



Complaints Policy

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is committed to providing high quality service. In cases where this does not happen, we welcome comments on how we can help you resolve issues as quickly as possible. We use this feedback to assess and improve our services.
- 1.2 This policy relates to complaints against actions taken by the ACU, its staff or anyone working on behalf of the ACU, current ACU member institutions and any other organisation contracted to provide specific administrative or other services on the ACU's behalf, over which it can reasonably be expected to have control.
- 1.3 In all cases, before a complaint is lodged all reasonable efforts should be made to resolve the matter before invoking the formal Complaints Policy.
- 1.4 The policy does not:
 - (a) apply to reporting actual, attempted or suspected fraud, corruption or bribery. Reporting of fraud, corruption or bribery will follow the ACU's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy;
 - (b) apply to complaints relating to the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) as these are covered by the CSC's own Complaints Policy and Procedure (link: [Complaints policy](#));
 - (c) apply to reporting safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding concerns should be reported using the ACU Safeguarding Policy;
 - (d) apply to any complaint about the actions of a university or other host organisation at which a Kings Fellowship Scholar or Fellow or delivery partner or grant recipient is based. Such complaints should be addressed directly to the institution involved;
 - (e) disputes over membership fees where the terms are clearly stated;
 - (f) resignation or lapsed membership cases unless procedural errors are alleged; or
 - (g) Requests for fee waivers outside of exceptional circumstances (as per Clause 21 of the Terms).

2. Reporting Complaints

- 2.1 Step 1: Informal Resolution
- 2.2 You are encouraged to first raise concerns informally by emailing complaints@acu.ac.uk who will ensure the complaint is directed to the relevant team. Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage.
- 2.3 Step 2: Formal Complaint
- 2.4 If you are not happy with the initial response or the complaint is considered of a serious nature, a formal complaint can be submitted in writing and include:
 - (a) Name and role of the complainant
 - (b) Institution name (if relevant)
 - (c) Description of the issue (where the complainant wishes to remain anonymous this should be clearly stated in the complaint). See section 3 for further

information

- (d) Relevant dates and correspondence
- (e) Desired outcome

2.5 Formal complaints should be sent to Head of Membership and Events at complaints@acu.ac.uk with the Subject: Formal Complaint. The complaint will be prioritised and triaged accordingly.

3. Acknowledgement and Investigation

- 3.1 We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 10 working days.
- 3.2 ACU reserves the right to inform any party against whom a complaint is directed of the nature of the complaint, for the purpose of obtaining information necessary to reach a decision. Where the complainant wishes to remain anonymous this should be clearly stated in the complaint. Where informing the party involved of the complaint would compromise their anonymity, ACU will not inform the party without seeking express permission from the complainant in advance. The complainant may be contacted for further information if required.

4. Response

- 4.1 ACU will, after considering the full evidence presented in the complaint, respond in writing to the complainant within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed of the revised timeline.

5. Outcome

The outcome could be any of the following:

- (a) that the complaint has no basis and should be rejected;
- (b) that the complaint should be upheld; or
- (c) remedial action such as an apology or policy/procedural review.

6. Appeals

- a. If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response, they may request a review by the Chief Operating Officer. Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the outcome and should clearly state the grounds for appeal.
- b. The procedures outlined above represent the sole channels for complaints to the ACU, and we will be unable to enter into any further correspondence once these have been exhausted.

7. Reporting

- a. All complaints and outcomes will be recorded and reviewed periodically to improve services and processes.
- b. The details and outcome of the complaint will be recorded in the Complaints Register at the ACU. A summary of the Complaints Register will be tabled to the Audit and Risk Committee once a year. The tabled summary will maintain the confidentiality of the individuals making the complaint/s, and the subject of the complaint, as far as may be practical. Where appropriate, changes in policy or practice resulting from any complaint will also be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned.

Date of last review	January 2026
Date of next review	January 2028
Policy owner	People and Culture
Changes	New policy