

Complaints Process

Frequently Asked Questions for Registrants

These will be published in the member resource area of ACC's website

Who can make a complaint about me?

Anyone can raise a concern or make a complaint about an ACC registered counsellor or psychotherapist. This includes current or former clients, third parties, employers, organisations, or members of the public.

Does a complaint mean I have done something wrong?

No. A complaint does not imply wrongdoing. Many concerns will be resolved through feedback, reflection, or improvements to professional practice and do not involve findings of misconduct.

What types of concerns can ACC consider?

ACC can consider concerns that relate to:

- Your professional conduct or behaviour.
- The delivery of counselling or psychotherapy services.
- Matters that may affect your fitness to practise.
- Alleged breaches of ACC's Ethics and Practice or Terms and Conditions of Membership.

Are there time limits on complaints?

Complaints are usually considered if they are made within three years of the events concerned. However, historic complaints may still be considered if there are concerns about ongoing risk or public safety, or if there are other relevant circumstances that would be considered.

What happens when a complaint is received?

ACC first carries out an initial assessment to decide whether the complaint can be considered i.e. the complaint relates to a current registrant. If yes, then the registrant is notified of the complaint and then ACC assesses the level of potential risk and severity of the complaint if the concern were upheld. This determines how the complaint is managed.

How does ACC decide what procedure to use?

Complaints are assessed as low, medium, or high risk:

- **Low risk** - managed through feedback and right to reply
- **Medium risk** - managed through a Practice Review process
- **High risk** - managed through investigation and Fitness to Practise procedures

The process used is proportionate to the level of potential risk.

Will I be informed if a complaint is made about me?

Yes. If a complaint proceeds, you will be informed in writing and provided with details of the concern and the procedure being followed.

Do I have to take part in the process?

Yes. Cooperation with the complaints process is a condition of ACC membership. This includes responding within timescales, providing information when requested, and attending meetings or hearings where required.

Can I get support during the process?

Yes. You are strongly advised to seek support through supervision, professional networks, insurers, or personal support. ACC can explain the process but does not provide advocacy or legal advice.

Could I be suspended while a complaint is investigated?

In cases where there is a significant risk to public safety, ACC may impose temporary or interim suspension measures while the complaint is investigated.

Who at ACC will know about the complaint?

Only staff concerned with managing complaints will know about the details of any complaint.

Members should feel welcome and able to contact the team as normal when a complaint is being investigated. This should not impact on our membership services.

Will the outcome be published?

- Outcomes from low- and medium-risk processes are not normally published on ACC's website.
- Outcomes from Fitness to Practise hearings may be published on ACC's website, and conditions and suspensions will be added to the register listing and shared with other Accredited Registers in line with information-sharing arrangements.

What kinds of outcomes are possible?

Depending on the circumstances, outcomes may include:

- No further action
- Learning or professional development requirements
- Conditions on practice
- Suspension or removal from the Register in serious cases

Can I appeal a decision?

Yes. You may request a review or appeal of certain decisions on defined grounds and within set time limits.

What if I belong to another professional body?

The complainant has the right to decide which professional body they wish to raise the complaint with. ACC will not process complaints if they are already in or have been processed by another body.

You must notify ACC if a complaint or investigation is taking place through another professional body or employer. ACC may take action in line with information-sharing agreements to protect the public by notifying other professional membership bodies that a complaint has been received.

What if I resign while a complaint is ongoing?

ACC may continue to manage the complaint in the public interest. Records are retained in line with ACC's policies.

Will a complaint affect my future membership?

The answer depends on the outcome. Some matters are resolved without impact on membership. In serious cases, sanctions may affect registration and may need to be addressed before membership can be restored.

Where can I find more information?

You can refer to:

- ACC Complaints Management Policy
- [ACC Ethics and Practice](#)
- [ACC Terms and Conditions of Membership](#)
- ACC User-Friendly Complaints Guidance

ACC can also provide procedural information if you have questions about the process.