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ACCREDITATION BOARD**  
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## **PL59B Complaints against the COABC**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the complaints policy is to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly and consistently and that corrective action is taken as necessary. PL59B covers the handling of complaints regarding COABC and its accreditation programs and includes complaints against COABC staff, contracted personnel, evaluators and accreditation board members with respect to their duties.

Policies governing complaints against accredited and applicant Certification Bodies and complaints regarding operators certified by accredited and applicant Certification Bodies are covered by PL59A. Complaints by Accredited CBs regarding decisions concerning their own accreditation are considered Appeals and are covered by PL710.

This document is distributed to the COABC Board of Directors, The Accreditation Board, all staff and other parties on request. It may be revised by the Director of the Accreditation Board when the need arises or when recommended following an internal audit. The policy is approved by the COABC Board.

## **1. Policy**

### **1.1. Directing complaints**

- 1) Complaints regarding the Director of the Accreditation Board shall be directed to the President of COABC. All other complaints pertaining to the functioning of the COABC accreditation program shall be directed to the Director of the Accreditation Board.
- 2) On receipt of a written complaint, the Director of the Accreditation Board ( or COABC President) shall:
  - a) decide on the validity of the complaint;
  - b) investigate the complaint;
  - c) record all complaints and actions taken;
  - d) Respond to the complainant.

### **1.2. Determination of the validity of the complaint**

- 1) Complaints must be received in writing accompanied by documentation of evidence. If the complaint is received orally, investigation of the complaint is at the discretion of the Director. Valid complaints include issues such as unprofessional behaviour, breach of confidentiality, discrimination, violations of conflict of interest, financial mismanagement and failure in the execution of duties.

### **1.3. Confidentiality**

- 1) Parties involved in the complaint shall not publicly comment until the issue is resolved. Details of complaints are confidential to the investigator and the parties concerned. The identity of the complainant shall remain confidential unless disclosure is necessary or obvious during the investigation of the complaint.

## **2. Procedures**

- 1) The Director of the Accreditation Board, or person appointed by the Director, shall investigate the complaint and assess its validity. The Director will ensure that the body or person chosen to investigate is not investigating a complaint against itself.
- 2) Receipt of a complaint shall be acknowledged within 3 weeks and include a statement regarding the validity of the complaint and whether or not it will be investigated.
- 3) If a complaint is deemed invalid the reasons shall be given to the complainant. If reconsideration is requested by the complainant additional information must be supplied to the COABC.
- 4) When a complaint is deemed valid an investigation is carried out.
- 5) If it involves personnel, the person concerned shall be informed of the nature of the complaint and ask to respond.
- 6) The investigator will determine the extent of the investigation required. An investigation may include:
  - a) interviews with the complainant and the subject of the complaint;
  - b) interviews with third parties having information relevant to the complaint;
  - c) an audit of the COABC office and its records.
- 7) In the case of general complaints not directed against an individual the investigator will determine if actions comply with documented policy and procedures and if changes to policy and procedures are required.
- 8) Within one month of receipt of the investigator's report and recommendations, the appropriate body (COABC or AB) will review the report and determine the necessary corrective actions or disciplinary measures as appropriate.
- 9) The implementation of corrective actions shall be done in a timely manner and shall be checked at the next management review.
- 10) The Director of the Accreditation Board will convey the results of the investigation to both the complainant and the subject of the investigation. The complaint will then be considered closed.

### **2.1. Urgent complaints**

- 1) When the complaint is of a serious or urgent nature every effort shall be made to minimize the length of time to resolve the complaint.

## **2.2. Record of complaints**

- 1) All actions from receipt of the complaint to final closure shall be recorded on the complaints register form F 59. All records pertaining to the complaint and its investigation shall be kept for 7 years.