

Complaints Policy

1.1 Scope

Anyone who has a concern can make a complaint to the Microbiology Society. This complaints policy is for external complaints only. Microbiology Society staff should refer to internal HR policies and procedures if staff wish to make a complaint.

1.2 Initial complaints

The Microbiology Society will aim to resolve any complaints received at the first point of contact. If a complaint is received more than three months after an event or activity in question took place, the Society may ask the complainant to explain why they were unable to complain sooner and may decline to investigate the complaint. The Society will not consider anonymous complaints.

1.3 Formal complaints

If the complaint cannot be resolved at first point of contact as above, or through further informal discussion, the complainant should be informed that they may make a formal complaint.

Unless otherwise agreed by the Microbiology Society, formal complaints must be sent by email to the Chief Operations Officer at coo@microbiologysociety.org. The Chief Operations Officer is responsible for logging and acknowledging formal complaints.

All formal complaints received will be investigated and dealt with by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive may delegate to another member of the Leadership Team the role of investigating officer. Any formal complaint regarding the Chief Executive will be shared with the General Secretary, who may delegate another trustee or external individual as the investigating officer.

The Chief Executive or General Secretary or investigating officer will assess the complaint and judge whether there is sufficient evidence to substantiate a complaint. The Chief Executive and/or General Secretary will aim to respond to the complainant within 30 working days from receipt of the written complaint to confirm whether the complaint is upheld, providing reasons for the decision. If a complaint is upheld the Chief Executive (or the General Secretary if the Chief Executive is conflicted) will suggest remedial action.

If a complainant is unhappy with the response, they have the right of appeal as set out under section 1.5. The complainant has 20 working days from receipt of the decision to do this, and they should clearly detail in writing why they believe their complaint was not satisfactorily addressed.

1.4 Appeal

All appeals complaints will be shared with the General Secretary, who may delegate another trustee or external individual as the investigating officer.

The investigating officer will aim to report back to the General Secretary within 20 working days from receipt of the written escalation. The General Secretary will aim to respond to the complainant within 30 working days from receipt of the written escalation to confirm whether the complaint is upheld, providing reasons for the decision. The General Secretary will report their decision to the complainant in writing.

The decision of the General Secretary is final.

1.5 Vexatious complaints

The Microbiology Society reserves the right to refuse to accept a complaint where it reasonably believes that the complaint is vexatious, malicious or discriminatory, where the complaint threatens, harasses or abuses Society staff, trustees or other members, or where the complainant persists in making a complaint or demand when all reasonable attempts to resolve their concerns have already been made. In such cases the complainant will be notified of the reason why their complaint will not be addressed further. The decision as to whether a complaint is vexatious or otherwise inadmissible will be taken by the Chief Executive or the General Secretary if the Chief Executive is conflicted, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees where necessary. Such a decision is final.