

AMERICAN BOARD OF MULTIPLE SPECIALTIES IN PODIATRY

ABMSP Complaints Process

Purpose

The American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry (ABMSP) maintains a documented process for receiving, evaluating, investigating, and resolving complaints related to its certification activities.

The complaints process is intended to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, objectively, impartially, confidentially, and in a timely manner.

Scope

Complaints may concern:

- ABMSP certification activities or processes;
- the professional or ethical conduct of an ABMSP certificant;
- alleged misuse or misrepresentation of ABMSP certification;
- activities of Board members, committee members, reviewers, volunteers, contractors, or other individuals acting on behalf of ABMSP; or
- other matters that may affect the integrity of ABMSP certification programs.

Submission of a Complaint

Complaints shall be submitted in writing and should contain sufficient information to permit ABMSP to evaluate the matter, including, where applicable:

- the name and contact information of the complainant;
- the individual, activity, or certification matter involved;
- a description of the circumstances giving rise to the complaint;
- relevant dates and supporting facts; and
- available documentation or other information supporting the complaint.

Receipt and Initial Review

Upon receipt of a complaint, ABMSP will:

1. acknowledge receipt whenever possible;
2. determine whether the complaint relates to certification activities for which ABMSP is responsible;
3. determine whether sufficient information has been provided to evaluate the complaint; and
4. request additional information when necessary.

Complaints outside ABMSP's authority may be closed or referred to another appropriate organization when applicable.

Investigation and Evaluation

For complaints within its authority, ABMSP will gather and verify information necessary to evaluate the matter.

The investigation may include review of documents, correspondence, certification records, interviews, consultation with qualified subject matter experts, or other appropriate investigative activities.

Investigations shall be conducted objectively, impartially, and in a manner designed to protect the integrity of the certification process.

Complaints Concerning a Certified Person

When a complaint concerning an ABMSP certificant is substantiated or otherwise requires a response from the certificant, ABMSP shall provide the certificant with appropriate information regarding the matter and a reasonable opportunity to respond before final disciplinary action is taken, except where immediate action is necessary to protect the public or the integrity of the certification program.

Impartiality and Decision-Making

Individuals responsible for reviewing and approving the final disposition of a complaint shall be appropriately qualified and impartial.

Whenever practicable, the person making or approving the final decision communicated to the complainant shall not have been previously involved in the subject matter of the complaint.

Actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest shall be disclosed and appropriately managed.

Confidentiality

ABMSP shall protect confidential information relating to both the complainant and the subject of the complaint.

Information shall be disclosed only to individuals who have a legitimate need to participate in the review or as otherwise authorized by Board policy or required by law.

Communication and Progress

Whenever possible, ABMSP will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint;
- provide reasonable progress information while the complaint remains under review;
- communicate the outcome of the complaint; and
- provide formal notice when the complaint-handling process has concluded.

Corrective or Disciplinary Action

If the complaint identifies a deficiency in an ABMSP certification process, ABMSP may initiate an appropriate correction or corrective action.

If a complaint regarding a certificant or individual acting on behalf of ABMSP is substantiated, ABMSP may take appropriate corrective or disciplinary action consistent with its policies and the nature and severity of the matter.

Records

ABMSP shall maintain appropriate records of complaints, including:

- the complaint received;
- relevant supporting information;
- investigation and review activities;
- communications;
- findings and decisions;
- corrective or disciplinary actions, if applicable; and
- final disposition.

Complaint records shall be maintained in accordance with ABMSP's record-retention and confidentiality requirements.

Appeals

A complaint itself is distinct from an appeal. Individuals who are subject to a disciplinary decision resulting from a complaint may have appeal rights under the ABMSP Appeals Process and applicable Board policies.