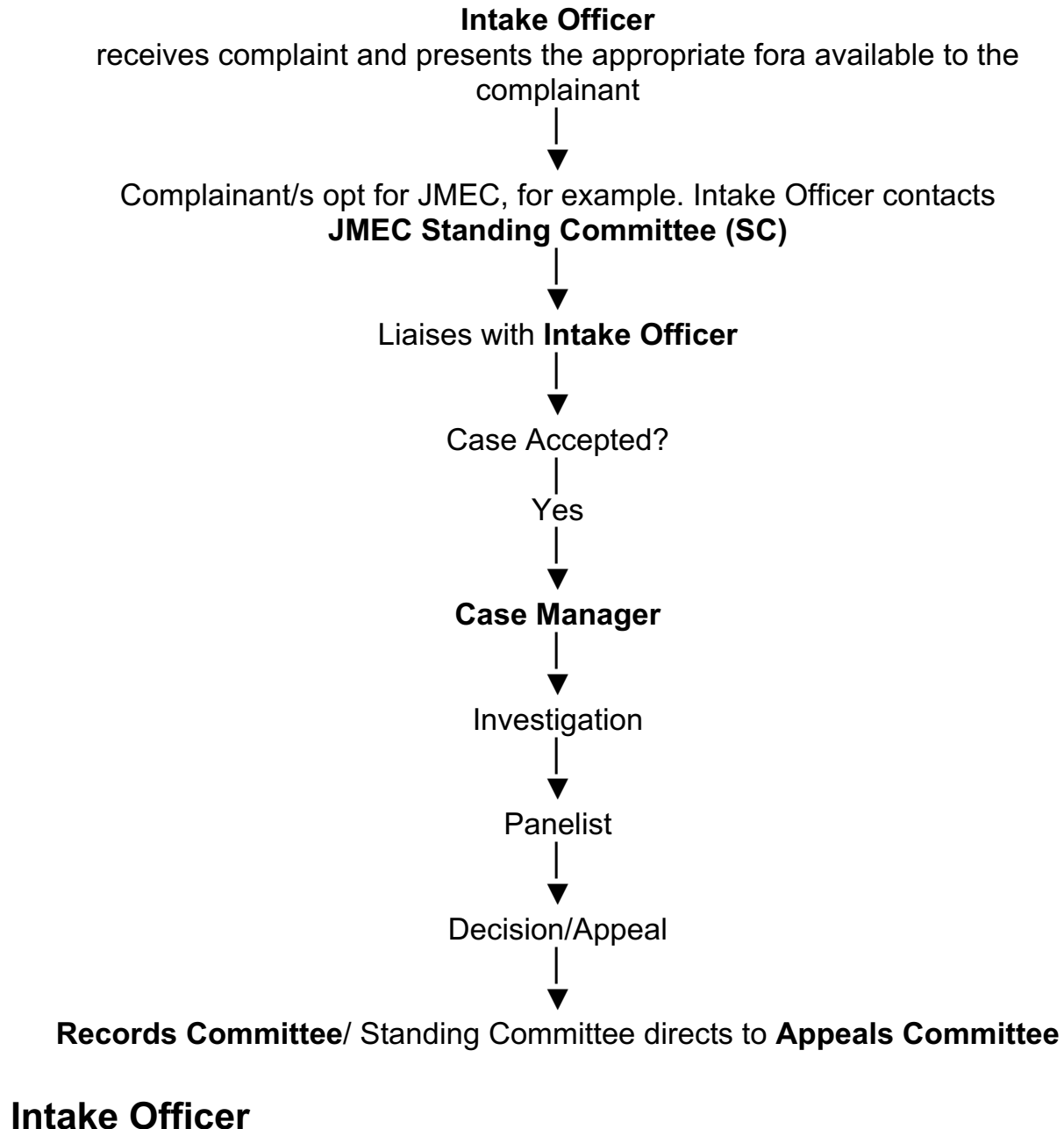


# SYSTEM OF CASE PROCESSING IN EUROPE

Complainant brings complaint before **Intake Officer** responsible for redirection to appropriate forum eg. IR, LMO, JMEC

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The Intake Officer serves as the first point of contact for receiving and assessing complaints, reports, or concerns. This role involves conducting preliminary assessments, documenting information accurately, and referring matters to the appropriate personnel or forum for further action.

