



COMMITTEE ON
PROFESSIONAL
ETHICS

The NATA Ethics Complaint Process

Step by step process of adjudicating an
ethics complaint by the Committee on
Professional Ethics (COPE)

The complaint process is initiated when an ethics complaint is received by the NATA office through the online ethics complaint form or based upon media report(s) or other publicly available sources.

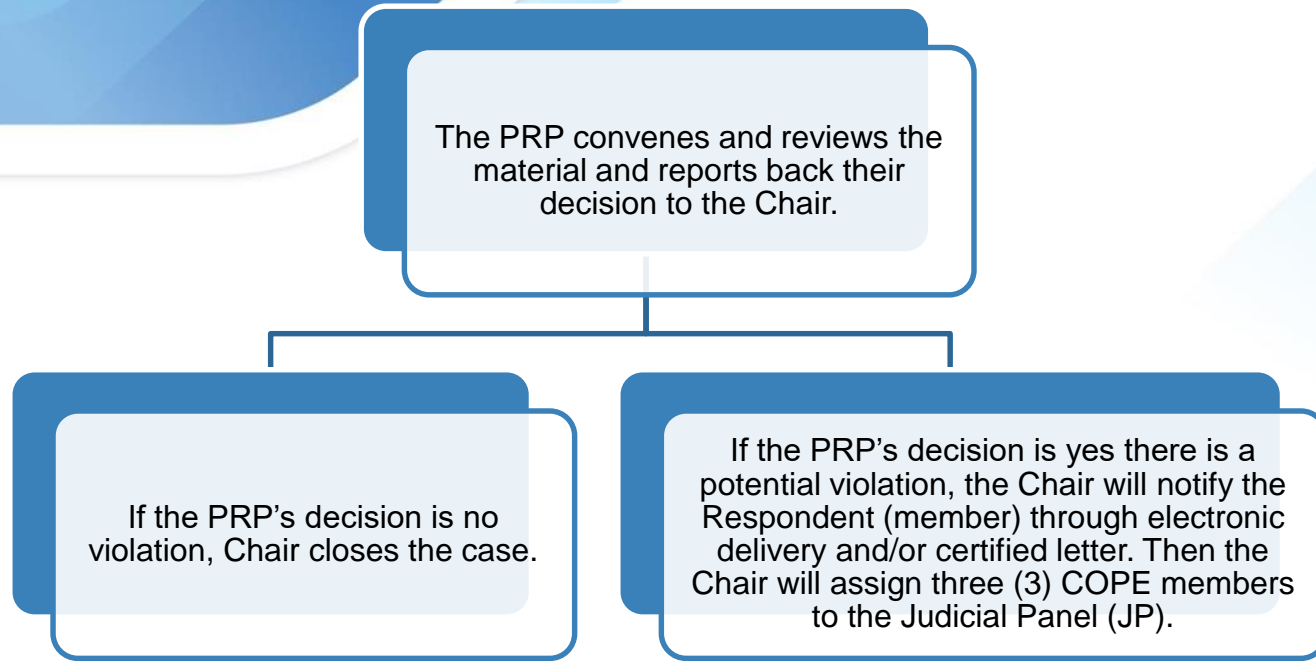
Complaint is sent to the COPE Chair, who will determine if the complaint warrants a Preliminary Review Panel (PRP) assignment

If no, the case is closed.

The case can be reopened, if new or additional evidence comes to light.

If yes, two (2) COPE members are assigned to the PRP by the Chair.

The PRP's responsibility is to review the information provided in the ethics complaint or media report and decide **IF** the allegations were true, would it be a violation of the NATA Code of Ethics and/or NATA Membership Standards.



The JP's responsibility is to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of the allegations.

The investigation may include:

- Collection of additional evidence (ex: police reports, court documents, etc.)
- Interviewing of individuals with personal knowledge
- Interview the Complainant and/or Respondent
- May consult with NATA legal counsel, if determined to be necessary

The JP will convene and adjudicate the allegations. The JP will render its decision to the Chair at the conclusion of the investigation.

If the JP's decision is that the evidence does NOT establish a Code of Ethics and/or Membership Standards violation, no sanctions are applied. Case is closed.

The case can be reopened if new or additional evidence comes to light. .

If the JP's decision is that the preponderance of the evidence establishes that a NATA Code of Ethics and/or Membership Standards violation exists, the JP will assign appropriate sanctions.

The Chair of COPE communicates the decision to the Respondent (member) via electronic delivery and/or certified letter.

The Chair will communicate:

- The Code of Ethics and/or Membership Standards violated
- The facts establishing the violations
- The imposed sanctions
- Other relevant information (ex: the right to appeal, etc.)

Sanctions can include:

All public sanctions are listed on the COPE Disciplinary Action Database and/or NATA News.

Private Reprimand

Public Censure

Ethics Education

Probation of Membership

Loss of Committee Service

Suspension of Membership

Expulsion of Membership

SANCTION DESCRIPTIONS

Private Reprimand

For violations that do not meet the burden of a more severe sanction. The written reprimand is confidential and is not published to the general membership or to the general public. However, the disciplinary action will be listed on the COPE Disciplinary Action Database.

Public Censure

When the COPE determines that a member should be censured publicly, a notice of the disciplinary action will be placed in the NATA News and COPE Disciplinary Action Database, along with a statement of the reasons for the actions. Other “public” censures may involve notification of the district and state regulatory bodies that disciplinary action has been taken. Public Censures will be made public.

Ethics Education

The COPE may impose an Education Requirement as part of the sanctions of reprimand or suspension. Ethics Education will be made public.

Loss of Committee Service

If serving on national or district committees, the COPE may recommend immediate removal from that service opportunity. If membership has been suspended or expelled, they will automatically lose any national or district service position. Loss of Committee Service will be made public

Probation of Membership

Probation is an appropriate sanction to accompany a reprimand or public censure. During a period of probation, a respondent is required to comply with conditions established by the COPE. Probations from the membership will be made public.

Suspension of Membership

Suspends membership due to ethics violations that do not meet the burden of permanent revocation of membership. Suspensions from the membership will be made public. Suspensions are considered temporary for an established amount of time or until a certain criterion is met.

Expulsion of Membership

Expulsion is the most serious sanction involving the revocation of membership. Action would be taken after an investigation and is permanent. Expulsion from the membership will be made public. An expelled individual is not eligible for reinstatement.



If a violation has been found, the Respondent (member) has the right to an appeal.

- Respondent has 10 days to file an appeal to the JP decision.
- Respondent must file a written appeal and include the specific grounds for appeal (as specified in the Complaint Process for Ethical Violations).

If Respondent (member) appeals, the Chair of COPE will assign three (3) Appeals Panel (AP) members.


- AP consists of a NATA Board of Director, a COPE member, and a NATA member at-large.

The AP's responsibility is to review the case records and the grounds the Respondent is appealing.

- The AP may seek additional information or conduct interviews.
- After convening, the AP will render its decision to the COPE Chair.



The decision of the AP is final and binding.



It is the NATA's discretion to notify appropriate state and/or regulatory agencies and/or the Board of Certification, Inc., in cases where sanctions have been levied against a member.

Each case is confidential (unless required otherwise by law).

COPE members are never assigned cases in their own district.

There are 22 members of COPE: one voting member and one at-large member from each district.



COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

**For additional information, please refer to the COPE Procedures
for Processing Complaints of Ethical Violations at:**

<https://www.nata.org/committee-professional-ethics>