

# Timeframes for processing complaints

## Professional Conduct Procedure

### How long will it take to deal with my complaint?

There are several key stages in the complaints procedure and the following timeframes will give you an indication as to these stages and how long each stage may take.

If your complaint is taken through the procedure, under normal circumstances, we would aim to complete the process within 12-18 months; however, due to the pandemic, times may vary. At the outset of a complaint, the gathering of information, assessment and allocation, and communication with the parties involves investment in time, and you will find below the estimate of these timings, for each stage. Please bear in mind that some complaints are more complicated and can take longer to prepare and to receive all the information we need. The outcome of an investigation can affect a member's ability to practice, so we must ensure we have all the information needed to proceed.

### Aims

1. We aim to meet the timeframes listed below; however, where we are unable to, or there is a delay, we will let you know.
2. We aim to update you at appropriate and regular intervals during the process unless you ask us not to. This may be by email, letter or telephone, our preferred method of contact will be by email.

Stage	Action	Timeframe for each stage
Complaint received by BACP	Acknowledge receipt	Within 1 week
Assessment of complaint against requirements of the Professional Conduct Procedure	Review of complaint information and evidence submitted and allocation to case manager.	6 to 8 weeks
Requests for further information and a preliminary response	The case manager may contact the complainant and the member to request any relevant evidence	3 to 5 weeks

Application of Threshold Test	On receipt of any information requested, the relevant person will assess the information and apply the Threshold Test. Where the matter passes this test, the parties will be notified, and a report will be prepared for the Investigation and Assessment Committee (IAC) to consider	2 to 4 weeks
IAC to assess whether the matter should progress through to a hearing or be closed	On completion of the IAC summary report, an IAC will be convened to consider the matter	6 to 8 weeks
Notification of IAC decision	The IAC may decide to: Ask for further information Dismiss the complaint Allocate the complaint to a professional conduct hearing Invite a consensual disposal	IAC decision to be notified to parties within 4 weeks of the date the IAC convened
Case proceeding to a Practice Review Hearing	Case preparation and listing of case	4 to 6 months depending on the nature and complexity of the case. (Due to the pandemic, physical hearings are suspended, and we are currently listing matters virtually. This means that these timings above are likely to be extended).
Case proceeding to a Disciplinary Proceedings Hearing	Case preparation and listing of case	6 to 8 months depending on the nature and complexity of the case (Due to the pandemic, physical hearings are suspended, and we are currently listing matters virtually. This means that these timings above are likely to be extended).

Member invited to enter into a consensual disposal	Where the IAC decide that the case should be settled by a consensual disposal, an agreement will be drafted by the IAC and finalised between the member and the Chair of the IAC	6 to 10 weeks from the date the IAC convened
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