

ETHICS COMPLAINTS FAIRNESS OVER SPEED

People sometimes ask why the ethics complaint process takes so long. The Texas REALTORS® complaint procedures are designed to ensure all parties are treated fairly. Parties have a right to appeal certain decisions and must be given sufficient notice at various steps so they have adequate time to prepare. These procedures extend the timeline, but the ultimate goal is fairness. Here is a step-by-step rundown of the ethics complaint process.

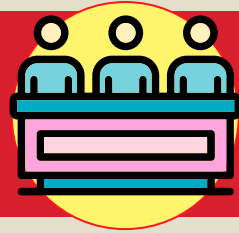
Step 1. Complaint is Filed

When a complaint is filed, the respondent is notified. The complaint must allege violations of one or more articles of the Code of Ethics, and the complainant may submit evidence and documents to support the case.



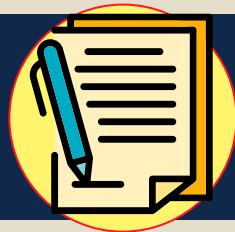
Step 2. Grievance Tribunal

A grievance tribunal (a four-member panel of the Professional Standards Committee) is scheduled within one to two weeks to decide if the ethics complaint should proceed to the next step.



Step 3. Appeal Period

Once the grievance tribunal's decision is made, the parties are notified and given 20 days to appeal the tribunal's decision. If appealed, the matter goes to an appeals panel to uphold the tribunal's decision or overturn it. If there is no appeal, parties are given 15 days to submit their responses.



Step 4. Mediation

Once a response is received, mediation is offered as an option. If mediation is declined or the matter is not resolved, the case is scheduled to be heard by a hearing panel.



Step 5. Hearing

All parties are notified of the hearing information at least 21 days in advance. During the hearing, the parties are given the opportunity to present their cases. A hearing panel's objective is to be fair, unbiased, and impartial to determine whether the facts support a violation of the Code of Ethics.



Step 6. Decision and Appeal

The parties are notified of the hearing panel's decision and given 20 days to appeal.



Ethics Case Timeline

Here is a sample timeline of the ethics process from the day a complaint is filed to its conclusion.*

JAN 1: Complainant files an ethics complaint online. Within a week, a grievance tribunal is scheduled.

JAN 8: A grievance tribunal meets to determine if there was a potential violation—assuming the facts are true—and the parties are notified of the decision. If dismissed, the parties are given 20 days to appeal.

JAN 28: Assuming no appeal, the parties get 15 days to respond.

FEB 12: Mediation is offered to parties as an option.

FEB 22: If mediation is unsuccessful, the complaint is sent to a professional standards hearing panel, where the parties are given due process to present their case.

MARCH 15: The hearing panel is scheduled 21 days later. After all parties have presented their case, a decision is made regarding the matter.

APRIL 4: Parties are given 20 days to appeal the hearing panel's decision.

JANUARY

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*These timeframes are merely an example, assuming there are no delays and no appeals. Arbitration requests follow a similar process with some variations to the steps and timelines.