

Appeals Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Appeals Policy is to ensure that decisions made by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) or by the Sport Integrity Canada's Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP) or Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada's (SDRCC) safeguarding tribunal are fair, transparent, consistent, and accountable. Drawing on good governance practices, this policy provides a clear, structured process for reviewing organizational decisions when an affected party believes an error has occurred.

Scope

Sport Integrity Canada's CSSP and the SDRCC's safeguarding tribunal governs any discipline or complaints identified under Category 1 of the CFLRI's Discipline and Complaints Policy. The processes and procedures are identified at https://sportintegrity.ca/sites/default/files/content/docs/2026-05/CSSPRules_2025-Final-EN.pdf.

This policy, however, applies to appeals related to **formal decisions** made by CFLRI for Category 2 behaviours identified within the CFLRI's Discipline and Complaints Policy, in the context of its research, knowledge mobilization, funding, partnerships, or programs. It does not apply to appeals to any decision related to the application of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport governed by the CSSP, the SDRCC's Safeguarding Tribunal or any other competent instance within the Abuse-Free Sport program, which shall be handled in accordance with the policies and procedures of the CSSP, as applicable.

Examples of appealable decisions may include:

- Research funding or grant decisions
- Acceptance, rejection, or modification of research proposals
- Decisions related to data access, authorship, or intellectual property
- Eligibility determinations for participation in research projects or initiatives
- Conduct of staff and volunteers
- Decisions affecting formal partnerships or affiliations

This policy does **not** apply to complaints about service quality or general dissatisfaction (see Section entitled "Distinction Between Appeals and Complaints").

Principles

All appeals will be guided by the following principles:

- **Fairness:** All parties are treated respectfully and impartially.
 - **Transparency:** Processes and timelines are clearly communicated.
 - **Timeliness:** Appeals are handled as efficiently as possible.
 - **Confidentiality:** Information is shared only as required to resolve the appeal.
 - **Independence:** Appeals are reviewed by individuals not involved in the original decision.
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Distinction Between Appeals and Complaints

Appeals	Complaints
Challenge a specific decision	Express dissatisfaction with service, conduct, or experience
Based on an alleged error in process, policy, or facts	Based on behaviour, communication, or service quality
Time-limited and formal	Can be informal or formal
Results in confirmation, modification, or reversal of a decision	Results in service improvement, clarification, or corrective action

Complaints are addressed through the organization's **Discipline and Complaints Policy**.

Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be submitted only on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Documentation of a material error in the application of policy or criteria
 2. A significant procedural error that affected the decision
 3. Relevant information was not considered or was misunderstood
 4. A reasonable perception of bias or conflict of interest
 5. Disagreement (e.g., "I believe that there was a material error") where the outcome alone is not sufficient grounds for appeal.
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Appeal Process

Step 1: Submission of Appeal

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within 15 business days of notification of the original decision.
- Appeals must include:
 - Name and contact information of the appellant
 - Identification of the decision being appealed
 - Clear statement of grounds for appeal
 - Any supporting documentation

Step 2: Initial Screening

- The President (or designate) screens the appeal to confirm:
 - It falls within the scope of this policy
 - It meets the grounds for appeal
 - It was submitted within the required timeline
- If the appeal is deemed ineligible, the appellant will be notified in writing with reasons.

Step 3: Appeal Review

- Eligible appeals are reviewed by an **Appeal Panel** of two to three individuals who:
 - Were not involved in the original decision
 - Have relevant expertise and no conflict of interest
- The panel may:
 - Review documentation
 - Request clarification or additional information
 - Consult policies, criteria, or procedures

Step 4: Decision

- The Appeal Panel may:
 - Uphold the original decision
 - Modify the decision
 - Refer the matter back for reconsideration
- The decision is communicated in writing within **20 business days** of the appeal being accepted, where possible.
- If more time is needed in an appeals process beyond the time stated in this policy, a formal extension based on reasonable grounds must be submitted. The request must be submitted in writing, include reasons for the request, and must seek consent from the other party (e.g., Board of Directors or President). The delay request must also not be unreasonable in length, be in the interest of justice, and have merit.

Step 5: Finality

- Appeal decisions are final and binding
 - No further internal appeal is available
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Roles and Responsibilities

- **Appellant:** Submits complete and timely appeal information
 - **President:** Oversees intake and screening
 - **Appeal Panel:** Conducts impartial review and decision-making
 - **Board of Directors:** Provides policy oversight and hears appeals only in exceptional circumstances involving governance matters
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Confidentiality and Records

All appeal materials and decisions will be handled confidentially and retained in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and the organization's records management policies.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the CFLRI Board of Directors, or sooner if required, to ensure alignment with best practices in research governance and the evolving needs of the organization.

Contact

For questions or to report a complaint:
President, CFLRI or Chair, Board of Directors,
Research_recherche at cflri.ca
613-233-5528

Approved by the Board of Directors on: June 25, 2026