Complaints

Most complaints to ACC are managed by Customer Support Service and the Office of the Complaints Investigator. Government Services also manage complaints received through the ACC Minister. To minimise complaints you must understand your obligations and responsibilities under the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights.

Policy

Complaints policies are:

Rules for managing complaints

Introduction

ACC must meet its obligations when managing complaints. The actions and timeframes that apply to the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) and the Customer Support Service (CSS) complaint processes are outlined in the following table. See also Managing issues and complaints and Resolving complex or escalated complaints.

The…	must…	within…
CSS and the managing business unit	contact the client	two working day of receiving the complaint. If we cannot contact the client by phone within this timeframe we must try again within two working days
CSS and/or the managing business unit	try to resolve the issue or non-formal/non-code complaint	four working days, or more if agreed to by the client. If we need more time and the client refuses an extension we must escalate the issue to the OCI • We must monitor and report daily on time extensions beyond four days • If we are not able to resolve complaints at the CSS or local level we must escalate them to the OCI
CSS	register and escalate formal or Code complaints to the OCI	the same day we receive the complaint
OCI	send the client a COM03 We have received your complaint (35K) letter	one working day of registering the complaint
OCI	ask the business unit, AE or TPA to complete the ACC711 Complaint response template (117K)	one working day of registering the complaint
managing business unit, accredited employer (AE) or third party administrator (TPA)	send a completed ACC711 Complaint response template (117K), and supporting information, to the complaints investigator	five working days of receiving the request for information
OCI	send an ACC712 Summary of events (108K),(SOE) to the client and the business unit manager, AE or TPA for comment	no set timeframes apply
client, managing business	respond to the	seven working days of receiving the SOE,

The…	must…	within…
unit, AE or TPA	ACC712 Summary of events (108K)	or at the investigator’s discretion
OCI	issue decision letter when the investigation is complete	4 to 6 weeks, or the timeframe in the acknowledgement letter
managing business unit, AE or TPA	implement remedies as directed	seven working days after the client receives the decision letter

Responsibility for managing complaints

Introduction

Different ACC groups are responsible for managing different types of complaints. This policy outlines the roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes for each group, and the rules about ownership of complaint information and assigning complaints. See also Managing issues and complaints and Resolving complex or escalated complaints.

Rules

ACC business units, accredited employers (AEs) and third party administrators (TPAs)

Role

Try to resolve all client issues.

Responsibility

You must:

- respond positively to issues referred from other areas
- work collaboratively with the Customer Support Service (CSS) or Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) to resolve client problems, concerns and Code of ACC Claimants’ Rights (Code) complaints.

You must then issue a decision on the complaint.

Expectation

Within one working day of being approached by the CSS about a client issue or complaint, you must:

- make contact with the client
- resolve the issue to the client’s satisfaction within the parameters of the legislation, if possible

- report to the CSS, detailing what action has been taken and whether the client is satisfied with the outcome
- you must use Eos to report to the CSS, not email.

Customer Support Service

Role

- Help clients, business units, AEs and TPAs achieve an outcome for the client's problems and concerns
- Administer and refer Code complaints to the OCI.

Responsibility

You must:

- get information from the client to clarify their issue and identify the solution they would like
- check any information in Eos
- consider policy, procedures and legislation
- advise the business units, AEs and TPAs of the issue and confirm process, expectations, and timeframes for its outcome.

Expectation

You must achieve an outcome when:

- the issue is straightforward, can be dealt with easily and resolved by making one or two phone calls
- the issue involves an urgent matter relating to entitlements or treatment
- it's not clear which business unit or case owner should manage the issue.
- You must escalate unresolved or Code complaints to the OCI.

You must escalate complaints when a client alleges a service failure or requests formal investigation.

Office of the Complaints Investigator

Role

Conduct investigations into Code or non-code complaints.

Responsibility

You must investigate and determine whether ACC or its agent has:

- met its responsibilities in terms of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights
- taken reasonable actions to manage entitlement.

Expectation

You must:

- deal with and make decisions on complaints in a fair and impartial manner, taking into consideration the evidence and the client's and ACC's views

- if necessary, decline to investigate complaints that should be dealt with by another agency, such as the Health and Disability Commissioner.

Ownership of complaint information

If the issue or complaint is from…	then they are considered to be the complainant and…
a client	• the information is owned by the client • the documents will be visible in Eos at the party level
a client's representative, authorised to act on behalf of the client	• the information is owned by the client • the documents will be visible in Eos at the party level
a party, who is not the client and not authorised to act on behalf of the client	• the information is owned by the party • the documents will be visible in Eos at the party level or claim level
a party, who is not the client and not authorised to act on behalf of the client, and who doesn't exist in Eos	• the information is owned by the party • the documents will be visible in Eos at the party level • a contact or document may be loaded to the client record if it pertains to their claim, noting that the person is not authorised

Assigning complaints

You must assign all complaints involving an alleged breach of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights to the OCI to investigate.

Where possible, address and resolve issues at a local level before they escalate to a complaint. If clients are not satisfied with the steps taken to resolve the issue, advise them how to lodge a complaint.

Working with the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights

Introduction

To minimise complaints, especially about our service, communication and behaviour, you must understand your obligations and responsibilities under the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights (17K). See also Rules for managing complaints and Responsibility for managing complaints.

Rules

Applying the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights

When dealing with clients ACC must fulfil its obligations in the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights (the Code).

Accredited employers and agents of ACC are subject to the Code and must provide the highest practicable standard of service and fairness.

