

American Center for Life Cycle Assessment Procedure for Handling Complaints against LCA Certified Professionals

PREAMBLE

This document was originally developed by the ACLCA Certification Management Committee and approved by the ACLCA Executive Committee on 9 January 2008 as the ***ACLCA Procedure for Handling Complaints against ACLCA Certified Practitioners***.

PURPOSE

This procedure outlines the ACLCA process for handling complaints against individuals that have been certified by ACLCA as Life Cycle Assessment Certified Professionals (LCACPs).

AUTHORSHIP

This document was developed by the ACLCA Certification Management Committee and approved by the ACLCA Executive Committee on 9 January 2008.

PROCEDURE

1. SCOPE

This procedure outlines the ACLCA process for handling complaints that are received in writing by the ACLCA, involving individuals that have been certified by ACLCA as LCACPs including (a) complaints concerning possible violations of the ACLCA Code of Ethics by these practitioners and (b) disputes between certified practitioners.

Complaints against the certification process are not covered by this procedure.

2. DEFINITIONS

Complaint: Any formal expression of dissatisfaction raised with ACLCA in regard to LCACPs that have been certified by ACLCA about actions involving LCA. This may include any activities perceived to be in violation of pertaining to the ACLCA Code of Ethics.

Appeal: Formal review process when a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

3. GENERAL

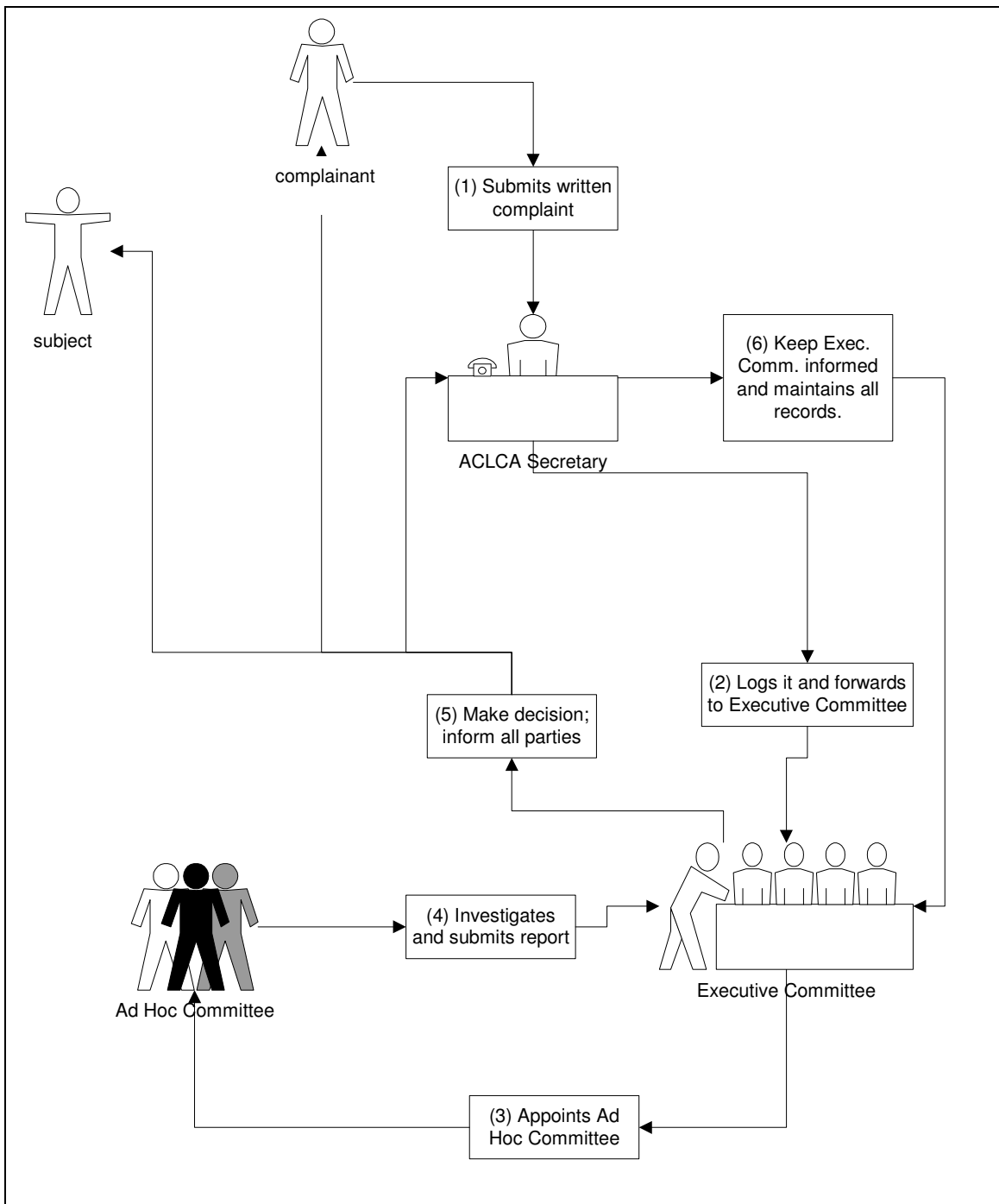
An ACLCA member or any other party who is dissatisfied with any action or decision involving ACLCA certified individuals, has the right to raise the issue. For major complaints (including disputes), the Secretary forwards the issue to the ACLCA Executive Committee for resolution. Alternatively for administrative matters, the ACLCA Secretary, after discussion with the ACLCA Executive Committee, may respond to the party concerned on behalf of ACLCA. In the latter case, a full record of the complaint and response will be made available to the Executive Committee.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

