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Section du dépôt légal



## Complaints management policy

Approved by the board of directors of the Conseil on October 19, 2005 (RÉS. CA0506A014)

Please submit complaints to:

**Service des plaintes**  
**Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec**  
**500 place d'Armes, 15<sup>e</sup> étage**  
**Montréal (Québec)**  
**H2Y 2W2**

### COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT POLICY OF THE CONSEIL DES ARTS ET DES LETTRES DU QUÉBEC

#### SECTION I – LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

In May 2000, the Québec National Assembly adopted the *Public Administration Act*, which introduces a new management framework in respect of government administration centred on the attainment of results, respect for the principle of transparency, and broader government accountability to the National Assembly.

Pursuant to the Act, government departments and agencies that directly offer services to individuals and businesses must make public a Service Statement that sets out their objectives concerning the level and quality of services.

To comply with the *Public Administration Act*, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (hereinafter called the "Conseil") has adopted a Service Statement stipulating the values and commitments that underpin the quality of its services. The Service Statement must be updated once a year.

To follow up on the commitments made in the Service Statement, the Conseil established in the fall of 2004 a centralized internal complaints management process.

This *Complaints Management Policy* seeks to formalize and structure the Conseil's complaints management process.

#### SECTION II – VALUES

##### The Conseil's values

The Conseil subscribes to the following values, which motivate all of its initiatives aimed at the artistic and literary communities and Québec society as a whole:

- the autonomy and freedom to create of artists and writers;
- the artistic and administrative independence of organizations;
- recognition by peers of artistic merit;
- cooperation with the arts and literary communities;
- the rigour and transparency of methods of attributing financial assistance;
- the efficiency of management processes and the accountability of staff.

##### Values of the Conseil's directors and employees

All of the Conseil's directors and employees adhere to the following basic values:

- competence;
- impartiality;
- integrity;
- loyalty;
- respect.

### SECTION III – OBJECTIVE

This *Complaints Management Policy* is aimed at ensuring prompt, efficient management of complaints submitted to the Conseil. It is also intended to help improve the services offered to Quebecers by enabling the Conseil to detect its weaknesses, remedy problematic or unfair situations, and enhance its operating methods, while ensuring the efficient, fair and respectful treatment of each complaint submitted to it.

### SECTION IV – FIELD OF APPLICATION

The *Complaints Management Policy* applies to all Conseil staff.

### SECTION V – DEFINITIONS

#### **Annual assessment**

The annual assessment assembles information from periodic complaints management reports and opinions and recommendations. It covers the period from April 1 to March 31.

#### **Complaint**

A complaint is the expression in writing of any dissatisfaction with the services that the Conseil offers in the course of fulfilling its mission, except for any request for a review pursuant to the review process pertaining to the Conseil's decisions.

The Conseil's commitments made pursuant to its Service Statement may be subject to complaints from the standpoint of fairness, transparency, respect, accessibility, equality of treatment, quality of internal management, expertise, excellence, diligence and confidentiality.

However, this definition excludes:

- the wording of a response to a request made pursuant to the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*;
- a complaint formulated by a member of the Conseil's staff concerning labour relations or the administration of collective agreements;
- a request subject to judicial proceedings before the courts.

#### **Eligibility**

This *Complaints Management Policy* covers citizens and, in particular, artists and arts organizations.

However, it does not cover members of the Conseil's staff in the exercise of their duties.

#### **Periodic complaints management report**

This document assembles the written complaints received with respect to the Conseil and contains the following information:

- the date of the complaint;
- a summary of the matter of the complaint;
- the division and the artistic discipline concerned;
- the date of the response to the complaint and a summary of the response;
- a summary of any recommendation stemming from the complaint.

### SECTION VI – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### **Quality of services**

The quality of services offered to Quebecers is the Conseil's key concern and the *Complaints Management Policy* must be accessible to everyone.

**Simplicity and diligence**

Complainants must be able to readily communicate in writing their dissatisfaction to any Conseil employee with the assurance that the Conseil will display diligence in giving them a detailed response written in clear, precise language.

**Confidentiality and impartiality**

The Conseil must process all complaints with the same attention in a confidential, diligent and impartial manner regardless of the administrative unit concerned. In accordance with the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information* and in keeping with the Conseil's commitment to confidentiality in respect of its assistance programs, the strictest confidentiality must be displayed with regard to the complainants' identity.

**Transparency**

In order to achieve transparency, the Conseil's annual management report must indicate the objectives that the Conseil has pursued in respect of the processing of complaints and the significant adjustments made, as the case may be, in its operating methods.

