

SECTION SEVENTEEN: Complaints

A. Policy:

It is the policy of ABET to review all complaints received from any source, including students, against either an accredited program or ABET itself that are related to compliance with ABET's policies, criteria, or procedures and to resolve any such complaints in a timely, fair, and equitable manner. Furthermore, it is the policy of ABET to retain all documentation associated with any such complaint received against an accredited program for a period of not less than one accreditation cycle (typically six years), and for a period of not less than five years for any complaints received against ABET itself.

1. ABET will not pursue complaints that are not made in writing or that are anonymous. The receipt of a complaint will be acknowledged to the complainant within 10 business days.

2. ABET cannot assume authority for enforcing the policies of programs or institutions regarding faculty member, professional staff, or student rights. ABET does not adjudicate, arbitrate, or mediate individual grievances against a program or institution.

B. Procedure:

1. Complaints will be reviewed initially by the ABET Executive Director, acting as an agent of the ABET Board of Directors, or by his/her staff designee.
2. If the complaint is not within the purview of ABET, the complainant will be notified within 10 business days and no further action will be taken.
3. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Executive Director will follow procedures appropriate to the nature of the complaint. If it appears that an ABET representative or an individual working on behalf of ABET may have violated ABET's Code of Conduct, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint to the Board of Directors Audit Committee for adjudication according to the Board of Directors Rules of Procedure Section Four. If the complaint is against an institution or its accredited programs, the Executive Director will follow the procedure described in the Board of Directors Rules of Procedure Section Seventeen B.4. If the complaint is against ABET, the Executive Director will follow the procedure described in Board of Directors Rules of Procedures Section Seventeen B.5. The complainant will be notified within 10 business days of the receipt of the complaint that the complaint falls within the purview of ABET and the next steps in the investigative process.
4. Complaints to ABET Against an Institution or its Accredited Programs
 - a. If the complaint appears to warrant further investigation, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint to the principal administrative officers of the institution within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint. The Executive Director will request for an institutional response within 20 business days of receipt of the request. In the event that an institutional response is not received by ABET within 20 business days of the request for the response, ABET may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including revocation of accreditation.
 - b. Upon receipt of the institutional response, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint and the institutional response to the executive committee(s) of the appropriate commission(s). The executive committee(s) will review the institutional response within 20 business days of receipt of the complaint and institutional response. If more than one executive committee is involved, those committees will work together, as appropriate, to review the institutional response. The commission chair(s) will provide the

Executive Director with the executive committee(s)' determination, including a brief rationale for the determination, within 20 business days of receipt of the forwarded information.

- c. If the executive committee(s) determine(s) that the institutional response satisfactorily addresses the issue or issues raised in the complaint, the matter will be considered closed. Within 10 business days of receipt of the executive committee(s)' determination, the Executive Director will inform the complainant and the institution in writing of the determination and the matter will be closed.
- d. If the executive committee(s) determine(s) that the institutional response does not satisfactorily address the issue or issues raised in the complaint, ABET may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including revocation of accreditation. Within 10 business days of receipt of the executive committee(s)' determination, the Executive Director will inform the complainant and the institution in writing of the determination.
- e. If the institution has released incorrect or misleading information regarding the accreditation status of the institution or program, the contents of visit reports and final statements, or the accreditation action taken by ABET, the institution will be required to make a public correction.

5. Complaints Against ABET

- a. If the complaint is concerned with ABET's criteria, policies, or procedures or with the implementation of these, the Executive Director will forward a copy of the complaint to the executive committee of the appropriate commission(s) or to the Board of Directors within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint.
- b. If it appears that an ABET representative or an individual working on behalf of ABET may have violated ABET's criteria, policies, or procedures, that individual will be asked to respond to the issues raised in the complaint within 20 business days of receipt of the request.
- c. Upon receipt of the individual's response, the appropriate commission executive committee(s) or the Board of Directors will make a determination as to whether a violation occurred or not within 20 business days of receipt of the response. The commission chair(s) or the ABET President will provide the Executive Director with the executive committee(s)' or Board of Directors', respectively, determination including a brief rationale for the determination, within 20 business days of receipt of the individual's response.
- d. If the determination is that no violation occurred, the matter will be considered closed. The Executive Director will inform the complainant of the

determination in writing within 10 business days of receipt of the determination, and the matter will be closed.

- e. If ABET determines that a violation has occurred, the Executive Director will inform the complainant of the determination in writing within 10 business days of receipt of the determination. ABET will counsel the responsible party and may take further action as circumstances warrant, up to and including termination as an ABET representative.
- f. If ABET finds that a violation of its policies or procedures has occurred which may have had an effect on a program's accreditation action, ABET may initiate further proceedings as circumstances warrant, up to and including an immediate revisit to the program at no cost to the institution.
- g. Complaints against ABET employees will be handled in accordance with the ABET Employee Operations & Procedures Manual and may result in actions up to and including termination of employment.