



## ALBERTA SAFE SPORT COMPLAINT MECHANISM

### ALBERTA UNIVERSAL CODE OF CONDUCT SUMMARY

#### 1) INTRODUCTION

The Alberta Universal Code of Conduct (“**AB UCC**”) is the harmonized conduct standard that applies to organizations using the Alberta Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism (“**ABSSCM**”). The AB UCC sets out prohibited behaviours and sanctioning principles designed for Alberta safe sport.

Developed by the Alberta Sport Leadership Association (“**ASLA**”), the purpose of the AB UCC is to:

- establish consistent, legally sound behavioural standards across all Alberta sport organizations that adopt the ABSSCM;
- provide clear, enforceable definitions of maltreatment;
- support the independent administration of maltreatment reports through the Independent Third Party (“**ITP**”); and
- align Alberta’s approach to safe sport with provincial law, governance principles, and procedural fairness.

In simple terms, **maltreatment** covers serious misconduct that materially harms people or puts them at risk, such as physical or psychological abuse, sexual misconduct or grooming, harassment, discrimination, or neglect. The ABSSCM provides a neutral place to report **maltreatment**, a fair process for handling reports, and clear outcomes to protect participants and sport integrity. The AB UCC sets the rules for acceptable behaviour in Alberta sports, and the ABSSCM is the system that handles reports when someone breaks those rules.

The AB UCC maintains the core principles of the Universal Code of Conduct to Address Maltreatment in Sport (“**UCCMS**”), and was drafted to reflect Alberta’s unique legal framework, local sport conditions, and commitment to a fair, transparent and independent process to address complaints of maltreatment in Alberta.

## **2) WHY DOES ALBERTA HAVE ITS OWN CODE OF CONDUCT?**

ASLA built a code of conduct that establishes core safe-sport protections that participants in sport expect, while aligning language, jurisdiction, and process to Alberta law and the ABSSCM operating model.

The AB UCC was created to ensure that the standards governing safe sport in Alberta are:

- consistent across all sports and organizations in the province of Alberta;
- legally sound and enforceable under Alberta law;
- strengthen procedural fairness and clarity in complaint handling;
- fair and transparent for all participants
- protective of legitimate, good-faith sport activities; and
- locally governed under ASLA's oversight.

The AB UCC builds upon the core principles of the UCCMS, while refining language and structure to meet Alberta's specific legislative, governance and community needs. The AB UCC was prepared to align with the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, the *Fairness and Safety in Sport Act*, the *Personal Information Protection Act*, and other provincial legislation and regulations, ensuring that Alberta's Safe Sport system operates within clear legal and procedural boundaries.

Further, the AB UCC focuses on conduct that causes objective harm or risk to safety, ensuring that cases of maltreatment are addressed through the ITP, while minor issues can be properly managed within the sport organization. Under the ABSSCM, complaints involving maltreatment are referred to an ITP for review and resolution, while lower-level or routine matters may be addressed internally. This balance promotes meaningful protection for sport participants, practical implementation for sport organizations and protects the integrity of the ABSSCM system. This focus ensures that the ABSSCM remains focused on the cases where it is needed most – to prevent, detect and resolve maltreatment in sport in Alberta.

## **3) WHO OVERSEES THE AB UCC AND THE ABSSCM?**

ASLA administers and oversees the AB UCC and the ABSSCM. The ABSSCM is Alberta's independent, province-wide, reporting and dispute resolution mechanism for maltreatment in sport. Through the ABSSCM, reports of maltreatment are managed by an ITP to ensure impartial intake, review and dispute resolution.

The AB UCC was developed by ASLA with extensive input from legal counsel, sport complaint management providers, dispute-resolution professionals, and sport-sector stakeholders across Alberta. In developing the AB UCC, ASLA worked with its Safe Sport Committee made up of individuals from a wide range of subject expertise and different sport perspectives, as

well as from Alberta Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation (SPAR). Additionally, ASLA consulted with a wide range of sport organizations and sector leaders and hosted multiple forums for input on the development of the ABSSCM.

#### **4) MUST ORGANIZATIONS ADOPT THE AB UCC?**

Any sport organization that desires to participate in the ABSSCM, must adopt the AB UCC as a binding policy of the organization.