**SECTION VII – SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITY****President and CEO**

The President and CEO submits the *Complaints Management Policy* and modifications thereto for the approval of the board of directors and ensures compliance with the policy. He receives from the Secretary of the Conseil the periodic complaints management reports and the annual assessment and the attendant recommendations, makes sure of follow-up to them at the Conseil, and ensures that the appropriate remedial measures are implemented. He also approves the proposed responses to complaints submitted to him by the Secretary.

**Secretary**

In his capacity as the official responsible for the management of complaints, the Secretary of the Conseil coordinates the processing of complaints and ensures proper follow-up to each complaint received.

He acts as an intermediary between the President and CEO and the directors with respect to the handling of complaints. In this capacity, he is the key interlocutor of the Conseil's divisions in the processing of complaints.

As soon as the Secretary is apprised of a complaint, he transmits to the director and the program manager concerned a request in which he specifies the nature of the follow-up to be given to the complaint and the deadline for responding to it.

He submits to the President and CEO for approval proposed responses to written complaints prepared by the divisions and receives from the director a copy of the final version of responses to complaints bearing the signature of the person concerned.

He produces for the President and CEO a periodic complaints management report and an annual assessment that can include opinions and recommendations aimed at enhancing the Conseil's services. The periodic complaints management report is tabled at each board of directors' meeting. The annual assessment is submitted at the first board meeting following the end of the fiscal year.

**Directors**

Each of the Conseil's directors is responsible for handling complaints concerning his division.

The director must display attentiveness and courtesy toward complainants.

As soon as he receives a complaint, the director must promptly inform the Secretary of the Conseil accordingly and send him a copy of the complaint.

At the request of the Secretary of the Conseil, the director must also send him any proposed response to a complaint for examination and comment.

If the director concludes that the complaint cannot be settled at his level, poses a specific problem, is likely to have public repercussions or involves more than one division, the director must inform the Secretary of the Conseil accordingly. The Secretary will coordinate the handling of the complaint at his level.

Each director must ensure that the staff in his unit is familiar with the *Complaints Management Policy* and the attendant procedure.

**Staff**

The Conseil's staff contributes to and collaborates in the administration of the *Complaints Management Policy*.

Staff must display attentiveness and courtesy with respect to complainants and must strive to promptly resolve complaints.

An employee must inform any individual who formulates or wishes to formulate a complaint of the Conseil's *Complaints Management Policy*.

An employee who receives a verbal complaint must inform the complainant that he may express his dissatisfaction in writing and, if need be, offer the individual the necessary assistance to enable him to formulate his complaint, as the case may be. Should the individual refuse to formulate his complaint in writing, the employee must promptly respond verbally to the complaint.

An employee who receives a written complaint must promptly submit it to his director and to the Secretary of the Conseil.

If the employee concludes that the complaint cannot be settled at his level, poses a specific problem, is likely to have public repercussions or involves more than one division of the Conseil, he must promptly inform his director accordingly. The director will determine, in collaboration with the Secretary of the Conseil, the appropriate response.

#### **Management committee**

If, having examined the written complaint and discussed it with the President and CEO and the director concerned, the Secretary of the Conseil believes that it demands more detailed analysis, he submits it to the management committee.

When a complaint is submitted to the management committee, the committee analyses it and recommends the appropriate response in light of the facts and explanations at hand.

If, following the management committee's analysis of the complaint, the President and CEO concludes that the file can be handled internally, the director concerned informs in writing the complainant of the Conseil's decision, bearing in mind the management committee's recommendation, and sends a copy of its response to the Secretary of the Conseil.

#### **Board of directors**

If, following the management committee's analysis of the complaint, the President and CEO concludes that the complaint must be referred to the board of directors, the Secretary of the Conseil submits it to the board accompanied by a recommendation.

As soon as the board of directors receives the complaint and the recommendation accompanying it, the board may immediately hand down a decision on the complaint or, if it deems it necessary, may set up an ad hoc committee made up of board members to investigate the complaint and report on it.

If need be, the ad hoc committee set up by the board of directors analyses the complaint and, after giving the complainant the opportunity to express verbally or in writing his viewpoint, submits a recommendation to the board of directors.

Following its examination of the complaint, the ad hoc committee submits its report at the first board of directors' meeting after its meeting.

Following the submission of the ad hoc committee's report, the board of directors hands down a decision on the complaint and recommends a response to it.

Once the board of directors has handed down a decision on the complaint, the President and CEO informs the complainant of the Conseil's decision and sends a copy of his response to the director concerned and to the Secretary of the Conseil.

### **SECTION VIII – COMING INTO FORCE**

This *Complaints Management Policy* will come into force upon its adoption by the board of directors.