



Association for Coaching Complaints Procedure

1. Background

The Association for Coaching is committed to maintaining professional standards. To this end the Complaints Procedure sets out to provide protection to the public and a mechanism for protecting the name of the Association for Coaching and the profession of Coaching.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Coach and the Complainant to understand the Complaints Procedure. Association for Coaching Members are required to ensure that any client who is unhappy about the service they have received knows about the Association's Complaints Procedure and that further information can be obtained by contacting the Association for Coaching directly.

3. Administration

The Association for Coaching is not responsible for any expenses incurred by either party or any supporting parties. The Association for Coaching may hear a complaint made against a member even if another professional body is considering the case. The client and Member are both expected to try all reasonable courses of action to resolve the situation before making representation to the Association for Coaching. The Association for Coaching will distribute/publish the outcomes against a member where the complaint has been upheld.

4. Complaints Procedure

Making a Complaint

- a) The complaint is deemed to be a breach of a clause of the Association for Coaching's Code of Ethics.
- b) The complaint may be made by a client or by one member of the Association against another.
- c) The person and/or organisation concerned must be named and be a member of the Association at the time of the complaint being made.
- d) The Complaint must be made in writing.

Complaints that do not meet the criteria above will not be heard.

Actioning a Complaint

- a) The AC Member will be notified that a complaint has been received
- b) The initial complaint will be dealt with by the AC President, Chair and one Vice President and it is at this stage that the complaint will either be rejected, deferred so that further information can be obtained or accepted and referred

on to the Complaints Committee and the client and AC member will be informed accordingly.

- c) The AC Member will receive full details of the complaint.
- d) All correspondence and information received will be provided to all relevant parties.
- e) Hearings will take place in or near to the Association's Headquarters
- f) The Client and Member may bring a support person to any meeting and members of the Complaints Committee must openly declare any areas where a conflict of interests may be present
- g) All paperwork (i.e. correspondence, witness statements etc) must be received not less than 30 days prior to the date of any hearing. The Chair of the Complaints Committee will decide whether any legal advice need to be sought from the Association's legal advisers. It will be up to the Chair of the Complaints Committee to decide whether new evidence can be accepted on the day of the hearing.
- h) Any party may call upon a witness and the names of such parties are to be with the Chair of the Complaints Committee 30 days prior to the date of any hearing. Any member of the Complaints Committee, the Member being complained against or the Client may question witnesses.
- i) If either the AC Member or the Client fails to attend the Hearing the Chair has the right to continue with the case in the absence of one of the relevant parties, terminate the hearing or adjourn and reset the meeting for a date no later than 30 days from the day of the original hearing.

Outcomes

- a) The outcome of the Hearing will be notified in writing to all relevant parties within 30 days of the date the Hearing took place.
- b) Sanctions will be clearly stated and the Member against whom the sanction has been made can apply for it to be lifted when the conditions have been met and the Chair of the Complaints Committee will seek evidence of compliance. The Member will be informed in writing of the lifting of the sanction and details will also be placed in the Association's Journal.

Appeals

- a) An independent person will be appointed by the Chair of the Association to consider the Appeal.
- b) If the Appeal is upheld, turned down or if there is insufficient evidence the Member will receive notification in writing.
- c) Appeals will be considered if new evidence of a significant nature becomes available that would have changed the decision of the Complaints Committee had it been available at the time of the hearing. Alternatively, appeals will also be considered where the sanction is deemed unfairly harsh in relation to the event.
- d) Appeals must be made in writing to the Chair of the Association within 30 days of notification of the original decision and are required to clearly outline the grounds on which the appeal is being made.
- e) The Appeals Panel will be appointed by the Chair of the Association and will comprise of four people who were not part of the original hearing. The same rules that applied to the original hearing will also apply to the Appeals Committee.
- f) The Chair of the Appeals Committee will inform the Chair of the Association of the decision and it is the Association's Chair who will take the appropriate

action. The decision will be made in writing within 21 days of the Appeals hearing.

5. Professional Misconduct

Professional Misconduct applies to a Member of the Association who has contravened the ethical standards that are expected of any member of the Coaching profession. Misconduct applies where a Member of the Association is deemed to have failed to follow either the written or unwritten rules of the profession. Serious Professional Misconduct applies where a Member of the Association has behaved in such a way that it is deemed that suspension and/or termination of membership is necessary.

6. Professional Malpractice

The term Professional Malpractice will be used where a Member of the Association's professional behaviour falls below the minimum standards of the profession. For example through incompetence and/or negligence.

7. Bring the Coaching Profession into Disrepute

A Member may be deemed as bringing the Profession into disrepute where he or she acts in such a way that could be deemed as undermining the public's confidence in the coaching profession.

www.associationforcoaching.com

The AC is an independent non profit organisation with the goal to promote best practice, raise awareness and standards across the UK Coaching industry, while providing value added benefits to its members – whether they are professional Coaches or Organisations involved in Coaching.