### **Intake Officer – Provided by ISKCON Resolve Ombuds**

#### **Skills Required**

1. Impartiality and discretion
2. Strong communication and listening skills
3. Basic knowledge of different avenues and ISKCON Law
4. Organizational skills and attention to detail
5. Sensitivity to diverse cultural backgrounds

#### **Function**

1. Acts as the first point of contact for complaints, concerns, or reports.
  2. Conducts preliminary assessments to determine whether the matter falls within ISKCON's ecclesiastical jurisdiction.
  3. Gathers initial information and clarifies the nature of the complaint or report.
  4. Explains the intake process, confidentiality limits, and next procedural steps to the reporting party.
  5. Documents and triages cases to the appropriate forum.
  6. Identifies immediate risks or urgent concerns requiring escalation.
  7. Maintains records of intake decisions and communications.
  8. Ensures procedural fairness by applying intake criteria consistently.
- Where applicable, parties are informed of the options to pursue both civil and /or criminal action.

- If the matter is sub judice in a secular court, ISKCON will withhold its internal disciplinary proceedings until the court has issued its outcome.

Function	Description
1. Case Intake and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive appeals, complaints, or inquiries formally.</li> <li>• Ensure completeness of submissions and log each case.</li> </ul>
2. Initial Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether the submission falls within a particular jurisdiction.</li> <li>• Check if local remedies have been exhausted.</li> <li>• Verify that the appeal meets procedural requirements (timeliness, relevance, clarity).</li> </ul>
3. Communication and Acknowledgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge receipt of the case to the submitting party.</li> <li>• Explain the next steps in the process.</li> <li>• Clarify any missing or unclear information in the submission.</li> </ul>
4. Redirection and Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redirect case to the appropriate forum.</li> <li>• Maintain a record of redirections and follow up when necessary.</li> </ul>
5. Conflict Screening	Identify any potential conflicts of interest.
6. Liaison and Coordination	Coordinate between the submitting party and relevant forum.

7. Confidentiality and Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle all cases with strict confidentiality, especially those involving personal, ethical, or sensitive allegations.</li> </ul>
8. Recordkeeping and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain accurate records of all intake activity.</li> <li>• Submit regular updates to the Justice Minister - Europe.</li> <li>• Track status of each case and help prevent delays.</li> </ul>

**ISKCON Justice Ministry European  
Committee (JMEC)**

# JMEC System of Case Processing

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## 1. Intake & Preliminary Assessment

Step	Description
Submission Received	Complaint, appeal, or referral received via the Intake Officer.
Jurisdiction Check	Confirm that JMEC has authority to hear the case.
Completeness Check	Verify documentation, dates, identity of parties, and grounds for complaint.
Referral if Needed	If jurisdiction is lacking, redirect to the appropriate agency.

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## 2. Case Assignment by Case Manager

Step	Description
Appointment of Investigator	Case Manager appoints an investigator
Appointment of Case Panel	A neutral panel (eg. 3-5 members out of 5-7) assigned from within the entire JMEC “pool” of panelists. Parties are presented with a list of 5-7 panelists from the available “pool” of panelists and afforded the opportunity to

object to the appointment of anyone contained therein.

Conflict of Interest Check

Panel members must be inquired from and must disclose if any conflict of interest or prior involvement exists.

Notification to Parties

Written notice is sent to the complainant and respondent, including the scope of the investigation.

