



2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CSIA OMBUDS OFFICE

Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance



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2024 Annual Report – CSIA Ombuds Office

Introduction

We are pleased to share the Annual Report for the CSIA Ombuds Office (CSIA Ombuds) for January 1 to December 31, 2024.

CSIA took significant steps this year to simplify key policies and streamline and strengthen internal complaints processes, both formal and informal. Importantly, the [Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance \(CSIA\) Code of Conduct and Resolution Process](#) was approved by the Board on October 8, 2024.

We want to acknowledge the commitment and significant work of CSIA leadership, board members, and staff over the past year toward effective complaint management. We can see that the paths ahead are much clearer, and we look forward to continuing to advocate for fair conditions for CSIA and the skiing community in 2025.

This report contains statistics about who used the office, an overview of the work that we did in the past year, and our insights and recommendations. To protect confidentiality of visitors, the data has been aggregated and our conclusions generalized. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you for putting your trust in our ombuds team.

Heather, Julie, & Brent
February 4, 2025

About the CSIA Ombuds Office

The CSIA Ombuds is an independent office staffed by [JustEquitable](#) and funded by CSIA. The office is:

- **Confidential** – Information will not be shared with CSIA without permission¹
- **Impartial** – Ombuds are advocates for fairness, not for individuals or the organization
- **Bilingual** - Services are available in French and English

Find out more about the CSIA Ombuds on [our website](#), or contact us by:

- **Webform:** [Click here](#)
- **Telephone:** 1-800-811-6428 ext.113
- **Email:** csiaamscombuds@snowpro.com

The fairness triangle (right) illustrates the role of an ombuds.

Ombuds (also known as ombudsman, ombud, ombudspersons) work to ensure an organizations' decisions, processes, and services are fair and equitable.

Ombuds help to resolve individual issues and proactively identify areas for systemic improvement, including changes in policies and procedures.



The CSIA Ombuds can:

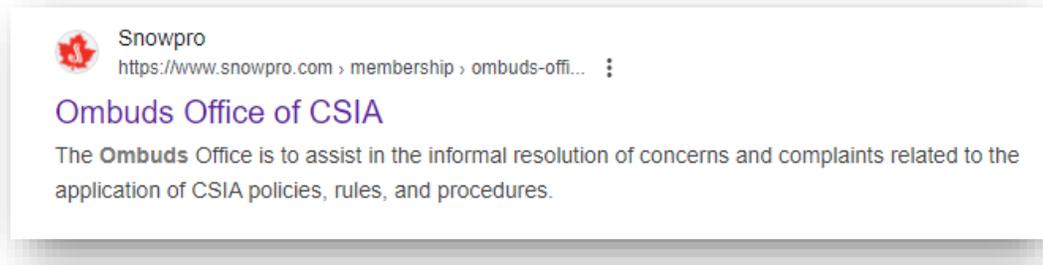
- Help to resolve issues informally through consultation, facilitation, mediation, shuttle diplomacy or other appropriate dispute resolution (ADR) tools
- Help you understand your options, including making a formal complaint to CSIA
- Intervene and/or investigate if there are concerns about a CSIA process or decision and make recommendations.

Members of the CSIA community can reach out to the Ombuds for a confidential discussion at any time – we are here to help!

¹ There are limits to confidentiality; we may be required to share information if there are immediate safety concerns, or we are required to disclose by law.

CSIA Ombuds activities in 2024

CSIA launched its new CSIA Ombuds Office in March 2024. The office worked with CSIA to develop a distinct webpage ([CSIA Ombuds Office](#)) and a confidential Google intake form for complaints. The office began consulting on cases immediately.



In April 2024, the office began a review CSIA policies and processes, for the purpose of making recommendations to ensure fairness and efficiency. This resulted in the development of a new [Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance \(CSIA\) Code of Conduct and Resolution Process](#). The policy clearly outlines expectations of members of the CSIA community and the informal and formal processes that are available if there are concerns that members are not meeting these expectations.

 <p>Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance (CSIA) Code of Conduct and Resolution Process</p> <p>Policy Owner: Managing Director Policy Operator: CSIA Complaint Officer; CSIA Ombuds Office & CSIA Management Policy Approver: National Board of Directors Approved: October 8, 2024 Effective: November 1, 2024 Next Review Date: November 1, 2025</p>			
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In terms of outreach in 2024, the office provided training on the new complaints resolution process and fair complaints handling to the new CSIA Complaints Officers, staff and leadership in December 2024 and planned for a bilingual session for members in January 2025. We also provided content for the CSIA Communiqué.



