

NZIF Complaints Process

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the process for handling complaints related to Registered Forest Professionals (RFP's). This process ensures all complaints are addressed in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

Scope

This process applies to all RFPS, but extends to the Registrar, Registration Board, applicants, and administrators.

Submitting a Complaint

How to Submit

Complaints should be submitted in writing via email to complaints@nzif.org.nz. Complaints are considered confidential until the final decision in regards to the complaint has been made.

Information Required

When submitting a complaint, please provide the following information:

- Your Full name and Contact details (email and phone number).
- Name of person complaint being made against.
- Description of the issue.
- Relevant dates and times.
- Any supporting documentation.

Acknowledgment of Complaint

Upon receipt of a complaint, an acknowledgment email will be sent to the complainant within five (5) business days. This acknowledgment will include:

- A unique complaint reference number
- An outline of the next steps in the process
- Contact details for further communication

Initial Review

The complaint will undergo an initial review by the Complaints Officer within ten (10) business days of acknowledgment. The Complaints Officer will:

- Assess the validity of the complaint as per rule 32

- Determine if additional information is required from the complainant
- Refer the complaint to the Complaints Committee if necessary
- Inform the complainant of the referral to the Complaints Committee or if there is no validity to the complaint as per rule 32.

Complaints Committee

Composition

The Complaints Committee will be composed of:

- Chairperson (appointed by the President).
- Two members (appointed by the Chairperson, ensuring no conflict of interest) who are either Fellows or current RFP's.

Role

The Complaints Committee will:

- Notify the person complained against advising them of the complaint.
- Investigate the complaint thoroughly. It may appoint an investigator or seek specialist expertise to assist with its enquiries.
- Interview relevant parties if needed.
- Review all submitted documentation.
- Make a decision based on the findings, with the decision to be unanimous.

Decision and Resolution

Timeframe

The Complaints Committee will aim to resolve the complaint within twenty (20) business days of referral to the committee.

Outcome

The decision of the Complaints Committee will be communicated to the complainant in writing. The outcome will include:

- A summary of the investigation.
- The decision made.
- Any actions to be taken as per rule 58.
- Information on the appeals process.

Appeals Process

Grounds for Appeal

Complainants may appeal the decision of the Complaints Committee if they believe:

- There was a procedural error.
- New evidence has come to light.
- The decision was unreasonable based on the evidence provided.

How to Appeal

Appeals must be submitted in writing to appeals@nzif.org.nz within ten (10) business days of receiving the decision. The appeal should include:

- The original complaint reference number.
- Grounds for appeal.
- Any additional supporting documentation.

Appeals Committee

An independent Appeals Committee, consisting of three members who are fellows or councillors and not previously involved in the complaint, will review the appeal.

Decision

The Appeals Committee will:

- Review the original complaint and decision
- Consider the grounds for appeal
- Make a final decision within twenty (20) business days of receiving the appeal

The final decision of the Appeals Committee will be communicated in writing to the complainant and is not subject to further appeal.

Record Keeping

All complaints and related documentation will be securely stored and retained for a period of five (5) years. Access to these records will be restricted to authorised personnel only.

Review of Process

This complaints process will be reviewed annually to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant policies and regulations.