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### 3. Data Gathering - Investigation

Step	Description
Collection of Evidence	Interview witnesses, gather documents, and contextual information.
Confidentiality Maintained	Sensitive information is handled discreetly, with clear boundaries.
Right to Notice, Respond and Reply	The parties have the right to be notified of the case allegations, respond and submit evidence, as well as avail a right to reply (to the presented response) when necessary.
Witness Interviews	Neutral questioning with attention to spiritual integrity and psychological safety.
Additional Observations	Neutral descriptions of additional facts that may be observed by the investigator

#### 4. Analysis and Deliberation by Panelists (Adjudicators)

Step	Description
Analysing Information	The case manager collates and presents the information gathered by the investigator together with the verification of sources.
Legal and Ethical Evaluation	Panel assesses violations of ISKCON Law, Code of Ethical Behaviour, or sastric principles.
Deliberation	Internal meeting to form conclusions and recommendations.
Consultation (if needed)	In complex cases, consultation with legal advisors, IDRD or ISKCON Justice Ministry.

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#### 5. Decisions and Recommendations by the Panel

Step	Description
Decision	Comprehensive, balanced, and fact-based reasoning.



Sanctions and Reasons

Restrictions, requirements, and/or restorative/reformative measures, if applicable.

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## 6. Communication by the JMEC

Step	Description
Publication/Notification	JMEC Communications formally issues the decision, after checking for the applicability of automatic review etc. eg. where there is a lifetime ban; where the restrictions imposed appear to be <i>prima facie</i> disproportionate to the severity of the offence or does not serve the objectives of restrictions usually imposed in such circumstances; where the requirements imposed are practically impossible to be fulfilled.
Notification to Parties	Written communication is sent to all involved parties (decision includes reasoning and consequences).
Notification to Authorities	JMEC Communications informs the appropriate authorities to implement disciplinary measures.

Right to Appeal

If applicable, parties may appeal to the JMEC Review/Appeals Committee. Where automatic reviews have already occurred, the parties are limited to grounds other than those already dealt with in respect of the restrictions and requirements imposed.

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## 7. Compliance and Monitoring

Step	Description
Follow-Up	Periodic review of compliance.
Review and Modifications	Review and revise the restrictions/requirements, where applicable.
Recordkeeping	All findings and documents securely archived by the Records & Oversight Committee.

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1. **Intake:** Cases are received through the Intake Officer provided by ISKCON Resolve Ombuds and redirected to the JMEC SC when appropriate. When accepted by the SC, the matter is referred to the Case Manager for formal registration and further processing.

### 2. Preliminary Review

- a. Jurisdiction and Admissibility Check: The Case Manager, in consultation with JMEC SC, determines whether the case is within JMEC's jurisdiction and if it is admissible.

- b. Right of Refusal: If the case is outside mandate or inadmissible, the JMEC exercises its right of refusal, providing appropriate communication to the Intake Officer.

### **3. Registration**

- a. The Case Manager formally registers the case, assigns a case number, and notifies relevant parties of receipt.
- b. Documentation is recorded securely in line with confidentiality and data protection standards.

**4. Investigation / Information Gathering:** An investigator is appointed to gather facts, interview relevant parties, and prepare an investigation report.

### **5. Adjudication:**

- a. The Panelists review the investigation findings and determine outcomes, ensuring decisions are fair, consistent, and aligned with ISKCON policies and spiritual principles.
- b. The Panelists communicate with parties via the Case Manager; direct contact is not made unless deemed necessary by a joint decision of the Panelists and Case Manager.
- c. The Panelists may also seek clarifications directly from investigators during this phase.

### **6. Appeals**

- a. Parties may appeal decisions as per the appeals process.
- b. Two-Tier Appeals Review:

Tier 1: Preliminary assessment is made by the Appeals Committee to determine if grounds for appeal are established.

Tier 2: If accepted, an Appeal Panel is appointed by the Appeals Committee, coordinated by the Case Manager, to hear the appeal and issue a final decision.

**7. Decision Communication:** The Case Manager via Communications Committee communicates final decisions to all relevant parties.

## **8. Record Management**

- a. All case documents, communications, decisions, and appeals are securely recorded and maintained for accountability and institutional learning.
- b. The Records and Oversight Committee is notified by the Case Manager of cases as required, including when a matter is sub judice for appeal.

