

Review Date: New policy
Date Developed: January
Principal Responsibility: Orthopaedic Outreach Committee
Validated: 16/9/2017 Committee

Approved by:	Title: Chair Outreach Committee	Name:	Signature/date
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OUTCOME:

All complaints will be handled in accordance with this policy.

DEFINITION:

- A complaint is an objection to something that is unfair, unacceptable, or otherwise not up to acceptable standards. In the context of this policy it is behaviours or actions that are not within the parameters of the ACFID Code of Conduct.

POLICY

- Anonymous complaints will not be accepted by the Outreach Committee.
- The Outreach Committee will only accept complaints in writing where the complainant is willing for the other party to be provided a copy of the complaint as part of the natural justice process. The identity and other information relating to the complainant may be kept confidential in exceptional circumstances where the complainant identifies themselves as being at risk if their identity is revealed
- The Outreach Committee will investigate the complaint via an internal complaint handling process which utilises a small sub-group of the Committee.
- Where there are more appropriate avenues for dealing with a complaint, (e.g. complaints relating to alleged breaches of Australian law, such as: employment of staff, third party providers, taxation, charities legislation in each state) the complaint will not be investigated by the Outreach Committee. Wherever the Outreach Committee chooses not to investigate a matter, the complainant will be promptly notified and where appropriate, provided with some advice as to what alternative avenues for dealing with the complaint may be open to the complainant.
- The Outreach Committee may decide to refer the complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee for advice.
- All decisions of the Outreach Committee are to be documented in writing which includes the reasons for that decision being made. This information must be archived.
- The subject of the complaint, if adversely affected by a decision, must be provided with written advice regarding his or her rights of reconsideration, review and appeal.

STRATEGIES:

1. Receipt of Complaint
2. Process of Managing a Complaint
3. Complaint Management Sub Group
4. Decision of the Outreach Committee

1. Receipt of Complaint

- All complaints must be signed by the complainant and received in writing with from the complainant and directed to the Chair Orthopaedic Outreach.
- Complaints are to be forwarded to the Operational Manager & Nurse Consultant at AOA Offices Level 12 45 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000.
- Complaints will be dealt with confidentially and logged in a Complaints Database managed by the recipient.

2. Process for Managing a Complaint

- Once a complaint has been received it is to be forwarded immediately to the Chair Outreach Committee
- A return acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint is to be forwarded to the complainant within 7 days.
- The complaint will be discussed with the Chair Outreach Committee and a plan of action will be determined. This may include organising an ad hoc Committee meeting to discuss the manner in which the complaint is to be handled and investigated.
- Regardless of the plan of action the complaint is to be discussed at the next Outreach Committee meeting.
- At any time during the Complaint Process, the Chair may consult with people with particular skill or expertise to provide advice as needed on the complaint being investigated.
- The complaints process will permit all parties reasonable opportunity to provide any information they believe will assist the investigation and parties will be given an opportunity to respond to information provided by the other party.
- The complaints process will respect the privacy and confidentiality to which the parties are entitled under the Privacy Act.

3. Complaint Management Sub Group

- The Chair Outreach Committee following consultation with relevant Committee members or the Outreach Committee may decide to investigate the complaint by establishing a sub group of the Committee.
- The Complaints Management Sub Group will be made up of three members of the current Outreach Committee, have a designated Chair and be tasked with investigating the complaint and providing recommendations to the full Committee within 6 weeks.
- Administrative support for the sub group will be provided by the Operational Manager & Nurse Consultant. Advice, if required, can be sourced via AOA's Advocacy & Governance Manager.

4. Privacy Act

- At all stages of the complaints process, the complaint will be treated as strictly confidential unless and until the complaint has been determined to be a notifiable breach by the Committee and the appeal process has been exhausted.

- The investigation of complaints will take into account the following key principles from the Privacy Act:
 - Information will only be collected in so far as it is necessary and lawful;
 - Information will only be used for the purposes for which it is collected unless consent is obtained from the person/organisation under investigation; and

5. Decision of the Outreach Committee

- The Outreach Committee may decide to ratify the recommendations of the Sub Group. The Outreach Committee may review the Sub Group documentation and make alternate recommendations to be implemented.
- The Outreach Committee complaints processes will provide the parties with reasonable expectation of milestones for completion of each stage – noting that the time required may differ for each investigation.
- The Outreach Committee will be responsible for monitoring adherence to timelines and putting in place remedial action when necessary.

SEE ALSO

E.3 ACFID Code of Conduct Complaints Handling

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR/S

% of notifications handled in accordance with this policy