The Rights

The Injury, Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Compensation (Code of ACC Claimants' Rights) Notice 2002 specifies eight rights.

Clients have:

- the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- the right to be treated fairly and have their views considered
- the right to have their cultures, value and beliefs respected
- the right to a support person or persons
- the right to effective communication
- the right to be fully informed
- the right to have their privacy respected
- the right to complain.

ACC philosophy

You must comply with ACC's philosophy for dealing with client problems, concerns or complaints. This philosophy supports the Code.

When a client raises a concern or complaint, you must:

- take the concern or complaint seriously
- commit to settling it in a fair, open and respectful manner
- resolve it as quickly as possible
- treat the client with courtesy
- keep the client informed at all stages
- take responsibility for working with the client until the issues are settled.

You must not discriminate against a client because they have raised a concern or complaint.

Clients who raise a concern or file a complaint must not be disadvantaged in any way.

The purpose of the Code

The purpose of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights is to meet clients' reasonable expectations about how ACC should deal with them. The Code provides a framework that enables us to deliver a high standard of service and fairness to clients. The Code achieves these objectives by conferring rights on clients and imposing obligations on ACC.

The spirit of the Code

The Code encourages positive relationships between ACC and clients. For ACC to assist clients, a partnership based on mutual trust, respect, understanding and participation is critical. Clients and ACC need to work together, especially in the rehabilitation process. The Code is about how ACC will work with clients to make sure they receive the highest practicable standard of service and fairness.

Exceptions

The ACC Code of Claimants' Rights does not apply to:

- dealings with clients before 1 February 2003
- disputes about cover and entitlements, including treatment and compensation, which are addressed in the AC Act 2001
- the provision of treatment services. Treatment services are covered by the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights
- treatment and disability services purchased by ACC. Services purchased by ACC are covered by the Health and Disability Sector Standards and the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001.

The client has the right to review a decision made about their complaint under the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights. However, AC Act 2001, Section 149(3) prohibits any further appeal to the District Court against that review decision.

The Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) can investigate these matters and issue a Non Code finding, which will not contain review rights.

Ministerial queries and correspondence

Introduction

When someone writes to a government minister to raise an issue about ACC, ie a ministerial query, it is forwarded to ACC's Government Services for investigation and reply. This policy outlines the rules branches and business units must follow when Government Services requests information to help them respond to a ministerial query.

Rules

Administering requests for information

- Any information relating to a ministerial query belongs to the Minister, who is also responsible for deciding if it should be released
- Members of Parliament may contact a branch or business unit on behalf of a local constituent. You may respond directly to the Minister without going through Government Services

- You must not send large and unedited extracts from the claim file to Government Services
- Government Services must send requests for information to ACC branches in writing, ie by email
- Information sent to Government Services by branch or business unit managers must be complete, helpful and relevant to the ministerial query.

Example:

If you receive a social rehabilitation query, don't supply information about weekly compensation payments.

- You must forward all relevant reports, assessments and any additional documents to Government Services with the ministerial information template.

Example:

When a client complains that their home help entitlement is insufficient, you must include the assessor's report on the client's home help along with the template containing all the information regarding the case.

Handling requests for information in Eos

- You must keep all information relating to ministerial queries separate from individual claim files
- You may add contact notes to record queries from Government Services but you must not record the name of the Government Services advisor who sent the request
- You must not scan letters to or from the Minister into Eos.

Timeframes and actions for supplying information

You must supply information for a ministerial reply on the template within three working days.
If you can't supply the information within three days the branch or business unit manager must explain the delay to Government Services and supply a new timeframe.

Example:
Government Services requests information by the 15th of the month, but the case manager is not meeting with the client until the 16th. The case manager must tell Government Services about this meeting and arrange to supply the information on the 17th.

Process

Complaints processes are:

Managing complaints
Complex complaints
Investigate ministerial

Managing issues and complaints

This process must be used by the Customer Support Service (CSS) and ACC business units to manage an issue or complaint. When we are first alerted to an issue or complaint, CSS records the details then decides the best way to deal with it so that we can reach a resolution that satisfies all parties.

CSS then attempts to resolve the complaint or asks an ACC business unit to review and resolve it. Once the business unit has attempted resolution then it is referred back to the CSS team. At the end of the process the CSS checks whether the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.

Record issue or complaint

Responsibility

Customer Support Service (CSS)

When to use

Use this instruction to record the details when a client or other party contacts you with an issue or complaint.

Instruction

Step 1

Search for a party record in Eos.

Step 2

If the issue or complaint…	then…
is new	• register the new complaint record • go to **Screen issue or complaint**
is already in the system	• add a contact in the 'Complaints' tab • record details of the conversation • and notify the appropriate Customer Support Coordinator (CSC) or OCI Investigator, advising of contact with the complainant • this process ends

Screen issue or complaint

Responsibility

Customer Support Service (CSS)

When to use

Use this instruction to determine the best way to deal with a new issue or complaint so that we are likely to reach a resolution.

Instruction

Step 1

If the complainant…	then…
is on the phone	• get a description of the issue or complaint. See Dealing with a dissatisfied client • go to Step 5
sends a fax, letter or ACC709 Complaint form (122K)	• scan document(s) for distribution and immediate action and upload them into Eos • go to Step 2
sends an email	• add a contact in Eos • go to Step 2

Step 2

Phone the complainant.

If you…	then…
make contact on the first attempt	go to Step 4

do not make contact on the first attempt	• try to contact them at least three more times over two working days:
	  • if you make contact, go to Step 4
	  • if you don't make contact, go to Step 3

Step 3

- Send a CSS acknowledgement letter or email
- Record the contact in Eos
- Go to **Identify resolution steps**.

