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Complaints Policy

1. PURPOSE

The College of Intensive Care Medicine (CICM/the College) recognises that its members and members of the public have a right to raise concerns about any of the services provided by the College including its policies and processes. The College is committed to handling all complaints in a manner consistent with the guiding principles set out in this Policy and to respond to complaints in a timely manner.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline the guiding principles underpinning the CICM's Complaints policy and process
- define in-scope and out-of-scope complaints with respect to this Policy
- describe how the College manages the complaints it receives under this Policy.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The CICM's complaints policy and process is underpinned by the following principles:

Accessibility
The complaint handling system is easy to find and can be accessed by a variety of means. CICM staff can also assist people to navigate the complaints process.
Transparency
The College provides clear information about how people can make a complaint and how the complaint will be handled. The College commits to ensuring the complaint handling process provides transparency to the complainant and other relevant parties.
Procedural Fairness
All complaints are dealt with courteously and in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and within the established time frames set out in this Policy and the College's documented complaints process.



Privacy and Confidentiality
All complaint information is handled according to national and jurisdictional privacy laws, other relevant legislation and the College's Privacy Policy . Complaint and complainant information is de-identified if reported on more widely.
Accountability
The College is accountable both internally and externally for its decision making and complaint management performance. It provides explanations and reasons for its decisions and ensures appropriate review processes are undertaken.
Continuous Quality Improvement
The College uses its complaint data to identify problems and to improve the quality of its services.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

As a membership-based organisation, the CICM delivers its services to its members by employing staff to administer its programs, accredit hospital training sites and appoint supervisors to oversee CICM trainees at the training sites. Access the [College's website](#) to read more on the services provided to members.

The College welcomes all feedback, complaints, and concerns about any of the services provided. However, it can only address matters that fall within its jurisdiction.

Decisions already made by the CICM will need to be considered and managed via the CICM's [IC-23 Appeals, Review and Reconsideration Processes](#).

It is important to note that it is not within the remit of the College to investigate complaints:

- in which public safety is thought to be at risk, these should be referred to the appropriate medical authority such as the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority \(AHPRA\)](#), [Medical Board of Australia](#) or the [Medical Council of New Zealand](#)
- about patient outcomes, fees or compensation. In the first instance, these should be referred directly to the hospital or service provider. If unsatisfied with the outcome, these complaints can be directed to the relevant health complaints commission
- about criminal behaviour, these complaints should be referred to the police
- that have been already investigated by another entity (e.g. a hospital Human Resources (HR) Department).

CICM Trainees who feel their training experience has been impacted by bullying, discrimination or harassment at their training site should use [CICM's complaints process](#).



COLLEGE OF INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

ABN: 16 134 292 103

Other bullying, discrimination or harassment complaints should be directed to the employer, hospital or health service where the behaviour occurred.

For complaints relating to discrimination, bullying and harassment, please refer to *IC-20 – Prevention of bullying discrimination and harassment in the workplace*.

4. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCESS

4.1 CICM Complaint Handling Process

Lodging a complaint

The complainant reviews the CICM Complaints Policy and lodges their complaint. The complainant can choose to remain anonymous or to provide their name and contact details.

Receipt of complaint

Complainants will receive confirmation of the complaint being received by the College within 3 business days of written lodgement/receiving the complaint (if not earlier). Anonymous complainants will be contacted through a secure web-based chat system.

Triaging of complaint

All complaints will be directed to appropriate persons/committees within the College for review and response.

Timeline and notification of complaint outcome

The College aims to resolve all complaints within 28 days (if not earlier). Wherever the timelines provided are not achievable, the complainant will be notified prior to the provided timeframe.

Complainants and relevant parties are advised of CICM's response and outcome by identified contact methods. Complainants who are unsatisfied with the College's response can escalate their complaint via the Complaints Officer.

4.2 Important information for complainants

4.2.1 Frivolous and vexatious complaints

As part of its complaint handling process, an assessment of the nature of the complaint will be made. If it is deemed that the complaint is frivolous or vexatious, the College may, in its reasonable discretion, dismiss the claim and take no further action.

4.2.2 Victimization

Victimization, the act of threatening to, or actually subjecting a person to detriment because they have made a complaint is against the law and strictly forbidden.



COLLEGE OF INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

ABN: 16 134 292 103

4.2.3 Member support

Members requiring professional or personal support can access the CICM's Member Assistance Program (MAP) from Converge International. Further information relating to the Program, including how to access support can be found [here](#).

5. REPORTING & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Complaints Officers will prepare and provide the Professional Affairs Committee a de-identified report (three times a year) of all complaints received by the College. This report will assist the College in understanding and improving its services and processes.

6. RELEVANT CICM RESOURCES

- IC-2 Statement on the Role of Intensive Care Specialists
- IC-20 Prevention of Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment
- IC-23 Appeals, Review and Reconsideration Processes
- IC-34 Statement on Racism in the Healthcare System

7. EXTERNAL AGENCIES

The following is a list of agencies may be of assistance to complainants if they wish to direct their complaints to a particular agency.

Agency	More information
National Health Practitioner Ombudsman	https://www.nhpo.gov.au/make-a-complaint-to-the-commissioner
Victorian Ombudsman	https://www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/
Health and Disability Commissioner New Zealand	https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/others-who-can-help/complaints-a-z/health-disability-commissioner-hdc
Victoria Healthcare Complaints Commissioner	https://hcc.vic.gov.au/
New South Wales Health Care Complaints Commission	https://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au/
Australian Capital Territory Human Rights Commission	https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/
Northern Territory Health and Community Services Complaints Commission	https://hcsc.nst.gov.au/



COLLEGE OF INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

ABN: 16 134 292 103

Agency	More information
Western Australia Health and Disability Services Complaints Office	https://www.hadsco.wa.gov.au/
South Australia Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner	https://www.hcscs.sa.gov.au/
Health Complaints Commissioner Tasmania	https://www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au/
Queensland Office of the Health Ombudsman	https://www.oho.qld.gov.au/public
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner	https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/health-information

8. DEFINITIONS

Term	CICM Definition
Complaint	A complaint refers to a person's dissatisfaction with the College's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service • program • policy • process
Complaints officer	A person authorised to receive, review, refer and respond to complaints.
Complainant	Refers to a person, organisation or representative making a complaint.
Complaint handling system	Refers to all policies, procedures, practices, officers and resources the College utilises to manage complaints received.
Triage group	Refers to a small group of authorised College employees who are responsible for reviewing and assessing complaints received and providing advice and direction on the most appropriate person/s and/or committee to consider and (if appropriate) investigate the complaint.



COLLEGE OF INTENSIVE CARE MEDICINE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

ABN: 16 134 292 103

Revision History

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2024	First published in 2024

This document has been prepared having regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case.

Documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that the practitioner has obtained the current version. Documents have been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of their preparation, and the practitioner should therefore have regard to any information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that documents are as current as possible at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material which may have become available subsequently.

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