4.1 Maintaining the confidentiality, efficacy and integrity of ACLCA processes is the primary objective when dealing with complaints. The ACLCA Secretary ensures that all ACLCA member organizations and related parties are supported by a fair and effective complaint handling process. The confidentiality, independence and impartiality of all those involved in the complaint is maintained at all times.

4.2 The process for raising and resolving major complaints is as follows:

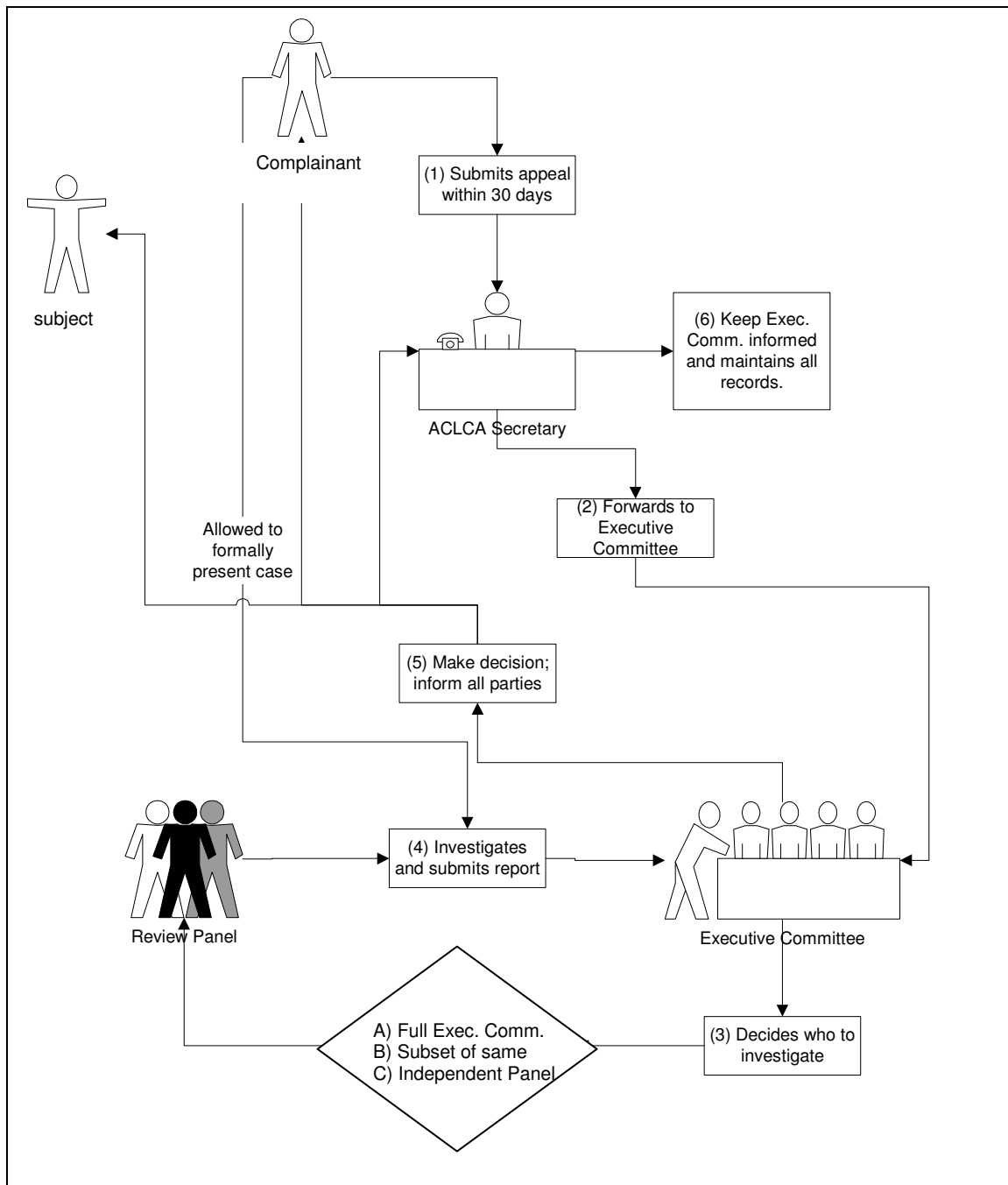
- a) All complaints must be submitted in writing to the ACLCA Secretary before formal investigations proceed. Details of the complaint are logged (a unique number is given, e.g., XX/Year). The ACLCA Secretary forwards the complaint to the ACLCA Executive Committee for review. When a complaint is not formally submitted in writing (e.g. verbal complaint, complaint raised during meetings etc) the complainant is advised of the need to submit the complaint in writing, before action can be taken.
- b) The ACLCA Executive Committee appoints a minimum of two impartial members of the ACLCA and, where appropriate, external experts to investigate the complaint deemed. The team leader of this ad hoc Group must be an Executive Committee member. The appointed members of the ad hoc Group are responsible for reviewing all the reports and documents pertaining to the complaint and ensuring any necessary information is sought from relevant sources.
- c) Upon completion, the team leader of the ad hoc Group is responsible for reporting to the Executive Committee. The team leader provides the Executive Committee with a written report on the findings of the investigation including any recommendations and corrective actions required for the resolution of the complaint.
- d) The Executive Committee considers the ad hoc Group's report and expedites any necessary actions for resolving the complaint.
- e) All parties involved in the complaint are promptly advised in writing of the decision of the Executive Committee. When advising all parties of the decision, information confidentiality of each of the parties involved shall be protected, unless ACLCA has received written permission to release such information to the other parties involved. This should normally be completed within 3-6 months of receipt of the complaint. Complainants are also advised of section 5 of this document if they wish to lodge an appeal.
- f) At each ACLCA Executive meeting the ACLCA Secretary shall provide the Committee with a status of all outstanding complaints.
- g) The ACLCA Secretary shall maintain the following records of all complaints:
 - Members of ad hoc Group;
 - Details of complaint;
 - Investigation documents and report;
 - Decision by Executive Committee;
 - Details of actions taken;
 - Date of resolution and any other comments, as required.