## **Notes**

- The Case Manager (administrative) acts as the conduit and will approach the parties directly.
- The Panelists may interview investigators and obtain information as needed.
- The Panelists are more actively involved towards the tail end of the process and communicate with the parties through the Case Manager.
- There is no direct communication between the Parties and the Panelists prior to adjudication.
- Panelists are not disclosed to the Parties, and any questions are routed through the Investigators.

## Purpose

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### **The Justice Ministry European Committee (JMEC)**

1. The Justice Ministry European Committee (JMEC) is entrusted with the responsibility of upholding and administering justice within the ISKCON European region, as delegated by the ISKCON Euro Regional Governing Body (RGB).
2. It serves as one of the grievance redressal and adjudication bodies within the judicial framework of ISKCON Europe, as authorized by the ISKCON Euro Regional Governing Body (RGB).
3. Its primary function is not to act as a court of first instance, but rather to oversee, guide, and ensure the proper administration of justice by local and regional ISKCON authorities, particularly in complex or escalated cases.

## General Duties

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### **1. Hearing Appeals of Managerial Decisions**

Reviewing appeals submitted against decisions made by local or regional ISKCON justice mechanisms, ensuring procedural fairness, consistency with ISKCON Law, and alignment with Vaishnava principles.

### **2. Ensuring Due Process**

Evaluating whether appropriate due process has been followed in previous decisions, and recommending action where violations of process or justice have occurred.

### **3. Providing Judicial Oversight**

Monitoring and guiding the local temple/centre adjudication methods within ISKCON Europe to maintain coherence with global ISKCON legal standards and

the ethos of spiritual justice, either on its own accord or when specifically requested.

#### **4. Training and Education**

Providing training approved by the global ISKCON Justice Ministry; guidance and recommendations to local ISKCON leadership, temple managements, and the Euro RGB on matters of justice, ethics, and conflict resolution.

#### **5. Promoting Uniformity and Accountability**

- a. Encouraging consistency in judicial practices across European ISKCON communities, supporting capacity-building among the local temple/ centre management, and maintaining records of appeals and redirections.
- b. Maintaining records, reporting to the ISKCON Justice Ministry, and operating with a commitment to transparency, integrity, and confidentiality as appropriate.

## **Core Functions**

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#### **1. Final Appeal Authority**

JMEC serves as the highest appellate body within ISKCON Europe, for judicial matters that have already been heard and decided by local or regional ISKCON justice bodies. It is therefore important that the local remedies have been exhausted or sought and used.

- a. Provided that the exact case and remedy being sought after are also not sub-judice in a secular court.
- b. In case of parallel or concurrent jurisdiction, the applicant shall have to ascertain one forum to submit under, to avoid forum-shopping.

Responsibilities:

- a. Hear appeals where all lower avenues of adjudication have been exhausted.
- b. Review the fairness, legality, and spiritual soundness of decisions made at the local or regional level.
- c. Affirm, overturn, or modify prior judgments as warranted.
- d. Ensure that Vaishnava principles, ISKCON Law, and due process have been upheld.
- e. Provide written rulings that establish precedent or clarify legal standards when needed.

## **2. Education and Capacity Building**

JMEC is responsible for educating ISKCON leaders, managers and the devotee community about internal legal systems, ethical standards, and principles of justice.

### Responsibilities:

- a. Develop and deliver structured training programs for temple councils and zonal bodies.
- b. Educate the general devotee community on their rights, responsibilities, and proper procedures for dispute resolution.
- c. Promote awareness of ISKCON Law.
- d. Provide guidance materials, policy manuals, and procedural templates to ensure consistency across Europe.

## **3. Review and Oversight of Lower Adjudication**

JMEC conducts oversight and quality control of adjudicatory processes handled by local and regional ISKCON justice structures.

Responsibilities:

- a. Periodically review rulings and procedures from lower bodies to ensure compliance with ISKCON Law and ethical standards.
- b. Offer guidance and feedback to local bodies to improve the integrity and competence of their justice mechanisms.
- c. Step in as a review authority when local mechanisms are conflicted, inactive, or compromised.
- d. JMEC's review function safeguards coherence, prevents abuse of authority, and strengthens institutional justice capacity across zones.