#### **5) WHAT HAPPENS IF A COMPLAINT FALLS OUTSIDE THE AB UCC?**

Under the ABSSCM, the ITP initially screens reports for jurisdiction. If the reported allegations, wouldn't constitute Prohibited Behaviour under the AB UCC, or another forum is more appropriate, the matter is redirected to the appropriate body. For example, team-selection disputes or administrative complaint, would be referred back to the applicable organization for resolution under its internal policies.

The AB UCC focuses exclusively on maltreatment reports that should be managed by an ITP to ensure impartial intake, review and dispute resolution.

#### **6) HOW DOES THE AB UCC DIFFER FROM THE UCCMS?**

Those familiar with the UCCMS will recognize shared goals of the AB UCC: participant safety, integrity, and respect. The AB UCC maintains these goals and introduces additional legal and procedural refinements to align with Alberta legislation and integrity of the ABSSCM system.

The following key differences for the AB UCC in comparison to the UCCMS include:

- Emphasizes objective legal standards and Alberta legal framework alignment.
- Requires an objective “reasonable person” test and material threshold for maltreatment reports. All conduct must be assessed against a reasonable-person standard to prioritize objective enforcement.
- The AB UCC recognizes legitimate sport purpose for decisions made in good faith to advance safety, athlete eligibility, fairness or performance.
- The AB UCC defines “Minors” consistent with Alberta law (under 18).
- The AB UCC expressly recognizes “good-faith” for coaching, decisions, rules enforcement, conduct will not be mischaracterized as maltreatment.
- ASLA retains control over updates and amendments of the AB UCC, ensuring that AB UCC changes reflect Alberta’s legislation, context and ABSSCM requirements.

- Heightened enforcement over retaliation and false reporting as standalone prohibited behaviours. The AB UCC requires reporting of maltreatment "in good faith" - protecting both complainants and respondents, and discourages misuse of the ABSSCM system.

For an in-depth comparison table of specific differences between the AB UCC and the UCCMS, please see [Schedule A](#).



**SCHEDULE A**  
**AB UCC – UCCMS COMPARISON**

<b>Category</b>	<b>AB UCC</b>	<b>UCCMS</b>	<b>General Notes / Meaning / Effect</b>
<b>Oversight and Governance</b>	Developed by the Alberta Sport Leadership Association (ASLA) as part of the Alberta Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism (ABSSCM).	Developed and administered nationally by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) through the Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP). Required for Sport Canada-funded organizations.	Clear routing at intake reduces jurisdictional forum conflicts and speeds case management  The ABSSCM may redirect <i>Reports</i> if jurisdiction sits with CSSP/NSO or an organization's internal dispute resolution policies.
<b>Scope of Application</b>	Applies to all <i>Participants</i> in sport activities organized by Alberta <i>Adopting Organizations</i> within Alberta, with defined jurisdictional limits.	Applies to Sport Canada funded NSOs and other adopting organizations, and their participants	
<b>Focus of Enforcement</b>	Targets <i>Prohibited Behaviour</i> that constitutes material maltreatment or risk of harm. Discourages use of the ABSSCM report process for trivial or minor disagreements.	Refers to "Potential to cause harm" without qualifier	The AB UCC focuses on material maltreatment – protecting <i>Participants</i> while ensuring the independent process remains focused on maltreatment <i>Reports</i> .
<b>Maltreatment Definition and Threshold</b>	Generally, defines <i>Maltreatment</i> as conduct that is objectively harmful or creates a material risk of harm to the physical or psychological safety of a <i>Participant</i> .	Broader definitions that include subjective categories.	AB UCC keeps the same protective intent but adds a "material" qualifier – tightening the threshold to conduct that genuinely affects <i>Participant</i> safety or well-being.