5. APPEALS AGAINST COMPLAINT DECISIONS

If a complainant is not satisfied with the decision, a formal request to review the decision must be lodged in writing to the ACLCA Secretary within 30 days of receipt of the notification. The process is then as follows:

- a. The ACLCA Secretary forwards the appeal documents to the ACLCA Executive Committee.
- b. The Executive Committee decides whether an independent review panel, the full Executive, or a sub-set of the Executive Committee is required to carry out the review.
- c. The Group appointed in (b) is responsible for reviewing the appeal documentation, investigation report and decision. An opportunity for the complainant to formally present their case in a hearing must also be provided. Where the review is by an independent panel or a sub-set of the Executive Committee a recommendation to the Executive Committee must be prepared.
- d. The Executive Committee makes the necessary decisions to close out the appeal and recommends appropriate corrective actions.
- e. All parties involved in the appeal are promptly advised of the findings in writing, including the reasons for the decision(s) reached. When advising all parties of the findings, information confidentiality of each of the parties involved shall be protected, unless ACLCA has received written permission to release such information to the other parties involved. The ACLCA Secretary ensures the necessary action for close out of the appeal is completed. This should normally be completed within 3 months of receipt of the appeal.
- f. At each ACLCA Executive meeting the ACLCA Secretary shall provide the Committee with a status of all outstanding appeals.
- g. The ACLCA Secretary maintains the following records of all formal requests for review of an initial decision on a complaint:
 - Members of review panel;
 - Record of review of appeal documentation as per 5(c) and the recommendation to the Executive where applicable;
 - Decision by Executive Committee;
 - Details of actions taken;
 - Date of close out and any other comments, as required.



6. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

ACLCA considers all complaints as a possible opportunity to improve the services of LCA practitioners and based on closed resolutions, may make periodically recommendations to the Certification Committee for their consideration.