



COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Making complaints

If a member of the Society wishes to raise an informal or formal complaint against a member of the Society or a member of staff, they should do so in writing to the Honorary Secretary via the SCS Secretariat Office either by email or by post, or, if the complaint relates to or concerns the Honorary Secretary, by emailing the President via the generic SCS email complaints@scs.org.uk

On receipt of a written complaint the Honorary Secretary will refer it to the Investigation Panel. If however a complaint is not received formally, in writing within one month of making an initial allegation, that allegation will be deemed to be unsubstantiated and the file will be closed.

Such letter/e-mail should be headed 'Complaint' and where possible should set out:-

1. the nature of the complaint;
2. details of the circumstances in which it has arisen;
3. details of any steps taken so far to have the complaint dealt with; and
4. details of the steps the member considers should be taken to deal with the complaint.

The Member should also attach to their letter any documents or proof they wish to be taken into account in the consideration of their complaint.

Dealing with Complaints

Receipt of the complaint shall be acknowledged to the complainant by the Honorary Secretary by email within 7 working days of receipt of the letter and recorded by the Chair of the Investigation Panel and filed at the Secretariat Office.

If, in the course of their duties, a member of SCS staff identifies member activity which could contravene Bye-law 7.2, 7.3 and 7.8 and the Code of Conduct Practice Policy, they will refer the matter to the Honorary Secretary. The Honorary Secretary will then refer the matter to the Investigation Panel. If the Chair considers that the matter falls in the category of misconduct outlined in Bye-Law 7.2, 7.3 and 7.8 and contravenes the Code of Conduct and Practice, the member of SCS staff will act as the complainant, they will prepare a complaint and will not otherwise be involved in any further aspect of the matter.

The Honorary Secretary will advise the Investigation Panel of any complaint(s) received, who will then:

- Consider whether the complaint falls within activity relating to misconduct under SCS Constitution Bye-Law 7.2, 7.3 and 7.8 or contravenes the Code of Conduct and Practice Policy, and if so:
- Notify the Respondent of the nature with particulars and source of the complaint;
 - the fact that such a complaint will be considered by an Investigating Panel;
 - the Respondent's right to submit a written statement to the Panel within 10 working days from the date of notification; and
 - the Panel's powers of investigation, and its authority in the absence of any reply from the Respondent, to proceed without further reference to the Respondent provided due notice has been given.
- Investigate with others involved and where necessary request more facts and evidence from the complainant.
- The Investigating Panel will have the authority to dismiss the complaint if it considers there is no case to answer;
 - to decide that, whilst the complaint appears to be justified, the matter is not serious enough to warrant further proceedings; or
 - it is decided that the complaint is not of a nature which contravenes the Constitution Bye-Laws 7 or that there is insufficient evidence to support the complaint, it will be dismissed.
- The Investigation Panel will have the authority to refer the complaint to the Disciplinary Committee.
- The Investigation Panel Chair will present the conclusion to the complainant and the Respondent within 28 days of the date of receiving the written complaint.
- The complainant and respondent may Appeal the outcome within 7 working days of the date of the outcome letter.
- If a complaint is referred to the Disciplinary Committee this will be advised to the complainant and respondent. The Disciplinary committee members will review the evidence and decide what further action if necessary should be taken.
- No action should be taken against a member until the matter has been thoroughly investigated.
- The Disciplinary Committee Chair will present the conclusion to the complainant and the respondent within 14 days of the response from the Investigation Panel.
- The complainant and respondent may Appeal the outcome of the Disciplinary Committee within 7 working days of the date of the outcome letter.
- A response to the Appeal will be final.