Step 4

When you contact the complainant:

- advise them we've received their issue or complaint. See Dealing with a dissatisfied client

- ask them how they want us to resolve the complaint and clear up any aspects of the issue or complaint that are not clear
- record the contact in Eos.

Step 5

Use the following table to decide how to manage the issue or complaint.

<table>
<tr><th>If…</th><th>then…</th></tr>
<tr><td>another organisation is responsible for managing the entire issue or complaint</td><td>go to Step 6</td></tr>
<tr><td>we are responsible for managing the entire issue or complaint</td><td>go to Step 7</td></tr>
<tr><td>we are responsible for managing part of the issue or complaint</td><td>go to Step 6 for the parts we don't manage
go to Step 7 for the parts we do manage</td></tr>
</table>

Step 6

Phone the complainant:

- advise them who they need to talk to and either:
    - transfer them to the relevant organisation
    - give them the organisation's contact details
- Add a contact in Eos
- update the 'General' tab of the 'Complaint' record
- this process ends.

Step 7

<table>
<tr><th>If the issue is about…</th><th>then…</th></tr>
<tr><td>levies</td><td>refer the complainant to the BSC Technical Advisors
this process ends</td></tr>
<tr><td>an existing investigation</td><td>send a task or email to the appropriate complaints investigator advising them the client has made further contact or that we've received more information
either:
record the contact details in the 'Contacts' tab of the 'Complaint' record
upload the documents into Eos
this process ends</td></tr>
<tr><td>privacy</td><td>send a task or email to ACC Privacy Officer</td></tr>
</table>

If the issue is about…	then…
	• record the contact details in the 'Contacts' tab • this process ends
matters that the complainant is not authorised to discuss	• phone the complainant and tell them why we can't take the matter further • this process ends
another ACC matter	go to Step 8

Step 8

If the complaint is about…	then…
a single ACC issue	go to Step 9
a range of ACC issues	• add a contact in Eos and outline the issues • generate a separate e-form for each issue in 'Complaint Type Details' • go to Step 9 and deal with each issue separately

Step 9

If we…	then…
can resolve the complaint immediately	• tell the complainant what we will do and get their consent to the course of action • record the contact in Eos • create a task in Eos • carry out agreed actions • close the 'Complaint'
cannot resolve the complaint immediately	• record the contact in Eos • go to **Identify resolution steps**

What happens next

If the issue is about an existing investigation, the Office of the Complaints Investigator will go to Resolving complex or escalated complaints.

Identify resolution steps

Responsibility

Customer Support Service (CSS)

When to use

Use this instruction to decide which resolution product(s) will achieve the best outcome for both parties when we can't resolve an issue or complaint at first contact.

Instruction

Step 1

Check the existing information in the Eos 'Contacts' tab. See View a contact.

Step 2

Use the following table to decide how to resolve the issue or complaint.

If the issue or complaint is about…	then consider one or more of the following…
an entitlement or cover decision and: • we've received a review application, or one is imminent • the decision is unclear	ask Customer Service Technical Support (CSTS) to test the decision
cultural concerns relating to Maori, Pacific Island or Asian clients	refer to Cultural Services
our service	• refer to facilitation or mediation • refer to Service Recovery (SR) • escalate to the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)
a perceived lack of impartiality	refer to a Community (Trusted) Advocacy, eg: • Linkage Trust • Workplace Injury Advocacy Service

Step 3

Use the following table if you need further advice.

If…	then…
we can resolve the issue or complaint easily	go to Step 4
we need to repeatedly contact the complainant	• refer to a CSS Team Manager

If…	then…
the issue or complaint may have serious legal implications	(TM) • ask the TM for direction
we need advice: • about relevant policy or legislation • to clarify a reviewable decision	refer to CSTS for advice and testing of the decision then refer to the appropriate business unit
we need advice from an independent third party and/or confirmation of a reviewable decision	refer to a Community (Trusted) Advocacy
the issue or complaint is about a Maori, Pacific Island or Asian cultural matter and there is no identified business unit, accredited employer (AE) or third party administrator (TPA)	refer to Cultural Services
the issue or complaint is about a cultural issue and a service or decision issue	refer to both Cultural Services and the appropriate business unit
the issue or complaint is a service issue only	refer to the appropriate business unit and consider requesting facilitation or mediation

Step 4

Use the following table to decide who should manage the issue or complaint.

If…	then…

• the issue or complaint:
  • can be dealt with easily
  • can be resolved by making one or two phone calls
  • is urgent and relates to entitlement or treatment
  • is not specific to a particular business unit or claims officer
• the responsible business unit does not wish to engage with the client, eg there is a contact restriction on the communications plan
	it should be managed by the CSS
	• go to **Resolve issue or complaint**

the issue or complaint is specific to a particular business unit	transfer it to the relevant business unit
the issue or complaint relates to an accredited employer (AE) or third party administrator (TPA)	contact the AE or TPA and try to resolve the issue or complaint
the complainant has requested the issue or complaint be	refer it immediately to the OCI for Resolving complex or escalated

If…	then…
referred to the OCI because either: • they do not want the CSS or branch to be involved • it is an issue requiring a Code of Claimants rights decision	complaints

Resolve issue or complaint

Responsibility

Customer Support Service (CSS)

When to use

Use this instruction to resolve an issue or complaint when we've determined that it should be managed by the CSS.

Before you begin

Read Rules for managing complaints. The benchmark timeframe for resolving issues or complaints is four working days.

