Ethics Complaint Cycle

Steps of Ethics Commission Review

- AOTA is a voluntary membership organization.
- AOTA is only permitted to handle ethics complaints against occupational therapy practitioners and students who were AOTA members at the time of the alleged misconduct.
- The Ethics Commission (EC) has jurisdiction to enforce the Code of Ethics on members.



Complaint

- Complaints may only be accepted through ethics@aota.org or mailed to AOTA headquarters as "Complaint". Complaints are confidential and cannot be taken over the phone or submitted anonymously.
- Complaint forms must be signed, and include 3-5 key Standards of Conduct for alleged violations, supporting evidence (dates, emails, nonconfidential documents), and attempted resolution.



Review

- Complaints are reviewed by the Ethics Manager for accuracy (signed form, date of allegations, Standards of Conduct violations, written proof).
- AOTA membership database confirms if respondent was a member at the time of the alleged incident.
- · Completed complaints are prepared for monthly EC meeting.



Action

- New cases are presented to the EC to vote on taking one of the following actions:
 - Open investigation (Respondent must have been a member during alleged violation)
 - More information (Ethics Manager contacts complainant for more information for EC review)
 - **Dismiss** (Information provided does not violate Code of Ethics)
 - No action (Respondent was not a member at the time of incident and EC cannot take action)



Inquiry

- Ethics Manager drafts inquiry letter for alleged Code violations to respondent with legal and EC Chairperson approvals.
- Inquiry letters for open investigations are confidentially and securely emailed with delivery confirmation.
 - Respondent has 30 calendar days to respond to inquiries to allegations
 - Complainant has 30 calendar days to provide any additional information if requested.
- Ethics Manager has 30 calendar days to conduct confidential investigation.



Decision

- If investigation does not support violation, the EC votes to dismiss. If investigation supports violation the EC votes on sanction.
- Respondent has 30 calendar days to request an appeal.
- If the public sanction stands (either through non-response or appeal loss), the respondent's name, sanction level, and Standard of Conduct violation are placed on AOTA's website, member database, OT Practice, and AJOT for a minimum of 3 years.
- Roster of Fellows and Honors distinctions may be removed during the period of probation, suspension, or permanently for membership revocation.



Explore more!





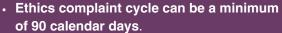
Who can initiate a complaint?

Individuals

Cases

- State occupational therapy boards
- Ethics Commission when proof of evidence is available

How long is the ethics process?



- 30 days to investigate
- 30 days to appeal sanction
- 30 days for appeal & hearing process
- Timeline depends on the complexity of the case and communication frequency.

Nonmember



What happens to a complaint for a nonmember?

- AOTA cannot investigate complaints against nonmembers.
- Complainants receive a letter with guidance on further actions to explore.

Options

- · State licensing boards
- · National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc (NBCOT)
- · Specialty licensing respondents may hold



