



Complaints Procedure:

Complaints against members

Introduction

1. BIID Registered Interior Designer and Associate members are required to sign up to the BIID Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as 'the Code'). Whilst we demand high standards of professionalism from our members, we recognise that occasionally a member of the Institute may breach the Code. If you feel that one of our members has breached the Code and wish to make a formal complaint, all complaints received are dealt with in accordance with the following procedure.
2. The BIID is a voluntary membership body and the interior design profession is not regulated by the government. As such we only have authority over our members in relation to their membership with us. We have no authority to issue fines, compel a designer to complete a project or prevent an interior designer from practicing. The sole purpose of the BIID Complaints Procedure is to determine whether a breach of the Code has occurred and what the consequences of that breach should be. It has no authority to do any more than that.

Complaints Procedure

Stage 1: Initial complaint

3. The complainant is asked to complete the BIID Complaint Form. In this form we ask for the following information:
 - a. Name of complainant
 - b. Name of BIID member you are making a complaint about
 - c. A short summary of your complaint
 - d. A list of the clauses of the Code you are alleging the designer has breached
 - e. Any relevant evidence
4. We cannot consider any complaint if any legal proceedings are due to be instigated or are ongoing involving the complainant and the designer, or involving the issue which is the subject of the complaint. It is possible that doing so might prejudice those proceedings and the outcomes may also impact on the disciplinary investigation and sanctions. Out of fairness to both parties we will not consider a complaint in this situation and will suspend any proceedings where legal action is subsequently planned or instigated.
5. Email the completed form, alongside any evidence, to the BIID Chief Operating Officer. The Chief Operating Officer acts as the administrator of the complaint and is unable to make any comment as to whether or not the designer may have breached the Code.
6. At this stage, only the Chief Operating Officer, complainant and designer will be aware of the complaint. It is not shared with any other staff members or Directors.
7. A Complaint Review Panel will be convened. This will be comprised of two Registered Interior Designers and one lay member (who is not a BIID member and not an interior designer). All members of the Complaint Review Panel will be required to confirm that they have no conflicts of interest that prevent them from considering the allegation fairly. The Complaint Review Panel will meet online and review the completed Complaint Review form and any submitted evidence. The members of the Complaint Review Panel are asked to consider whether the complaint is within scope for the BIID to consider. Their deliberations will focus on the clauses contained in the Code of Conduct, and the question of whether there is sufficient evidence available or likely to be obtainable to conduct an investigation.

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8. The decision of the Complaint Review Panel will be either that the BIID can consider the complaint, or that it cannot. This decision will be communicated to the complainant. If the Complaint Review Panel has decided the BIID cannot hear the complaint the matter will be concluded there. There is no right to appeal this decision.
9. If the decision of the Complaint Review Panel is that the BIID can hear the complaint, it will move on to the next stage.

Stage 2: Informing the designer

10. The next stage is that the designer will be informed that a complaint has been received against them and that a Complaint Review Panel has decided that the BIID will hear the complaint. They will be sent the complaint form and all accompanying evidence. For reasons of transparency, these will not be edited or redacted. They will be given 28 days to provide a written response to the allegations including any relevant evidence, if they wish to do so.
11. Once the designer has submitted a response to the allegations, the complainant will be given 28 days to provide a written response, if they wish to do so. Once the complainant has submitted their response, the designer will be given 28 days to provide a final response.
12. All submissions will then be compiled together. This document will consist of all the allegations and evidence permitted to be submitted for consideration.

Convening the Enquiry Panel

13. Once all written submissions have been received, an Enquiry Panel will be convened. This will be comprised of two Registered Interior Designers and one lay member (who is not a BIID member and not an interior designer). All members of the Complaint Review Panel will be required to confirm that they have no conflicts of interest that prevent them from considering the allegation fairly. These will not be the same individuals that sat on the Complaint Review Panel.
14. All documents will be sent to the Enquiry Panel for review. They will have the opportunity to ask for additional evidence to be submitted. The complainant and/or designer will then be given 21 days to provide the additional requested evidence.
15. The meeting of the Enquiry Panel will be held in the form of an online meeting. Both the designer and the complainant will be asked to attend, along with any appropriate witnesses. Every effort will be made to find a date convenient for all parties. However, if either the complainant or the designer refuses multiple proposed dates, or refuses to respond, the BIID reserves the right to book a date. If a party does not attend the Enquiry Panel members will review the submitted written evidence.
16. The online meeting of the Enquiry Panel will enable the Enquiry Panel members to ask questions of the designer and complainant. In order to ensure that the process is fair to both parties, no new allegations of breaches of the Code will be permitted to be brought up during the online meeting. Only in the most exceptional circumstances will new evidence be permitted to be introduced during the online meeting. This is because introducing new evidence in the meeting will mean there is not enough time for the Enquiry Panel members or the respondent to properly review and respond to the evidence.
17. The online meeting will be recorded but this recording will only be shared with the Enquiry Panel members and our quality control assessor. The recording will only be used for reference and quality control purposes and will be deleted after 90 days.

Decision of the Enquiry Panel

18. After the Enquiry Panel members have considered all the evidence and heard from both parties (and any witnesses) they will convene to make their decision. The decision will be either that the subject of the complaint has breached the BIID Code of Conduct or not. If the Enquiry Panel decide that a breach has occurred, they will issue either:

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- a. a formal reprimand
- b. continuation of membership on condition that the member undertakes a prescribed amount of mentoring for a set period of time
- c. suspension of membership for set period of time, within which the member is expected to undertake a prescribed amount of mentoring. Upon satisfactory completion of this mentoring, membership will be reinstated.
- d. being removed from membership permanently.

19. Both complainant and designer will be informed of the decision.

Publication of the decision

20. If the complaint is not upheld, details of the complaint will not be shared with anyone else at the Institute. However, a summary of the judgement, with all identifying details redacted, may be published for educational purposes.
21. If the complaint is upheld, a summary of the judgement may be published. In either case, any notes of the Enquiry Panel proceedings made by Enquiry Panel members or the Chief Operating Officer will be for BIID records only and will not be shared with either party.

Appealing a decision

22. After being informed of the decision, the complainant or subject of the complaint may wish to appeal. They can only do so on grounds of new evidence, failure to follow process or manifest injustice of the decision. This request for appeal should be submitted in writing. This request will be submitted for consideration to the BIID President. If the request for an appeal is granted, the BIID Council of Directors will nominate an appropriate external body to hear the appeal.

Additional Notes

23. We are not able to accept anonymous complaints. This is in order to be as fair as possible to the subject of the complaint, to enable them to have as much information as possible in order to defend themselves against the complaint (if they choose to do so).
24. The BIID is sympathetic to any individual involved in the complaints procedure who is suffering from illness or other life circumstances which affects their ability to fully contribute to the process. However, given the significant amount of time and effort involved from all parties, including members of the Enquiry Panel, once a date and time for an Enquiry Panel meeting has been convened, if either the complainant or subject of the complaint is subsequently not able to attend, the meeting will go ahead as planned. The members of the Enquiry Panel will use the evidence previously submitted by the absent party to inform their decision.
25. The decision on whether to invite any witnesses to the Enquiry Panel meeting remains with the Enquiry Panel members. If the complainant or subject of the complaint has submitted a witness statement as part of their evidence, the Enquiry Panel members may ask that witness to attend the Enquiry Panel meeting, if they are able to.

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