## Committees Under the JMEC

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- **Standing Committee**
- **Appeals Committee**
- **Education & Advisory Committee**
- **Records & Oversight of Adjudication Committee**
- **Communications Committee**
- **Finance Committee**

## Standing Committee

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The Standing Committee (SC) of the Justice Ministry European Committee (JMEC) is a permanent body established to support the Ministry in fulfilling its mandate of upholding and administering justice within ISKCON Europe.

- a. It shall comprise of three-five members recommended by the Euro RGB and endorsed by the ISKCON Justice Ministry.
- b. Chairperson of the Committee shall automatically become the Justice Minister for Europe and in effect, the local representative of the (International) Justice Ministry.

### Purpose:

1. To provide continuity, oversight, and strategic guidance in the administration of justice matters handled by the JMEC.
2. To ensure that justice processes and decisions remain consistent with ISKCON's global policies, European governance standards, and spiritual principles.
3. To assist in policy formulation, review, and implementation within the JMEC's scope.

4. To support the Appeals Body function by reviewing procedural adherence and advising on complex or escalated cases as required.

Responsibilities:

1. Oversee ongoing justice-related initiatives and matters within the JMEC mandate.
2. Review and recommend updates to policies, procedures, and operational guidelines.
3. Provide strategic input to ensure fair, consistent, and effective justice administration across the region.
4. Coordinate with the ISKCON Euro RGB and local committees for alignment and accountability.
5. Uphold ISKCON's values of fairness, compassion, and integrity in all aspects of justice administration.
6. To liaise with the Intake Officer as a first contact and when appropriate delegate case to a Case Manager, who is responsible for further appointing investigators to the case and an adjudication panel.

## **Appeals Committee**

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Purpose: To manage appeals submitted against decisions made by the Panel.

Process: Two-Tier Approach

1. Preliminary Assessment: Determine whether the grounds for appeal are established and if the appeal is admissible.
2. Appeal Panel Appointment: If the appeal is admissible, appoint an Appeal Panel to hear and decide the matter. The Case Manager will coordinate all processes with the Appeal Panel.

Responsibilities:

1. Review and manage all appeal submissions.

2. Conduct preliminary assessments to determine admissibility.
3. Appoint and coordinate with the Appeal Panel through the Case Manager.
4. Inform the Records Committee when a matter is sub judice for appeal.
5. The Correspondence Secretary will handle all communications related to the appeals process.

Note: The original decision remains in effect unless the appellant demonstrates extenuating circumstances that warrant a temporary stay pending the outcome of the Appeal Panel's decision.

## **Education & Advisory Committee**

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Purpose: Serve in a consultative role for the broader ISKCON community in Europe. As well as offer advisory opinions to ISKCON Europe leaders upon request.

Responsibilities: Conduct workshops or seminars on ISKCON justice and conflict resolution.

## **Records & Oversight (of Adjudication)**

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Purpose: Maintain documentation and ensures transparency and accountability

Responsibilities:

1. Automatic review of decisions made by the Panelists (without requiring a prior appeal or application by the affected party. It ensures that serious or impactful decisions are checked for errors, bias, or misapplication before being enforced).
2. Archive appeals and redirection decisions
3. Prepare annual reports
4. Audit the performance and consistency decisions of the JMEC

## Communications Committee

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Purpose: Responsible for managing and overseeing all communications related to the JMEC's activities. This includes ensuring clarity, consistency, and confidentiality in internal and external communications to uphold the credibility and integrity of JMEC within ISKCON Europe.

Responsibilities:

1. Draft, review, and disseminate official statements, notices, and decisions issued by JMEC Standing Committee.
2. Manage communication with parties involved in justice processes, ensuring clarity and respect in all correspondence.
3. Liaise with ISKCON's regional and global communication bodies to ensure consistency of communication where required.
4. Maintain records of communications in accordance with confidentiality and data protection standards.