Instruction

Step 1

Contact the complainant and try to resolve the matter, using the product(s) recommended in **Identify resolution steps**.

Step 2

If you…	then…
can resolve the matter within one working day	• record the contact details in Eos • close the complaint, using the description ‘resolved at first contact’ • this process ends
cannot resolve the matter within four working days	• try to agree on a plan and a timeframe for resolution • record the contact details in Eos • go to Step 3

If you…	then…
cannot resolve the matter within 10 working days	• consult with the CSS manager and decide whether to refer it to the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) • record the details of your discussion in EOS • if appropriate, create a 'complaint referral for investigation' task and transfer it to the OCI work queue • this process ends

Step 3

Agree a revised plan and timeframe with the complainant.

If…	then…
you can agree	• record the contact details in Eos • go to **Complete follow up task**
• you cannot agree • the complainant does not want to pursue the matter	• record the contact details in Eos • close the complaint • this process ends
• you cannot agree • you need to refer the matter for investigation	• record the contact details in Eos • create a 'complaint referral for investigation' task and transfer it to the OCI work queue • this process ends

Review and resolve issue or complaint

Responsibility

ACC business unit

When to use

Use this instruction to review and resolve an issue or complaint referred from the Customer Support Service (CSS).

Before you begin

Read Rules for managing complaints. The benchmark timeframe for resolving issues or complaints is four working days.

Instruction

Step 1

Open the ‘complaint referral to business unit’ task or the CSS advisory email.

Step 2

Determine whether your business unit owns the issue or complaint.

If your business unit…	then…
owns the complaint	go to Step 3
does not own the complaint	transfer the task or email back to the CSS advising the referral is incorrect

Step 3

Determine whether you have enough information.

If you…	then…
have enough information	go to Step 4
don't have enough information	request more information from the CSS

Step 4

Determine if the issue or complaint is straightforward or complex.

If…	then…
it is straightforward	go to Step 5
it involves complex cover or entitlement issues	consider any: • advice received from Customer Service Technical Support (CSTS) • recommendations from the CSS about appropriate resolution products, eg referral to Cultural Services

Step 5

Try to resolve the matter to the complainant’s satisfaction.

Step 6

If you…	then…
can resolve the matter within four working days	• record the contact details in Eos

If you…	then…
cannot resolve the matter within four working days	• go to Step 8 • agree on a plan and timeframe for resolution • update the CSS team via email or task

Step 7

If…	then…
you cannot agree on a revised plan and timeframe	• record the contact details in Eos • transfer the task or email back to the CSS • this process ends
you agree a revised plan and timeframe	• record the contact details in Eos • continue attempts to resolve the matter

Step 8

If the complainant…	and…	then…
is satisfied	no further action is needed	transfer the task or email back to the CSS
is not satisfied	you agree a new plan and timeframe	• advise the CSS • change the date on the task • continue attempts to resolve the matter
	you cannot agree a new plan and timeframe	transfer the task or email back to the CSS

What happens next

If you've transferred the task to the CSS, go to **Complete follow-up task**.

Complete follow-up task

Responsibility

Customer Support Service (CSS)

When to use

Use this instruction when either:

- an issue or complaint is returned to the CSS
- you need to check if a an issue or complaint is resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Instruction

Step 1

Open the follow-up task in Eos.

Step 2

Try at least twice to contact the complainant by phone.

Step 3

If…	then…
you make contact	go to Step 4
you don't make contact after two phone calls	• record the contact details in Eos • close the complaint

Step 4

<table>
<tr><th>If the complainant is…</th><th>then…</th></tr>
<tr><td>not satisfied</td><td>initiate a new issue or complaint and either:
return to Record issue or complaint and restart this process
create a 'complaint refer to investigation’ task and transfer to the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)</td></tr>
<tr><td>satisfied</td><td>close both the follow-up task and the complaint
email the relevant Business unit manager:
information relating to the issue or complaint
details of how it was resolved</td></tr>
</table>

Resolving complex or escalated complaints

The Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) and ACC business units use this process to manage complex or escalated complaints. The process begins when the OCI receives a complaint, either directly or by referral from another ACC group or external agency.

Complaints usually relate to alleged breaches of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights, complex matters or escalated complaints that cannot be resolved by another ACC group.

Allocate the complaint

Responsibility

Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)

When to use

Use this instruction to allocate a complaint to an investigator when you receive a complaint directly from a client or by referral from another ACC group or external party, eg a client's agent.

Instruction

Step 1

Decide who is responsible for managing the complaint.

If the complaint…	**then…**
relates to: • an alleged breach of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights • an existing investigation • a complex investigation • a specific business unit, third party administrator or accredited employer	• the OCI is responsible • go to Step 2
is: • a new 'non-code' related issue or complaint • straightforward	• the CSS is responsible • send the CSS an email asking them to manage it • this process ends
is the responsibility of an external agency	• write to the complainant telling them ACC is not the correct agency to manage their complaint and giving them the details of the correct agency

If the complaint…	then…
	• this process ends

Step 2

If you received notification via…	then…
a 'Refer for investigation task'	go to Step 3
an email	contact CSS and request that they either: • load the complaint as a 'Refer for Investigation' task and send it to the Eos 'Office of the Complaints Investigator' admin/work queue • load the complaint to a previous Eos complaint file and send a general task to the investigator

Step 3

Allocate the complaint to the investigator:

- open the 'Complaints Monitoring' spreadsheet and check the complaints assigned to each investigator
- allocate the complaint to the most suitable investigator from the 'Office of the Complaints Investigator' admin/work queue
- advise the Privacy group via privacy.officer@acc.co.nz if the complaint includes issues relating to Right 7
- add the complaint details to the spreadsheet and save it.

