is about, or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

ACCE will keep the person making the complaint up to date on our progress, particularly if there are any delays.

ACCE will keep records about:

- how we managed the complaint;
- the outcome/s of the complaint including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, and recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations, and
- any outstanding actions that need to be followed up.

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the complaint handling manager and/or senior management.

### **Continuous improvement:**

ACCE is committed to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaints management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

### **Complaints**

To make a complaint to ACCE, email member services [admin@acce.org.au](mailto:admin@acce.org.au) or phone (03) 9433 8000.