

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	REG-3005
Department:	Training Support and Partnerships		
Title:	Advice, Support and Complaints		

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to describe the approach used by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) to offer advice, support, and address, manage and resolve complaints reported to RACS.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all those that have an interaction with RACS or affiliated bodies.

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Framework and Standards

- 3.1.1 Not all contact with RACS involves a complaint. The Surgical Advisor in Aotearoa New Zealand and Executive Director of Surgical Affairs in Australia are available to provide confidential advice, support and discuss options for a way forward in relation to the concerns raised.
- 3.1.2 RACS will manage all matters according to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness.
- 3.1.3 All matters will be treated respectfully and without prejudice.
- 3.1.4 All information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence and any sharing of information will be made only with the permission of the enquirer, or complainant.
- 3.1.5 The person who has lodged an enquiry or complainant will be kept informed of any actions being taken and the progress of the matters.
- 3.1.6 All complaints will be recorded on a confidential database in accordance with the RACS Privacy of Personal Information Policy.
- 3.1.7 Where appropriate, and with consent of the complainant, RACS, in its own discretion may share information with other health institutions or regulatory bodies or direct complaints to them, depending on the nature of the complaint and the jurisdiction best equipped to deal with the enquiry or complaint.
- 3.1.8 For the purposes of the operations of Global Health, RACS is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct and is committed to recognising the importance and value of listening and responding to concerns and complaints in a safe and confidential manner. (Commitment 7.3.3. ACFID Code of Conduct).

3.2. General Principles

- 3.2.1 Confidentiality
 - 3.2.1.1 All matters will be dealt with as far as possible on a confidential basis subject to the requirements of procedural fairness.
 - 3.2.1.2 A person making a complaint to RACS can choose to be identified, maintain confidentiality, or specify anonymity. If an anonymous or confidential complaint is made, RACS will note the issue but may determine not to proceed with dealing with the complaint at its own discretion, for example to maintain procedural fairness.

3.3. Acceptance of Enquiries or Complaints

- 3.3.1 RACS can decide not to accept enquiries involving incidents that occurred more

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than 12 months prior to lodging the concern.

- 3.3.2 The Surgical Advisor in Aotearoa New Zealand and Executive Director of Surgical Affairs in Australia may offer advice and support regarding the enquiry which may lead to lodging a complaint.
- 3.3.3 RACS employs an assessment and triage process to determine whether RACS can or should accept a complaint and the identification of the most appropriate pathway to progress resolution of the complaint.
- 3.3.4 RACS is not able to conduct investigations. The statutory regulators or the employing hospitals may be better placed to undertake such activities. Consequently, it may be appropriate for RACS to refer a complaint to another body. If this complaint is due to the operations of Global Health services, and review determines that escalation is required, RACS will support the referral to the most appropriate agency of the host country recipient.
- 3.3.5 RACS will endeavour to obtain the consent of the complainant prior to referring the complaint to another body. [see 3.2.2.2 above]
- 3.3.6 In determining whether the complaint is a matter that is appropriate for RACS to address, the following matters may be considered:
- 3.3.6.1 A complaint should provide sufficient information to identify the relevant conduct and how that conduct may have fallen below expected standards. RACS may decline to process the complaint where there appears to be insufficient supporting information.
- 3.3.6.2 RACS may decline to deal with the complaint if it has, or is being, substantively addressed or investigated by another body. Notwithstanding that, a complaint may have been addressed by another body, but due to its severity or the issues involved, the complaint may still be considered by RACS.
- 3.3.6.3 Complaints arising in the context of commercial dealings will not be considered by RACS.
- 3.3.6.4 Complaints regarding RACS employees are to be directed to the RACS People and Culture team.
- 3.3.6.5 Complaints regarding any breach of the ACFID Code of Conduct should be made to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. For information on the Code of Conduct and how to make a complaint visit the ACFID website www.acfid.asn.au

4. HOW TO MAKE AN ENQUIRY, GAIN SUPPORT OR LODGE A COMPLAINT

People wishing to contact RACS with an enquiry, gain support, or lodge a complaint can do so by phone, email, letter and/or in person:

Support and Complaints Lead
 Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
 250-290 Spring Street
 East Melbourne VIC 3002
 Phone: +61 3 9249 1120
 1800 892 491 (Australia)
 0800 787 470 (Aotearoa New Zealand)
 +61 3 9249 1120 (Outside Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand)
complaints@surgeons.org

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5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Enquiries, concerns, and complaint form

RACS Code of Conduct

Whistleblower Policy Fraud and Corruption prevention Privacy of Personal Information Policy

Prevention of Sex Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy Discrimination Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy

Child Safeguarding Policy

Social Media Policy

Approver: Council Executive

Authoriser: Council