



International Society for Sexual Medicine

ISSM Policy on How to Raise a Complaint

Introduction

Membership in the International Society for Sexual Medicine (ISSM) reflects a professional commitment to uphold and advance the Society's mission, values, and bylaws. This document explains how to raise a complaint if a concern arises and provides an overview of the process ISSM follows to review complaints in a fair, confidential, and timely way.

Please refer to the [ISSM Code of Professional Conduct](#) as a supporting document.

ISSM Complaint Reporting Workflow

1. Submission of Complaint

- Complaints must be submitted via email to complaints@issm.info.
- The complaint should include:
 - Complainant identification (optional, but encouraged)
 - Description of events (dates, people involved, context)
 - Supporting evidence, if available
- Confidentiality of the complainant is guaranteed, even if identified.

2. Initial Screening (within 5 business days)

Responsible: Ethics Committee Secretary or designated officer

- Verify:
 - Ethical relevance of the complaint
 - Jurisdiction (Is the accused an ISSM member?)
 - Completeness of the information
- Outcome:
 - If not admissible: case closed with written justification
 - If admissible: move to preliminary investigation

3. Preliminary Investigation (within 30 calendar days)

Responsible: Designated Subcommittee (2–3 members without conflicts of interest)

- Actions:
 - Request additional documents or statements
 - Allow written responses from involved parties
 - Collect evidence (emails, publications, event records, etc.)



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- Maintain impartiality and respect throughout the process.

4. Committee Deliberation and Preliminary Report (within 10 days)

Responsible: Full Ethics Committee

- Confidential discussion of findings
- Possible outcomes:
 - Dismissal for lack of evidence
 - Informal warning
 - Formal disciplinary recommendation (requires Board approval)
- Report includes:
 - Summary of facts
 - Ethical analysis based on the ISSM Code
 - Reasoned recommendation

5. Right to Defense (within 15 calendar days)

- Accused party receives the preliminary report
- Rights:
 - Submit written defense
 - Request a hearing (optional)
- Defense is reviewed fairly and impartially.

6. Final Decision and Submission to ISSM Board (within 10 days)

- Final review of the case with the defense included
- Final report and recommendation submitted to the ISSM Board
- Board decision is final and binding

7. Sanction Implementation (if applicable)

Possible sanctions:

- Formal written warning
- Suspension of membership rights (defined period)
- Termination of ISSM membership (per Bylaws Art. IV, §4.06)
- Notification of involved parties by official communication

8. Recordkeeping and Reporting

- All documentation is securely stored for at least 5 years
- An anonymous summary may be presented to the ISSM Assembly annually



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General Principles

- Confidentiality: guaranteed throughout all stages
- Whistleblower protection: retaliation strictly prohibited
- Impartiality: members with conflicts must recuse themselves
- Timeliness: entire process ideally concluded within 60 days

ISSM Complaint Reporting Workflow Diagram