Step 4

Transfer the task to the investigator:

- open the 'Refer for Investigation' task and:
    - edit the task
    - delete the text
    - type in Capitals 'NEW COMPLAINT ALLOCATED'
- check the date on the task
- transfer the task to the investigator allocated to the complaint.

Step 5

Update the manual exercise book: 'Daily Complaint Record'.

What happens next

The OCI investigator will advise interested parties using **Acknowledge the complaint and request information**.

Acknowledge complaint and request information

Responsibility

Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)

When to use

Use this instruction when you've been allocated a complaint through a 'Refer for Investigation' task.

Before you begin

If you need help when completing this instruction, refer to 'Investigator receives new complaint' (OCI I:\ drive document).

Instruction

Step 1

Open the 'Refer for Investigation' task and look for 'New Complaint Allocated' in the title.

Step 2

Open the claim details and review the Customer Support Service (CSS) records, contacts and documents for relevant information.

Step 3

- Generate a COM03 We have received your complaint (35K) letter and an ACCFS01 Complaints - Getting your complaint investigated information sheet (245K)
- Complete the description boxes and fields in the letter (refer to OCI I:\ drive document)
- Send the completed letter and information sheet to the client and/or an authorised agent or third party administrator (TPA).

Step 4

If you…	then…
do not need more information	• go to **Investigate complaint** • this process ends
need more information	• put the 'Refer for Investigation' task on hold • set a target date for 15 days

Step 5

Request more information.

If the issue or complaint is from…	then…
an accredited employer (AE) or a TPA	send them an email with the following documents attached: • a copy of the correspondence sent by the complainant, unless they complained verbally • a copy of the acknowledgement letter sent to the complainant • the blank ACC711 complaint response template (117K)

a business unit	add a ‘Complaint - Refer to business unit’ task in Eos
	• assign the task to the admin work queue of the complainant’s business unit asking them to:
	  ◦ return the information on the ACC711 (117K) complaint response template
	  ◦ load the response to the ‘complaints tab’ at party level

Step 6

Load the complaint and transfer the task (refer to OCI I:\ drive document):

- generate a new task ‘Complaint – Refer to business unit’ and click the ‘assign to me’ tab
- enter ‘follow-up ACC711’ in the description box of the ‘work details’ field and set the target date for 5 days
- add a sub-activity
- click the ‘Recent’ tab and select ‘Complaint – Refer to business unit’, then click the ‘assign to me’ tab
- open the ‘Template for tasks’ document in the related resources section and copy either the:
  - ‘Request ACC711 from Branch’ section
  - ‘Request ACC 711 from AE or TPA via email’ section
- paste the copied information into the description box
- change the ‘target date’ field to today’s date and the ‘Priority’ field to ‘High’
- click 'Ok' then ‘transfer to department'.

Step 7

If you transfer the task to…	then…
any branch **except** the Dunedin Service Centre	• select the appropriate branch ‘administration’ queue • click 'OK' then ‘Back’ to generate a new subtask pop-up notification • click ‘Yes’

If you transfer the task to…	then…
the Dunedin Service Centre	• select the 'DSC – Quality Assurance' queue • click 'OK' then 'Back' to generate a new subtask pop-up notification • click 'Yes'

Step 8

Prepare to return the ACC711:

- change the 'on hold until' date to the date entered in the 'Refer for Investigation' task, ie the date the ACC711 is due back
- change the 'on hold reason' to 'put task on hold'
- click 'OK' then 'Back'.

Step 9

Finalise the Eos changes:

- open the task and click 'Edit'
- change the 'complaint status' on the 'General' tab to 'under investigation', then click 'OK'
- highlight the 'complaint type details' eform and click 'Open'
- scroll down to the 'Complaints Investigation' section of the form and change 'date acknowledgement letter sent' to today's date
- scroll down, click 'OK' then 'close'.

What happens next

If…	then…
you need new information	a business unit, branch, TPA or AE will **Collate and send information**
the OCI either: • has enough information • is asked to investigate the complaint	go to **Investigate complaint**

Collate and send information

Responsibility

ACC business units and branches

When to use

Use this instruction to collate information about an issue or complaint and return it to the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI) within the correct timeframes.

Before you begin

See:

- Working with the code of ACC claimants' rights
- Rules for managing complaints, for timeframes.

Instruction

Step 1

Open the 'Complaint - Refer to business unit' task in Eos.

Step 2

Check any information in Eos and related emails, eg dates of previous contact, supporting documents.

Step 3

Read the complaint to identify the relevant issues and decide whether:

- the client's rights have been breached under the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights
- you're able to address the issue or complaint through remedial action.

Step 4

Complete the ACC711 Complaint response template (117K) adding your findings from Steps 2 and 3.

Step 5

Upload the completed ACC711 to the 'Complaint' tab at party level.

Step 6

Load the ACC711 as a draft, then get an authorised manager to check it and change the status to 'complete'.

Step 7

Return the completed ACC711 to the OCI in a task.

What happens next

The OCI will **Investigate the complaint**.

If the OCI…	then…

If the OCI…	then…
requests a summary of events	go to **Respond to Summary of Events**
does not request a summary of events	go to **Implement remedies as directed**

Investigate complaint

Responsibility

Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)

When to use

Use this instruction to investigate a complaint and any responses, and prepare a summary of events (SOE) if necessary.