In 2025, we look forward to continuing to work with CSIA to provide more training and information to members and staff about fair complaints-handling. We will continue to do outreach to members, including sharing information about how to manage concerns on the CSIA Ombuds Office website, and in Communiqué to members.

We invite feedback about the Ombuds service and about the new Code of Conduct and Resolution Process. You can reach out to us directly by email: csiaamscombuds@snowpro.com or to the CSIA Managing Director by email: nloring@snowpro.com.

Visitors / Consults – year in review



What issues were raised with the CSIA Ombuds?

In addition to the twelve (12) individuals who contacted our office directly (by webform, email, or phone) or who we contacted because of a direct referral from CSIA (we refer to these individuals as “visitors”), we also had conversations with CSIA staff about individual complaints brought to their attention. Often, we had multiple conversations with visitors or with CSIA staff about their concerns and options for moving the issues forward to resolution.

It is premature to say whether this volume of visitors / consults will be typical for CSIA; it is common in the first year of an ombuds service for pre-existing concerns to be brought forward for review, which might increase initial numbers. We will continue to monitor this for the organization.

All the visitors we spoke with in 2024 raised issues that fell under CSIA policies and were matters that CSIA could appropriately review and respond to. We note that some events took place at ski resorts (where the employment relationship is relevant) or had been taking place over time - months or years.

We observed that there were often **multiple issues** raised by the visitor, and they did not all wish to proceed formally with all concerns, or at all. In addition, we observed that some concerns related to the **same CSIA member**, or the visitor was looking to support a formal complaint brought by another person. Word-of-mouth about the CSIA Ombuds office as a place to confidentially discuss concerns may be a factor in 2024 volumes.

Were there any themes that emerged from the issues?

The most significant theme was **inappropriate behaviours of members**, including abuse, harassment, bullying, or inappropriately sexualized behaviours. Secondary themes included: work under the table, concerns about evaluation during courses, or obtaining designations. These themes are not surprising based on what CSIA had advised were typical types of complaints in the past.

How did the CSIA Ombuds help visitors in 2024?

In most cases we offered and/or provided several forms of assistance, including:



- Listening and providing a non-judgemental space to discuss concerns.
- Offering to mediate an interpersonal issue.



- Providing information about CSIA's complaint process, informal and formal options, and links to policies and procedures.
- Exploring options for addressing concerns and helping the visitor weigh options.



- Helping the visitor to articulate their concerns and/or submit a formal complaint.



- Discussions with CSIA staff about responding to concerns fairly
- Reviewing final decisions of CSIA.

What were the outcomes of the matters brought to the CSIA Ombuds in 2024?



One (1) matter remains **OPEN**.



Eleven (11) matters were **CLOSED**, with the following outcomes:

- 1 Ombuds review of CSIA decision – no unfairness found
- 2 Visitors withdrew or did not want to proceed with their complaint
- 4 Visitors said they would follow up with the Ombuds after considering their options or taking action, but have not done so
- 4 Visitors indicated they wanted to file formal complaints with CSIA

For visitors who said they would follow up with the Ombuds but did not do so, if they return to the office, we will provide further information and assistance.

We are aware that a number of formal complaints are currently in progress with CSIA, and we will provide **support and monitor timelines in 2025** to ensure fairness of the CSIA processes.

While we are not able to share complaint stories, because of the need to protect visitors' confidentiality, we felt it would be helpful to include fictional case study that highlights the type of concern that might be brought to the Ombuds, and the actions that we would likely take in response.

Alex contacted the Ombuds about an instructor that they had had for a Level 1 class last winter at a resort in Ontario. Alex said the instructor *“made them feel uncomfortable”* because the instructor was making sexualized side comments about other skiers and instructors, on and off the hill. Alex told us that after having had time to think about it, they wanted to bring forward a complaint because *“this isn’t how ski instructors should be acting in 2024”*.

We listened and asked Alex open-ended questions to understand their concerns, what they had done to try to resolve the issue, and what they were looking for in terms of outcomes.