## Finance Committee

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Purpose:

1. To provide financial oversight and ensure prudent management of JMEC's resources.
2. To support effective budgeting, expenditure monitoring, and financial reporting.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop and recommend annual budgets for approval by the JMEC SC and Euro RGB.
2. Monitor and review financial performance against approved budgets.
3. Review and approve expenditures within delegated authority levels.

4. Ensure proper financial controls, documentation, and record-keeping are maintained.
5. Prepare and present periodic financial reports to the JMEC Standing Committee and the ISKCON Euro Regional Governing Body (RGB) as required.
6. Advise the JMEC SC on financial policies, sustainability, and risk management.

## Right of Refusal

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The Right of Refusal refers to the authority to decline to hear or accept a case or appeal redirected by the Intake Officer, under certain circumstances. This right ensures that the JMEC operates within its mandate, capacity, and intended scope.

Ground	Explanation
1. Lack of Jurisdiction	The matter does not fall under the scope of JMEC (e.g., it is purely spiritual, doctrinal, or outside Europe).
2. Local Remedies Not Exhausted	The complainant has not first pursued resolution through appropriate local or regional ISKCON channels.
3. Procedural Non-Compliance	The submission lacks key documentation, is unclear, or does not meet required filing procedures.
4. Frivolous or Malicious Claims	The case appears to be insincere, retaliatory, or intended to defame or harass another party.
5. Previously Resolved Matters	The issue has already been adjudicated by a competent ISKCON authority and no new evidence has emerged.

6. Pending Legal Proceedings	The case is currently under investigation or litigation in civil or criminal court, and parallel review would be inappropriate.
7. Conflict with ISKCON Law or Mission	The requested action would violate ISKCON Law or undermine the unity, principles, or reputation of ISKCON.
8. Anonymous or Unsupported Submissions	Complaints made without adequate identity, evidence, or willingness to engage in the process may be declined.

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## Notes

- The Right of Refusal must not be used to silence valid concerns, especially those involving misconduct, abuse, or gross injustice.
- Where possible, JMEC should redirect rather than outright reject a submission.
- Complainants retain the right to resubmit after addressing the grounds for refusal (e.g., exhausting local remedies or providing additional documentation).

## Grounds for Review or Appeal

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- **Procedural Error:** Significant failure to follow proper process that affected the outcome.
- **New Evidence:** Relevant evidence that was not available during the original investigation or adjudication and could materially affect the decision.
- **Disproportionate Outcome:** The accountability measure or sanction imposed is excessively severe or lenient in relation to the facts.
- **Bias or Conflict of Interest:** Evidence that the original decision-makers had a bias or conflict of interest affecting fairness.
- **Misinterpretation of Policy or Facts:** The decision was based on a clear misunderstanding or misapplication of ISKCON policies or factual evidence.

# Case Managers

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**Reports To:** Justice Minister Europe

Purpose of the Role: To manage grievance and justice processes within ISKCON with fairness, integrity, and efficiency, ensuring alignment with ISKCON policies, scriptural principles, and ethical standards.

Responsibilities:

1. Delegate individual grievance or cases to the appropriate investigators and adjudication panel
2. Serve as liaison between complainants, respondents, and panels
3. Ensure adherence to procedural timelines
4. Maintain confidentiality and reporting standards
5. Provide updates to the Standing Committee
6. Data Collection and Transparent communication of all documents to the panel
7. Communicate clearly and empathetically with all parties involved.
8. Uphold ISKCON's Code of Ethical Behavior and promote justice procedures in line with scriptural principles.

Basic Qualifications:

1. Initiated devotee in good standing, respected for integrity, fairness, and cooperative spirit with ISKCON authorities.
2. Knowledge of ISKCON policies and justice procedures.
3. Impartial, with no conflict of interest in cases handled.
4. Trained in grievance processes, mediation, or adjudication.
5. Strong communication and analytical skills.
6. Maintains confidentiality and discretion in all matters.



7. Knowledge of relevant scriptural principles.
8. Completed required training by the Justice Ministry (JM) or other agencies approved by it.

**Personal and Leadership Qualifications:**

- Mature and objective.
- Self-motivated and well-organized.
- Able to manage teams effectively.
- Efficient delegator.
- Good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Understands and upholds ISKCON's moral standards and ethical requirements of leadership.