Before you begin

Clients are entitled to view their own records. You must ensure nothing you record in emails, tasks, documents and contacts could negatively impact ACC's reputation.

Instruction

Step 1

Check your tasks in Eos.

If you…	then…
have an ACC711 notification task	open the task and check loaded documents
do not have an ACC711 notification task	open any complaint response documents or completed ACC711 Complaint response template (117K) that you've received by other means, eg email or fax

Step 2

If you…	then…
can view all the documents	go to Step 3
cannot view all the documents in the ACC711 notification task	• click on the pencil icon in the 'Complaints' tab at Party level and note that you cannot view the documents • return the task to the person who sent it to you

Step 3

If you…	then…
have the ACC711 form	go to Step 4
do not have the ACC711 form	• check the 'refer to business unit' task is allocated from the branch administration queue • phone the person the task is allocated to and ask when they will respond • change your ‘target date’ and close the task • if you can't get the ACC711 in a reasonable timeframe, discuss it with the business unit manager

Step 4

If you…	then…
need more information	go to Step 5
do not need more information	go to Step 6

Step 5

Phone the Team Manager who completed the ACC711.

If you …	then…
contact the Team Manager	• record details of the contact in Eos • go to Step 6

cannot contact the team manager by phone	• phone either:
	    • the Case Manager
	    • a Branch Manager or Area leader, if you need to negotiate a resolution
	• record details of all contacts on the complaint

cannot contact the Team Manager, Case Manager, Branch Manager or Area Manager by phone	• either:
	    • send a task to the business unit administration queue using the ACC711 template
	    • if the issues are significantly complex and you've already discussed them with the branch, email the team manager who completed the ACC711
	• record details of all contacts on the complaint

Step 6

Open your ‘Follow up ACC711’ task to see if it's on hold.

If the 'Follow up ACC711' task is…	then…
on hold	• take it off hold and update the off hold reason to ‘take task off hold’ • edit the task to say 'complete investigation and issue findings’ • change the target date to the day that you should be able to start the investigation
not on hold	go to Step 7

Step 7

Complete the following:

- review the client’s complaint and any responses
- read all related Eos contacts, documents and tasks
- identify areas where the parties agree or disagree
- if you need clarification, contact the relevant business unit, AE, TPA, complainant or witnesses, using step 5 as your guide.

Step 8

Use the following table to decide if you need a summary of events (SOE).

If…	then…
an AE manages the claim a TPA manages the claim on behalf of ACC	• you need an SOE • go to Step 9
the issues are complex there are multiple issues	• an SOE is optional • go to Step 9, if you want an SOE
all parties agree	• you don't need an SOE • go to **Make decision and notify parties**

Step 9

Complete an ACC712 Summary of events (108K).

Step 10

Send information to the parties.

If the party is a…	then…	and…

If the party is a…	then…	and…
branch or business unit	create a task	• send the SOE to the business unit admin queue • the ACC branch or business unit will **Respond to summary of events**
complainant	complete the: • COM05 Summary of events letter to client (37.5K) • ACC712 Summary of events form (108K)	post a hard copy of both documents to the complainant
TPA or AE		email both documents to the TPA or AE

Respond to summary of events

Responsibility

ACC business units and branches

When to use

Use this instruction to review and respond to an ACC712 Summary of events (SOE) (108K) sent to you by the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI).

Before you begin

You must complete and send your response within the timeframes in Rules for managing complaints .

Instruction

Step 1

Open the SOE and any supporting documents.

Step 2

Review the SOE and add your comments.

Step 3

Return the SOE with your comments to the OCI via a task within seven working days of receiving it.

What happens next

An OCI Investigator will review your response, then go to **Make decision and notify parties**.

Make decision and notify parties

Responsibility

Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)

When to use

Use this instruction to make a decision about a complaint and notify all parties within the correct timeframes.

Before you begin

See:

- Rules for managing complaints for correct timeframes or if you need help completing this instruction
- Working with the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights .

Instruction

Step 1

Make a decision after determining the following:

- whether the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights has been breached
- whether any non-code issues are valid
- the most appropriate remedy for the complainant, if any.

Step 2

Prepare a COM01 Findings (35K) letter. Include the:

- findings of the complaint
- reasons for the decision
- details of any remedy.

Step 3

Notify the parties.

<table>
<tr><th>If the party is a…</th><th>then…</th></tr>
<tr><td>branch or business unit</td><td>upload the COM01 Findings (35K)letter to the complaints tab in Eos
create an 'action complaint remedy' task and allocate it to the appropriate branch admin queue
ask that the task is returned to the OCI once the remedy is implemented</td></tr>
<tr><td>third party administrator (TPA)</td><td rowspan="2">email the COM01 Findings letter to the TPA or AE</td></tr>
<tr><td>accredited employer</td></tr>
</table>

If the party is a…	then…
(AE)	
client	post a hard copy of the COM01 Findings letter to the client

Step 4

If we…	then…
need to apologise	• consult Writing an apology guidelines • write and send the apology letter
do not need to apologise	go to Step 5

Step 5

Complete the following in Eos:

- update the general tab 'complaint status' to 'complete'
- open the 'complaint type details' e-form and complete all relevant tabs under 'complaints investigation'
- close the 'refer for investigation' task.

What happens next

The assigned business unit will **Implement remedies as directed**.

Implement remedies as directed

Responsibility

ACC business units and branches

When to use

Use this instruction to implement any remedies as directed by the Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI).

Instruction

Step 1

Open the task and view the COM01 Findings (35K) letter showing in the complaint tab at party level.

