

Code of Ethics

1. Purpose

The Forensic and Clinical Toxicology Association (FACTA) is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct, integrity, and scientific practice. This document outlines expected ethical standards of FACTA members and a simple process for managing complaints or concerns.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all FACTA members and to conduct that may impact the reputation of FACTA, the field of forensic and clinical toxicology, or public trust in the profession.

3. Core Principles

FACTA members are expected to maintain the following core principles:

1. Integrity and Honesty

Act honestly and ethically at all times and accurately represent qualifications, experience, and work.

2. Objectivity and Scientific Integrity

Base opinions and conclusions on evidence and sound science, and avoid bias or undue influence.

3. Professional Competence

Work within areas of expertise and maintain professional knowledge and skills.

4. Confidentiality

Respect confidentiality of casework and sensitive information, disclosing only where appropriate.

5. Professional Conduct

Conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring FACTA or the profession into disrepute, including online conduct.

6. Accountability

Be accountable for professional opinions and actions.

7. Compliance

Adhere to relevant laws, regulations, and professional standards.

4. Use of FACTA Membership

Members must only represent themselves as FACTA members while they are current active financial members, and must remove references to FACTA membership if lapsed. They must not imply endorsement by FACTA of any opinions or statements unless authorised by the FACTA President.

5. Complaints Process

Concerns or complaints should be submitted in writing via email to the FACTA President at president@facta.org.au. The President (in consultation with the Board) will:

- Acknowledge receipt
- Determine whether the matter falls within FACTA's scope and relates to a potential breach of this Code

Matters outside FACTA's scope will not be progressed.

6. Assessment Process

FACTA adopts a proportionate and pragmatic approach to complaints.

6.1 Initial Assessment

The President (in consultation with the Board) will determine whether:

- The complaint falls within FACTA's scope
- The complaint relates to a potential breach of this Code
- There is sufficient information to proceed

If the complaint:

- Falls outside FACTA's scope (e.g. personal disputes, unrelated legal matters),
OR
- Lacks sufficient information or merit

then no further action will be taken and the parties will be notified.

6.2 Information Gathering

Where a complaint has potential merit:

- The respondent will be invited to provide a written response
- Additional information may be requested from either party
- The Board may review relevant documentation or evidence

FACTA may pause consideration of a matter if it is subject to active legal or regulatory proceedings.

6.3 Board Review

The FACTA Board will review all available information and determine whether:

- The complaint has no merit → dismissed
- The complaint has merit but requires no further action
- The complaint has merit and requires action

Board members will recuse themselves where there is a conflict of interest.

6.4 Decision Making

Decisions will be made by the FACTA Board, taking into account:

- The available evidence
- The seriousness of the conduct
- The potential impact on FACTA and the profession

Decisions will be made on a majority basis where required.

7. Outcomes

Where appropriate, outcomes may include:

- No action
- Informal resolution or guidance
- Request for corrective action (e.g. removal of misleading claims)
- Written warning
- Temporary suspension of membership
- Termination of membership

The President will notify relevant parties of the outcome.

8. Appeals

There is no formal appeal process. However, the Board may review a decision at its discretion if:

- New information becomes available, or
- There has been a procedural error

9. Confidentiality

All complaints and related information will be handled confidentially and only shared where necessary or required by law.

10. Limitations

FACTA is not a regulatory or investigative body and will only act on matters directly relevant to the Association or the profession.

11. Acceptance

By becoming a FACTA member, individuals agree to adhere to this Code and conduct themselves in accordance with its principles.