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## ACAT ETHICS COMMITTEE

### *Appendix 1 to the ACAT Concerns and Complaints Procedure*

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#### Concerns and Complaints Procedure Appendix 1: Ethics Committee

##### Ethics Committee: Terms of Reference

The ACAT Ethics Committee consists of a group of senior ACAT members and lay persons who oversee the operation of the ACAT Concerns and Complaints Procedure and advises on the ACAT Codes of Ethics and Practice.

The Committee is appointed by the Lay and Clinical Chairs of the Ethics Committee on advice from the Chair of ACAT and the Board of Trustees.

The Lay and Clinical Chairs of the Ethics Committee are appointed by the ACAT Board of Trustees. Both Chairs are members of the Ethics Committee in their different capacities.

The ACAT Ethics Committee consists of at least six members of ACAT and three lay members. Further members of the Committee may be co-opted by the Chairs of the Ethics Committee on advice from the Chair of ACAT and Board of Trustees as needed.

Membership aims to reflect the diverse membership of ACAT and the clients they serve.

The Ethics Committee meets three times a year to review the operation of the Concerns and Complaints Procedure and the Code of Ethics and Practice, and also to advise the Board of Trustees on revisions.

##### Members of the Ethics Committee are required to

1. Have a general interest in the ethics of psychotherapy.
2. Attend the Ethics Committee meetings 3 times a year.
3. As required, in accordance with the ACAT Concerns and Complaints Procedure, take on the role of mediator, investigator or take part in investigating or adjudicating panels, reporting as necessary to the Ethics Committee Chairs.
4. As required, become chair of an investigating or adjudicating panel, reporting as necessary to the Ethics Committee Chairs.
5. As an investigating or adjudicating panel chair, compile a report summarising the outcome and/or recommendations of investigations or adjudications.



## **Skills and experience**

The members of the Ethics committee

1. Should be comfortable with taking a position of responsibility, bearing in mind that decisions taken by the Ethics Committee may have an impact on a clinician's life and livelihood.
2. Have good communication and written skills.
3. Be able to be objective in their judgement and have the capacity to make effective and unbiased engagement with complainants and the subject of the concern or complaint.
4. Lay members may be recruited for particular skills or experience; for instance, they may previously have had a CAT therapy or have experience of the justice system, or of charitable organisations.

## **Application**

Applicants are asked to produce a brief up-to-date CV, stating the reasons for their interest in being part of the ACAT Ethics Committee. Two professional references will be required and the applicant will have a short interview if shortlisted.

## **Tenure and Succession**

1. Tenure
  - a. Each joining member of the committee must agree to commit to a three year term of membership, [unless circumstance intervenes]
  - b. At the end of the three year term each member will be required to confirm whether they wish to renew their position for a further three years, to be voted on by the committee at the meeting following the end of the term.
  - c. From the point of accepting an offer of membership of the committee, each member will be subject to a 6 month term of probation on the committee, to be reviewed by the joint Chairs at the end of said time period.
2. Composition
  - a. The committee will aim to comprise of a maximum of 8 clinical members and 4 lay members, including a lay Chair.
  - b. The committee will ensure where possible that it has a minimum of 2 lay members and four clinical members at all times.
  - c. The committee will review composition on at least an annual basis and consider the length of remaining term of each member and where necessary initiate recruitment.
  - d. The committee will recruit as far as possible in line with ACAT's policy of Equality and Diversity.



### Clinical and Lay Chairs of the Ethics Committee: role description

In consultation with the Chair of ACAT and with the help of ACAT Administration, the Chairs will administer and co-ordinate the ACAT Code of Ethics and Practice, and the Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

#### The Chairs are required to

1. Chair the Ethics Committee meeting three times a year, writing up minutes and following through on actions agreed.
2. Consider initial complaints and, following the provisions of the Concerns and Complaints Procedure, refer for mediation, investigation or adjudication as appropriate.
3. Where required, appoint and instruct investigative and adjudication panels, inform the parties involved, and the Chair of ACAT and the Trustees of the progress of those panels.
4. Report the outcome of (2) and (3) above to the Chair and Trustees of ACAT and the Ethics Committee.
5. In a case where either of the Ethics Chairs takes on one of the above roles, they will report directly to the Chair and Trustees of ACAT.
6. Report annually on complaints and the work of the Ethics Committee to the ACAT AGM.
7. In consultation with the Chair of ACAT, appoint new members to the ACAT Ethics Committee to form part of the pool of members for the investigative and adjudication committees.
8. From time to time arranging for consultation and review of the ACAT Code of Ethics and Practice, and the Concerns and Complaints Procedure for endorsement by the Ethics Committee and Board of Trustees.

#### Skills and experience

##### The Chairs of the Ethics Committee

1. Will be able to be objective in their judgement and have the capacity to make effective and unbiased engagement with complainants and the subject of the concern or complaint.
2. Have excellent interpersonal skills.
3. Have good written skills.
4. Have excellent analytic and decision-making skills.
5. The Lay Chair of the Ethics Committee will have a background of relevant experience, for example in HR work or in law, and/or experience and knowledge of general organisational practice. S/he may seek general advice on CAT procedure and practice from the Clinical Chair of the Ethics Committee, the Chair or Vice-Chair of ACAT, ACAT members of the Ethics Committee, Trustees or from senior members of ACAT suggested by the Chair of ACAT.



6. The Clinical Chair of the Ethics Committee will be an experienced clinician. S/he will have experience of the work of the Ethics Committee and knowledge of ACAT and its structure and committees. His/her role is to liaise with the Lay Chair and facilitate communication with the wider organisation of ACAT. Normally the Clinical Chair is a Trustee of ACAT and will provide information of the work of the Ethics Committee at Trustee meetings.

### **Application**

On application produce an up-to-date CV citing two professional referees who can be contacted, together with a covering letter outlining their interest in this role. Short-listed applicants will be interviewed by the Chair of ACAT and a member of the Ethics Committee.

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*Approved at ACAT's AGM 11 July 2014; updated October 2020; May 2021; June 2023*

*To be reviewed May 2025*