Step 2

Implement any remedies as directed, referring if necessary to the Writing an apology guidelines.

Step 3

Return the task to the OCI.

What happens next

The OCI will **Follow up remedial action**.

Follow up remedial action

Responsibility

Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI)

When to use

Use this instruction to check if remedies for complaints are implemented.

Instruction

Step 1

Check for evidence of remedial action, such as we sent an apology letter, in the Eos contacts, documents and tasks.

Step 2

Close the 'follow-up remedy' task.

What happens next

This process ends.

Investigating a ministerial query

ACC business unit managers and technical advisors must use this process when investigating a ministerial query. As most of the process is handled by Government Services and the ACC Minister's Office, only work that is handled at the branch, centre or unit level is documented.

Receive ministerial query and investigate

Responsibility

Business Unit Managers and Technical Advisors

When to use

Use this instruction to investigate a ministerial query sent to you by ACC Government Services, eg a query from the Minister's office regarding a claim or client or a letter to the Minister from a client or member of the public that is sent to ACC for a draft response.

Before you begin

Read the rules in the Ministerial queries and correspondence policy.

Instruction

Step 1

Retrieve the Ministerial information template sent by the government services advisor.

Step 2

Review the information in:

- the Ministerial information template
- the physical claim file, Eos claim file and/or party record.

Step 3

Contact the government services advisor if you have any questions.

Step 4

Gather enough information from ACC staff to help you complete the Ministerial information template.

Step 5

Complete the Ministerial information template and any other documents you need to reply to the query. When preparing your reply:

- do not include large, unedited extracts from the claim file
- only attach information that is relevant to the query
- ensure all information you attach is listed, summarised and complete.

Step 6

Send your reply to the Business Unit authorised Manager, ie Technical Claims Manager or Quality Assurance Manager, asking them to review the information and comment.

Step 7

When you have received and collated all the necessary information send your reply to the government services advisor.

What happens next

Government Services will compose a draft reply to the ministerial query, using the information you've sent them. It will be peer reviewed and signed by a Senior Manager from your business group before they forward it to the ACC Minister's Office.

Reference

- Writing an apology guidelines
- Managing systemic advocacy
- Explaining the complaints process
- Behaviours to uphold the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights (66K)
- Dealing with a dissatisfied client

Writing an apology

Introduction

Use these guidelines when writing an apology letter to a client after the findings of a Complaint have been received, or when an error or service failure has been identified.

Why apologise?

When mistakes are made, often the person complaining only wants to be listened to, understood, respected and, where appropriate, given a proper explanation and an apology. A prompt and sincere apology for any misunderstanding is likely to work wonders. It will help to avoid the escalation of an issue and the significant cost in time and resources involved in disputes.

How should an apology be worded?

The most appropriate way of communicating an apology is to use a well-structured letter. It should cover the particular circumstances of the issue, the harm suffered, and the goal of the apology, eg reconciliation to restore our reputation, acknowledging the wrong done, and giving an assurance that a problem has been addressed and will not recur.

The most effective apologies include the following nine elements, grouped under five headings – recognition, responsibility, reasons, regret, and redress.

Element	Description
Recognition	• Describe the wrong – outline the problem, act, or omission that we are apologising for

Element	Description
	• Recognise the wrong – openly state that the action or inaction was incorrect, wrong, inappropriate, unreasonable, harmful, etc • Acknowledge the harm – acknowledge that the affected person has suffered embarrassment, hurt, pain, damage, or loss
Responsibility	Accept responsibility – admit our part in the wrong done, and the harm caused
Reasons	Explain how it happened – give a simple, plain English explanation for the cause of the problem, or a promise to investigate the cause. Refer to any mitigating circumstances such as whether our action was unintentional, or was prescribed by policy or legislation and, therefore, not discretionary
Regret	• Apologise – express sincere sorrow, remorse, or express regret that the action or inaction was wrong • Communicate sincerely – the way we communicate or apologise is very important as it can indicate or emphasise the level of our sincerity
Redress	• Specify the action taken or proposed – say what action has been taken or what specific steps are proposed to address the problem • Promise not to repeat the mistake – give assurance that the action or inaction will not be repeated

Good apology letters - example

Excerpt 1

"I am writing to apologise for the unsatisfactory service you received from staff in this branch, specifically the delay in calling you to discuss your weekly compensation concerns following your visit to ACC on the 12th of May 2003."

(Note: this includes recognition and description, responsibility.)

"Clearly the level of service was not of a standard that you have a right to expect. The requirement of returning calls within 24 hours of a request being made has been raised with all staff as a result of your complaint."

(Note: this includes acknowledgement, responsibility, action taken, and promise to not repeat.)

"I offer my sincere apologies that you did not receive the standard of service that ACC sets for its staff and am confident that this situation will not arise again."

(Note: this includes the promise to not repeat, sincerity, acknowledgement, and recognition.)

Bad apology letters - examples

The examples below lack sincerity. This means that even if they hold some of the required nine elements, they read as if we are apologising through gritted teeth, or simply can't be bothered (eg excerpt 2). The reader would not see this as effective, would not be pacified, may feel we are being condescending, and could, therefore, still escalate an issue.

Excerpt 2

"Further to our letter dated 14/07/2006 ACC would like to apologise for the breach of rights 1, 2, 5 and 6."

(Note: there is no recognition, responsibility acceptance, sincerity, explanation, or action taken.)

Excerpt 3

"In respect to the Rights that __branch has breached, ACC has directed __ branch to provide you with a written apology. This letter from __branch is to apologise for the breaches established by the ACC complaints investigator."

