



Raising Standards – Protecting Patients

Terms of Reference

Complaints and Professional Standards Committee

1. Purpose

The Complaints and Professional Standards Committee (CPSC) is established by the Council of the ACCSM to provide a fair, transparent, and independent process for the management of complaints, concerns, and allegations involving Fellows, trainees, or members of the College. The Committee ensures that patient safety, professional standards, and the reputation of the College are maintained through consistent application of policies, due process, and ethical principles.

2. Scope

The CPSC is responsible for:

- Receiving, reviewing, and investigating complaints or concerns related to clinical practice, professional behaviour, or breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- Making findings and recommendations regarding remediation, disciplinary action, or referral to external regulators (e.g., AHPRA, MBA).
- Monitoring patterns or systemic issues and providing feedback to the Public Safety and Patient Protection Committee (PSPPC) and Council.
- Ensuring compliance with principles of natural justice, cultural safety, and patient-centred care in all deliberations.

3. Responsibilities

- Maintain a fair and impartial process for complaints management.
- Conduct investigations or hearings in accordance with College policies.
- Determine whether breaches of the College's Code of Conduct, By-laws, or other professional standards have occurred.
- Recommend appropriate actions, which may include remediation, disciplinary action, or referral to regulatory authorities.
- Report trends or systemic risks to Council and the PSPPC.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect for all parties throughout proceedings.

4. Membership

The Committee shall consist of:

- Chair: An experienced senior Fellow, independent of the case under consideration.
- Medical or Surgical Members: At least three Fellows of the College with relevant expertise, appointed by Council
- Consumer Representative: To ensure patient perspectives are included.
- Administrator: Provides administrative support (non-voting).

5. Reporting

The CPSP reports to the Council through the President. Systemic or public safety issues are escalated to the Public Safety and Patient Protection Committee (PSPPC). Individual case details remain confidential; only outcomes and recommendations are reported in a de-identified format.

6. Meetings

The Committee will be convened as required when complaints or referrals are received. A quorum requires at least three voting members, including the Chair and one independent member.

7. Authority

The CPSC is authorised to:

- Request information or documentation relevant to complaints.
- Interview parties and seek expert advice as required.
- Make determinations and recommendations to Council in accordance with College policies and procedures.

8. Confidentiality and Natural Justice

All proceedings are confidential. Parties are entitled to procedural fairness, including notice of allegations, the opportunity to respond, and impartial adjudication. Decisions must be based on evidence and aligned with legal and regulatory obligations.

9. Review

This ToR shall be reviewed biennially, or earlier if required, by the Council of the ACCSM to ensure alignment with best practice, regulatory standards, and evolving community expectations.

This policy takes effect from:	22 Sep 2025
Approved by:	ACCSM Council
Next Review Date:	22 Sep 2027