**Notes**

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- Actively recruited and proposed by the Euro RGB
- Review of candidate suitability, conflict of interest, and previous involvement with either party in the case.
- Approval by Justice Minister – Europe
- Formal notification issued to the Case Manager outlining:
  - Specific case assignment
  - Expectations
  - Reporting structure and timeline
- Confidentiality agreement

<b>Role</b>	<b>Main Function</b>	<b>Key Outputs</b>	<b>Reports to</b>
<b>Case Manager</b>	Process coordination	Updates, procedural compliance, logs	JMEC SC
<b>Investigator</b>	Fact finding	Investigation report (facts only)	Case Manager
<b>Panelist</b>	Decision making	Final decision report, sanctions, remedies	Case Manager

## Notes

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### Offences and Consequences in ISKCON Europe

Category	Example Offences	Potential Consequences
Spiritual Misconduct	- Misrepresenting siddhānta- Claiming unauthorized spiritual authority	- Public correction or clarification- Restriction from teaching/preaching roles- Supervision by senior mentors
Moral or Ethical Misconduct	- Adultery- Sexual misconduct- Intoxication (alcohol, drugs)	- Temporary or permanent removal from leadership/service- Counseling or rehabilitation- Community notification
Abuse of Authority	- Bullying or manipulation of junior devotees- Nepotism or favoritism	- Loss of managerial position- Public apology or corrective service- Ethics training
Financial Misconduct	- Embezzlement- Unauthorized use of temple funds- Lack of transparency	- Restitution of funds- Audit and investigation- Suspension or removal from financial roles
Violation of ISKCON Law	- Contravention of GBC resolutions- Operating outside ISKCON structure	- Official warning or reprimand- Loss of recognition or affiliation- Review by Euro RGB or GBC
Criminal Activity (Civil Law)	- Theft- Physical assault- Harassment- Fraud	- Immediate suspension pending investigation- Mandatory reporting

		to legal authorities- Expulsion if proven
Harassment or Disrespect	- Verbal abuse- Disrespect toward women, elders, or other groups	- Mediation and apology- Ethics training- Temporary restriction from community roles
Disruption of Community Harmony	- Spreading false rumors- Sectarian behavior- Publicly insulting devotees	- Mediation or facilitated dialogue- Restrictions on temple access or speech- Counseling or guidance
Neglect of Duty or Incompetence	- Repeated managerial failure- Mishandling of sensitive cases	- Supervision or reassignment- Training and capacity-building- Formal warning
Obstruction of Justice	- Interfering with investigations- Intimidating witnesses- Withholding evidence	- Immediate removal from case-related roles- Sanctions or legal escalation- Review by oversight committee

## Considerations in imposing Sanctions/Restrictions/Requirements

- **Nature and seriousness** of the misconduct.
- **Intent** (deliberate, negligent, reckless, or accidental).
- **Personal circumstances** of the parties
- **Impact on complainants** or the community.
- **Prior conduct history** or previous disciplinary actions.
- **Acceptance of responsibility** and willingness to rectify behavior.
- **Mitigating factors** (e.g. health, external pressures).
- **Aggravating factors** (e.g. abuse of power, repeated offences).

## **Double Jeopardy**

An individual shall not be subjected to a second adjudication by a Panel for the same alleged act complained of, and relating to the same parties, once a final decision has been rendered, unless specific exceptions apply.

For the purpose of this provision, “same offense” shall include:

- The same alleged act(s) against the same person(s),
- Arising from the same factual circumstances or time period

### Exceptions

A. Substantial New Evidence: Tangible, previously unavailable evidence emerges that could reasonably alter the outcome of the original decision.

B. Approval by Committee: The Appeals and Records & Oversight Committee must approve the reopening of the case by unanimous vote.

## **Presumption of Innocence**

Every individual accused of misconduct within ISKCON shall be presumed innocent unless and until they are found responsible through a fair and impartial adjudicatory process conducted under the standards set by the ISKCON Ministry of Justice.