(Note: this is clinical and un-empathic - there is no recognition, responsibility acceptance, sincerity, explanation, or action taken. Further, its message is that we are only apologising as we've been directed to, not because we're accepting responsibility or taking future action.)

Excerpt 4

"I write further to the findings of the Office of the Complaints Investigator. The Investigator found that ACC had breached Right 5 of the ACC Code of Claimant Rights – the right to effective communication."

(Note: this includes a description but provides no explanation or acceptance of responsibility.)

"ACC has been directed by the complaints investigator to follow a procedure in the future to prevent communication problems, and we will adopt these processes."

(Note: action is taken but this implies that it's only because we're being forced to.)

"I would like to apologise for any distress caused to you by ACC's failure to communicate with you to the standard required."

(Note: clinical, not sincere – compare with the final paragraph of the good letter example, above.)

Managing systemic advocacy

Introduction

Use this information when you need to take action after an advocate raises a systemic issue with you.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of representing and communicating a viewpoint in order to achieve a desired goal. The difference between advocacy and simple communication is that an advocate attempts to convince the other party of a point of view.

Advocacy can be divided into two main types:

- **Individual advocacy** relates to the specific issues of a particular case or situation. In the ACC context, individual issues are those issues related to actions taken by ACC in relation to an individual client's case.
- **Systemic advocacy** is related to the desire to change or influence wider structural or systemic issues or goals. In the ACC context, systemic issues are those issues that relate to the way the ACC business works.

Advocacy should not be confused with making a complaint. For more information see Managing issues and complaints.

Examples of individual and systemic advocacy at ACC

Issue raised by advocate	Systemic or individual issue?
The legislation is unfair, and this is not related to a particular case	Systemic
An ACC policy is unfair in relation to an individual case	Individual
An ACC branch is not on the ground floor and difficult to access for people with a disability	Systemic
An ACC policy about a particular matter is unfair to a group of people or in general	Systemic
A client's weekly compensation payment is too low	Individual

Responding to systemic advocacy

When an advocate raises a systemic issue with ACC, the staff member receiving the issue refers the query to their manager or technical claims manager (TCM). The manager or TCM attempts to resolve the issue, and may refer the query to the Customer Service Technical Support team (CSTS) for clarification.

The ACC unit receiving the systemic issue manages the relationship with the advocate while the issue is being assessed. This process is similar to that in place for claims queries raised by a case manager and referred through a TCM to the CSTS. If a systemic issue is referred to CSTS, it should be clearly identified as a systemic issue.

Explaining the complaints process

Introduction

Use this information to help you understand the complaints' policies and processes.

How issues are raised

A client or their advocate, solicitor, or other representative may raise an issue about ACC's dealings with them by contacting any ACC office, branch or business unit, accredited employer or Customer Support Service (CSS).

Contact can be by phone, email, letter, fax or in person.

Where issues are resolved

There are three key areas involved in managing complaints:

- the business units, where issues arise
- Customer Support Service (CSS)
- ACC's Office of the Complaints Investigator (OCI).

Business units

The role of the business unit is to take responsibility and attempt to resolve all client issues. Business units must respond positively to issues that are referred to them from other areas and work collaboratively with CSS to resolve client issues.

If a business unit is approached by CSS about a customer issue, within **four working day** they should:

- make contact with the customer
- if possible, resolve the issue to the customer's satisfaction
- report back to CSS that the issue has been resolved via email.

Customer Support Service

CSS's role is to work with business units to achieve the resolution of client issues as quickly and effectively as possible. Their role is a facilitative one between customers, business units and the OCI.

CSS is likely to attempt resolution without business unit involvement where either:

- the issue is straightforward, can be dealt with easily, and can be resolved by making one or two phone calls
- it involves an urgent matter relating to entitlements or treatment
- there is no clearly defined and/or identified managing business unit or case owner.

CSS will gather information from the customer to clarify their issue and identify their desired solution. They will check in Pathway or Eos for additional information, phone the business unit to advise them of the issue and confirm the details of the issue and timeframes for resolution with the business unit via email.

If a business unit has attempted resolution and has not been successful, CSS will receive the issue back from the business unit and if appropriate pass it on to the OCI.

Office of the Complaints Investigator

The OCI is responsible for administering ACC's responsibilities in terms of the Code of ACC Claimants' Rights. It conducts investigations into Code or non-code complaints where service recovery has been unsuccessful or is refused by a customer. At the conclusion of an investigation it issues findings and decisions and may direct ACC to undertake certain actions. It is a free service to ACC customers.

The OCI investigates escalated complaints made by:

- clients about services provided by ACC units or agents
- levy payers and their dealings with the Business Service Centre
- any other non-service matters eg, from a non-client.

Within the CSS complaints process, all issues are initially sent to the Customer Support Service for resolution unless the customer has stated otherwise.

Dealing with a dissatisfied client

Introduction

Use these guidelines when dealing with a dissatisfied client. Every communication with customers is an opportunity for service recovery. This is particularly important when the communication is by telephone. Always treat callers with respect.

Actions

- Ask the caller to explain their concern or issue
- Ask open and clarifying questions to establish the full story
- Repeat the information to check that you understand what they have just told you
- Inform the caller:
    - 'My role is to help you work through the concerns or issues you have discussed with me. What would resolve this issue for you?'
- Inform the caller that there may be information that can be accessed to provide a history of the issue, eg in Pathway, Access database, Remedy AR
- Ask if they are happy for their information to be viewed at this stage.