	<p>Requires conduct to have a material effect or risk, meaning significant or non-trivial.</p>		<p>The AB UCC ensures proportionality — that the ITP focuses on serious safety or integrity issues. This reduces overreach into minor, trivial or grievance matters.</p>
<p><b>Objective / Reasonable Person Standard</b></p>	<p>Introduces an explicit “Reasonableness” standard (s. 2.6) to be applied in all assessments.</p> <p>Reasonable, good-faith sport decisions, including determinations of athlete eligibility, team selection and performance management do not constitute maltreatment.</p>	<p>No equivalent concept. UCCMS implies reasonableness but is less explicit across sections.</p>	<p>Included to make outcomes more predictable, fair, and legally defensible. It limits subjective or inconsistent applications of the AB UCC. Findings must be evidence-based and aligned with principles of natural justice.</p> <p>Provides clarity and reassurance for coaches, officials, and administrators and avoids chilling legitimate sport actions.</p>
<p><b>Athlete Eligibility</b></p>	<p>Good-faith actions to comply with athlete eligibility rules required by Alberta Law (such as <i>Fairness and Safety in Sport Act</i>) are not AB UCC breaches</p>	<p>UCCMS does not include an applicable law carve-out.</p>	<p>The ABSSCM will not have jurisdiction over complaints with respect to eligibility enforcement, avoiding ABSSCM overlap into eligibility disputes.</p>
<p><b>Vulnerable Participant</b></p>	<p>Defined based on objective criteria (age, legal capacity or dependence)</p>	<p>Defined very broadly to include subjective categories</p>	<p>Definitions changed to be more objective and more consistent with commonly accepted guidelines. Ensures the term is applied objectively, reducing risk of inconsistent use.</p>
<p><b>Grooming</b></p>	<p>Broadened and strengthened. Includes sexual and non-sexual grooming behaviours intended to gain trust or control to facilitate</p>	<p>Focus is primarily on sexual grooming. Defined as conduct that builds trust or emotional</p>	<p>AB UCC broadens coverage to be stronger, expanding scope.</p>

	<p>maltreatment. Ties <i>Grooming to Boundary Transgressions</i> directly.</p>	<p>connection for potential sexual exploitation.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Definition of protected categories directly aligns with <i>Alberta Human Rights Act</i> grounds (race, gender, age, disability, religion, etc.). Provides a legitimate sport purpose carve-out with undue hardship accommodation, and explicitly recognizes good-faith enforcement of eligibility required or permitted by Alberta law.</p> <p>Drafted to ensure that principles of equality applies neutrally to all <i>Participants</i>.</p>	<p>List of protected grounds aligns closer to <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>, adds “analogous grounds” (undefined), and less explicit about lawful eligibility and sport-objective carve-outs.</p> <p>AB UCC definition is more precise and aligns with Alberta law, including <i>Alberta Human Rights Act</i> and <i>Fairness and Safety in Sport Act</i>.</p> <p>The AB UCC emphasizes neutral and equal application language. Protection applies equally to all <i>Participants</i>, without creating classes of preferred identities.</p> <p>More predictable thresholds – AB UCC separates legitimate, legally compliant sport/performance/eligibility decisions from true discrimination.</p>
<p><b>False, Vexatious or Bad-Faith Reporting</b></p>	<p>Strengthened language on false, vexatious or bad-faith reports.</p> <p>Creates a distinct Prohibited Behaviour for “false, vexatious or bad-faith reporting” – knowingly or recklessly making a false allegation, deliberately exaggerating facts, or misusing the ABSSCM process for ulterior purposes. ITP and decision makers can dismiss and sanction process abuse and, in egregious cases, order cost recovery.</p> <p>Distinguishes false from unsubstantiated reports, protecting good faith reports.</p>	<p>Mentions good-faith reporting in general guidance but without explicit cross-reference to sanctions for bad-faith cases.</p> <p>AB UCC intentionally deters misuse of the ABSSCM while protecting those who report in good faith.</p> <p>Encourages reporting by emphasizing fairness and integrity on both sides – complainants are safe to come forward, and respondents are protected from malicious claims. Designed to strengthen trust in the ABSSCM reporting system by preventing abuse and ensuring serious cases receive attention.</p>

<b>Minors</b>	Defines a Minor in accordance with Alberta Law (under 18).	Minor is defined as under the age of 19.	Aligns the AB UCC with Alberta law.
<b>Amendment and Oversight</b>	ASLA may amend the AB UCC, with notice to <i>Adopting Organizations</i> .	UCCMS amendments made by CCES, with limited direct input from ASLA or provincial or local organizations.	ASLA's local oversight ensures responsiveness and alignment with Alberta law and sport realities.
<b>Sport-Specific Context</b>	<p>Enhanced acknowledgement of sport-specific considerations, including coaching norms, feedback, and performance-related feedback, ensuring these are not misinterpreted as maltreatment.</p> <p>Requires decision-makers to weigh sport-specific differences (contact, instruction, aggression, feedback) and protects good-faith coaching that serves legitimate sport purposes.</p>	<p>Less explicit acknowledgment of legitimate sport-specific conduct.</p>	<p>Greater consideration for different sport realities and guards against penalizing legitimate practices. The AB UCC protects both athlete welfare and the integrity of coaching by contextualizing interactions within legitimate sport purposes.</p>