Alex said they had contacted the resort manager, since the instructor is working there this winter, and they said they would *“look into it”*. Alex said they wanted to make sure the instructor was required to have *“sensitivity training”* and a warning about their behaviour. Alex mentioned wanting CSIA to take this seriously.



We discussed the CSIA Code of Conduct and the formal complaint process and shared with Alex the link to the policy. We emphasized that CSIA takes complaints and issues of instructor conduct seriously. We offered to facilitate an informal conversation between Alex and the instructor, and Alex said they were not interested. We explained how Alex would make a formal complaint and the possible sanctions for a member at the end of the process. Alex said they would think about that, but what else might be possible?

We advised that in 2024, CSIA required course conductors and staff to attend a respectful workplaces session, and we offered to contact CSIA to inquire about any other training (mandatory or optional) that Level 3 instructors receive, and future initiatives around appropriate instructor behaviour. Alex was interested in this option. We also spent time discussing how Alex might follow up with the resort manager, and what the resort might be able to do as the instructor’s employer. We told Alex we would let them know what we found out after talking to CSIA about the instructor training. Alex thanked us for listening, and indicated they would follow up with the resort and let us know if they needed further assistance.

CSIA Ombuds 2024 Recommendations

Prior to finalizing this report, we met with CSIA management about our findings and recommendations, and they expressed their commitment to working to implement our recommendations in 2025.

Here are our recommendations and the response of CSIA management:

Recommendation 1: Increase Awareness

We recommend that CSIA ensure members are familiar with the [CSIA Code of Conduct and Resolution Process](#). Members should be aware of their role in managing conflict and responding to concerns. As part of CSIA annual membership renewal process, members should be required to read and affirm their understanding of [the Code of Conduct](#) and their responsibilities.

CSIA Response: *The Code and other policies will undergo regular governance reviews ensure they are in practice, fair and effective (i.e., the Code is a “living policy”). Integrating member expectations into the organization's culture is crucial, and CSIA is committed to raising awareness through a sustainable strategy. The CSIA Ombuds was invited to run online training for members on the new policy in January 2025, and an additional session is planned for Fall 2025. In addition, CSIA is developing efficient practices for internal complaints resolution in alignment with the Code. Understanding responsibilities is vital for CSIA members, and making review of the Code a mandatory part of the annual membership process is under consideration.*

Recommendation 2: Emphasize Expectations

We recommend that annual training for CSIA course conductors emphasize positive and appropriate behaviours, including giving feedback, managing relationships with students, and maintaining boundaries.

CSIA Response: *CSIA implemented mandatory respect in workplace training in 2024 for staff and course conductors (1.5 hr workshop) and is committed to ongoing improvements in training around positive and appropriate ski instruction.*

Recommendation 3: Focus on Clarity & Accessibility

We recommend that CSIA update public information to clarify the new complaints process and the independent role of the Ombuds, including:

- Archive prior policy versions (visible if google search “Snowpro code of conduct”)
- Ensure the email address for starting complaints (code@snowpro.com) is easily accessible to members
- Consider a new [FAQ](#) section addressing Code violations and related concerns, including examples like conduct during employment and the ski resort’s role as employer
- Add link to the Ombuds page on the [contact page](#)
- Update the [Ombuds page](#) in consultation with the CSIA Ombuds

CSIA Response: *CSIA has plans for a more dynamic and interactive website with resources for members, and CSIA willing to incorporate these recommendations into the project plan.*

Recommendation 4: Develop Internal Capacity & Practices

We recommend that CSIA provide ongoing training and support to the Complaints Officers and decision-makers to ensure they have the necessary skills and tools to conduct fair reviews of concerns and make fair decisions.

We recommend that CSIA review their internal complaints handling and storage systems and processes, to align with best practices for confidential tracking, identification of trends, document storage, and archiving of complaints. We highlight the need for limited access to complaint files (open and closed), consistent storage practices, and time-tracking to ensure timely complaints-handling.

CSIA Response: *CSIA invited the CSIA Ombuds to run a training session for the Complaints Officers in December 2024, and training on reviewing complaints and making decisions took place in January 2025. Work is underway by CSIA to create central confidential storage of complaints and outcomes and tracking themes / issues that may not have resulted in formal complaints.*



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