

CONSTITUENT COMPLAINTS

CATEGORY, SCOPE, AND AUTHORITIES		KEY DATES	
Policy category:	Governance	Approval:	October 2013
Functional area:	All areas	Effective:	October 2013
Applies to:	All staff and volunteers	Revision frequency:	Every 5 years
Approval Authority:	Board of Directors	Last review:	Aug 2024
Executive Champion:	CEO	Next review:	2029

I. RATIONALE

Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC) adheres to high standards of quality, transparency, and accountability. We are committed to providing everyone we serve—including program beneficiaries, donors, event participants, and the general public—with a high level of service as we work to achieve our mission. We value comments, suggestions, and complaints from our community about their interactions with our organization. Such feedback contributes to the ongoing improvement of our services and operations.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear, transparent, and structured mechanism for OCC constituents to raise concerns or make formal complaints about any aspect of the organization's operations, services, or conduct.
- Ensure that all formal complaints raised by our constituents are responded to promptly, transparently, and fairly in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy.

III. SCOPE

This policy applies to all OCC staff and volunteers and addresses any types of concerns or complaints from OCC constituents relating to actions for which OCC is responsible.

IV. POLICY DETAILS

1. DEFINITIONS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action by OCC as an organization, or by a staff or volunteer acting on behalf of the organization. Complaints may come from anyone who interacts with OCC, including the general public, donors, program beneficiaries, funders, and others.

A complaint is not:

- A general inquiry or feedback about OCC's work.
- A request for information.
- A contractual dispute.
- A request to issue a tax receipt or to amend records (e.g., to correct an address, cancel a donation, unsubscribe from an OCC service such as a newsletter or email, etc.).

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. Accessibility:** OCC will make it easy and straightforward for its constituents to raise concerns or complaints in a manner that is accessible and accommodating to their needs.
- 2.2. Timeliness and Responsiveness:** OCC will respond to and resolve complaints promptly and effectively, keeping complainants informed throughout the process.
- 2.3. Impartiality:** OCC will handle all complaints with fairness and impartiality. OCC will ensure that complaints are resolved by objective parties without conflicts of interest.
- 2.4. Confidentiality:** OCC will protect the privacy and confidentiality of all parties involved in a complaint unless otherwise required by law. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in resolving the complaint, and sensitive information will be handled with care.
- 2.5. Accountability:** OCC will take responsibility for decisions and actions during the complaint handling process. This includes explaining and documenting the reasoning behind decisions and actions taken in response to complaints.
- 2.6. Continuous Improvement:** OCC will use feedback from the complaint process to improve organizational practices. We will regularly review complaint trends and outcomes to identify areas for improvement.
- 2.7. Mutual Respect:** OCC will foster a culture where constituents feel respected and valued, promoting an environment where individuals are encouraged to provide feedback without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

3. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

OCC has a two-step complaints process:

3.1. Sharing a Concern

Many concerns or informal complaints can be resolved easily and quickly, often at the time they arise, by speaking with your contact at Ovarian Cancer Canada, emailing info@ovariancanada.org or calling 1-877-413-7970 to have your enquiry directed to the appropriate department.

3.2. Making a Formal Complaint

If a problem cannot be resolved in this way or if the person wishes to make a formal written complaint, they may do so by addressing the complaint to the CEO, or if the complaint is about the CEO, to the Chair of the Board. Formal complaints may be submitted

- By email at concerns@ovariancanada.org or plaintes@ovairecanada.org
- By phone at +12893266225, ext 230

4. FORMAL COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- 4.1. Receipt & Acknowledgement:** All formal complaints should be acknowledged within a maximum three (3) working days from their receipt, wherever possible.
- 4.2. Assess and Investigate:** Subject to their nature, each complaint will be handled in accordance with the provisions of this policy and any other relevant policies. OCC will work to resolve the complaint in a timely fashion. Complainants will be kept informed of the status of their complaint and the timeframe for action. Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it will be escalated to the next line of supervision.
- 4.3. Resolution and Appeal:** Once a complaint is considered resolved, the complainant shall be informed accordingly. Complainants will be provided clear and understandable reasons for decisions related to their complaints. If a complaint isn't addressed satisfactorily to the complainant or cannot be resolved for whatever reason, the complainant will be advised of their options to escalate their concern to a more senior staff person.
- 4.4. Record Retention:** All formal complaints received must be recorded. Information about the complaint must include at a minimum the date and description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, the timeframe for resolving the complaint, and a description of the resolution.
- 4.5. Reporting Requirements:** The Leadership Team will receive timely reports about formal complaints received. On an annual basis, the Executive Champion of this policy will submit a complaints report to the Board of Directors. The report shall include—at a minimum—the number of formal complaints in the reporting period, the type and nature of the complaints received, and the status of the complaints.
- 4.6. Exemptions to this Policy**
On certain occasions, OCC may choose not to respond to a complaint. These include:
- When a complaint is about something OCC has no direct connection to or something we are not responsible for.
 - When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint that OCC has already responded to. The complainant will be given escalation points, but we may choose not to reply again and will always inform them of our decision to do this.
 - When a complainant is being abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner.
 - When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
 - When a complaint is illegible.
 - When a complaint has clearly been sent to OCC as part of a bulk mailing or email.
 - OCC will not respond to complaints made anonymously. However, we will investigate the concern and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

V. RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following internal and external documents support the application of this policy:

- a. Procedures, forms, guidelines, and other resources:
 - Complaints process
- b. Related organizational policies
 - Conflict resolution
 - Ethical fundraising and donor accountability
 - Privacy
 - Whistleblower
 - Harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination

DEFINITIONS

Executive Champion: A member of the LT with overall responsibility for an assigned policy including: drafting, carrying out appropriate consultations / assessment, evaluating implications of the policy including risks and costs and seeking legal advice where necessary, developing and carrying out the communication, change management and implementation plan, writing any related procedures, standards or guidelines, monitoring compliance through regular reviews of the policy and reporting to the approval authority on compliance with the policy. The Executive Champion may designate a delegate, who must be named.

Leadership Team (LT): The most senior level of staff leadership within OCC comprised of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Vice-Presidents. The CEO may alter the composition of the LT as required from time to time. One person may hold more than one position. Titles may change at the discretion of the LT or the Board.

POLICY HISTORY

Include a record of all changes to the policy and their approval dates.

Date	Type of review	Comments
2013	Policy development and approval	
2019	Policy review	Board approval of this policy
Aug 2024	Policy review	Moved policy in the new policy template. Added clarity to definition of a complaint (what is not a complaint). Increased clarity and specificity of guiding principles. Added clarity to the formal complaints management process.