



**CIEEM**



Advice Note  
**Members Making  
Complaints  
About Members**



August 2023 ○ [www.cieem.net](http://www.cieem.net)

# Members Making Complaints About Members

---

CIEEM members are expected to play their part in upholding the standards of the profession and challenging poor standards of work. Sometimes that involves making a professional conduct complaint about another CIEEM member. In taking such action, members should be mindful of the impact and implications of making a complaint and consider whether using the professional conduct complaints process is the most effective way to address the concerns. It is certainly not the appropriate method to resolve commercial disputes between members.

We would always encourage a member who is concerned about the conduct or practice of another member to raise the matter informally in the first instance. This is not a requirement but is a courteous and constructive way to resolve differences of opinion. Do not make an approach with the assumption that the member concerned has deliberately produced a poor piece of work or has acted in breach of the Code. An open mind and the premise that there may have been a genuine mistake or that you have access to information that may not have been available to them is more likely to achieve a good outcome for all parties.

If you do feel that you need to make a complaint to CIEEM, do so in a calm and considered manner using non-emotive language and avoiding accusations based on your interpretation or assumptions about their motivations or competence. Professional reputations can be at stake here and an overly aggressive or challenging complaint can trigger an extremely defensive response.

Be sure of your facts. Professional conduct inquiries can be stressful for all parties but are likely to be especially so for the member who is the subject of the complaint. Be conscious that being the subject of a professional conduct complaint can cause both stress and distress for the member concerned. This can be aggravated by overly aggressive or unevidenced allegations.

Both the member concerned and the Professional Standards Committee will expect you to have good evidence to support your complaint and not be relying on hearsay or unjustified opinion. Unfounded allegations with no reasonable basis could result in a counter-complaint.

Respect the confidentiality of the complaints process. All members are considered to be competent and of good character unless and until shown otherwise. Making details of a complaint inquiry public, or even the fact that a complaint has been made, could put you in breach of the Code or, in some cases, at risk of legal action over defamation of character if it is considered that you are trying to bring the member and their work into disrepute.

Of course, sometimes the right thing to do is to make a complaint to CIEEM and in those circumstances we should certainly expect you to do so. However, for the benefit of all concerned, please make sure you do so in a professional manner. You can find out more information to help you prepare your complaint by reading the [FAQs If you are considering making a complaint](#) and the [Professional Conduct Inquiry Procedures](#).



Raising the profile of professional ecological and environmental management and promoting the highest standards of practice for the benefit of nature and society.



CIEEM  
Grosvenor Court  
Ampfield Hill, Ampfield  
Romsey, SO51 9BD

© Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management 2019 | Company Number: RC000861 | Registered Charity (England and Wales): 1189915.