# Complaints procedure

**Last update: October 2019**

## Scope

This procedure defines how The Society records and responds to complaints. It defines the process, responsibilities and recording of complaints, the investigation of problems, response to the complainant and analysis and reporting for management corrective actions and process improvement purposes.

## Introduction

Complaints are a valuable resource for improvement of The Society’s processes and services to the members and meeting its objectives. A negative feedback or complaint if handled well can and will improve the perception of The Society. Conversely, a complaint ignored or handled badly can do much damage. Positive Feedback is also important and must be recorded and communicated because it will enhance moral and provides an opportunity to identify and build on successful initiatives and activities.

A complaint should always result in consideration of corrective action.

Feedback and complaint issues raised during meetings should be recorded in the minutes and progressed in subsequent meetings and should not be included in the system unless a response to an individual not present is required.

## Purpose of the complaints procedure

To record all significant feedback and all complaints relevant to The Society’s activities.

To respond to complaints in a timely manner to the satisfaction of The Society and where possible the complainant.

To use the data from both negative and positive feedback to benefit The Society and the membership by identifying and implementing improvement to the systems and procedures. The objective is to avoid the recurrence of problems.

## Responsibilities

### Volunteers and staff

It is the responsibility of volunteers and staff as defined in sections 3.2 and 3.3 above to:

* Be familiar with this procedure and to comply with it.
* Ensure that all complaints are recorded according to the system. Maintain strict confidentiality
* Assist in the investigation

### President

* Respond to major complaints.
* Review each completed process for adequacy and completeness of investigation, corrective action and response
* Sign off to denote completion

### Executive

* Receive all recorded complaints.
* If necessary consult with the President, and if appropriate, depending on the seriousness of the issue, delegate actions as necessary.
* Manage the investigation, response to the complainant, and corrective actions arising for the optimum benefit to the Society.
* Approve the response to the complainant. In consultation with the President if necessary
* Consider preventive actions i.e. applicability of the corrective action to related areas.
* Report to Council on complaints received and Corrective Actions proposed and completed.

### Distinctions Manager

* Manage the investigation and response to complaints on the Distinctions processes as agreed with the Chair of the Distinction Committee, Executive, or President.

## Procedure

### Receipt

Anyone receiving a complaint must respond sympathetically and explain to the complainant that the Society has a formal system which is used to investigate and respond to complaints when it is appropriate.

Record details of the complainant and complaint in the complaints log or forward to the Executive for addition to the complaints log.

Record any comments on the problem made to the complainant, and any action taken.

### Initial Response

The initial response by the recipient should be:

“The Society has a formal system for investigating and dealing with complaints. I will make a note of the problem and we will look into your problem and reply to you. You can expect an initial response within 5 to 10 days”.

### Investigation

Investigation of a complaint shall include the following

* A review of the facts surrounding the problem.
* Identification of the cause or causes.
* Identification of corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

Consideration of other possible similar problems in related areas.

### Review and reporting

Reporting should be to Council at regular intervals for information and for actions to be agreed or endorsed.

Where complaints are to be reported to the President/Council for response, the attached form should be used, and details of the complaint should be reviewed by the complainant before forwarding.

### Final response

Executive shall normally respond to the complainant or agree and delegate a response action as appropriate to the seriousness of the complaint. The target timescale for response is 30 days.

### Distinctions feedback

Issues raised at Advisory Days or Workshops or in ‘one to one’ should be resolved at the meeting and not recorded in the system unless there are general lessons to be learned or concerns to be resolved.

# Appendix: Complaint record

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Received From:  Membership Number:  Address:  Email: | Recorded By:  Last updated: |

## Complaint summary:

## Record of actions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Final Response:  By: | Date: |
| Corrective Action:  By:  Verified: | Completion Date:  Date: |
| Related Areas: |  |
| Final Review:  By: | Date: |