



AHRC Complaints and Appeals Policy

The AHRC is committed to providing an accessible, high quality, efficient, and accurate service in all its interactions with its/our community¹. Despite our commitment we recognise that sometimes things go wrong. If you consider that we have fallen short of the level of service that you would expect you are welcome to alert us to the problem by raising a complaint.

A complaint will cover:

- A failure on our part to follow our published processes.
- An unreasonable delay or inefficiency in responding to an enquiry or operating our procedures.
- Inappropriate or discourteous conduct by our staff or those acting on our behalf.
- A failure by an individual working for or representing the AHRC to act according to the Seven Principles of Public Life, as laid out in our Code of Practice (Annex 1).

As a matter of process, if a complaint about failure on our part to follow published processes is upheld, we will investigate whether the issue of complaint has adversely influenced an AHRC decision, including a funding decision. If the AHRC finds that a decision has been adversely influenced it will take appropriate action to rectify the matter or find an acceptable solution.

The following matters may not form the basis for a complaint:

- Matters which are the subject of litigation or legal proceedings.
- Matters which draw into question the academic judgement on which a funding decision was based.

Making a Complaint

In the first instance we ask that you try to resolve your complaint with the person dealing with the issue in question. If they cannot resolve the matter you should submit a formal complaint to the Associate Director of Resources, providing a clear description of the content of your complaint.

We will aim to respond to complaints within 15 working days. If your complaint is a complex one then we will send you an interim reply within 15 working days specifying when you can expect a full response. A diagram demonstrating all possible routes a complaint could take is available at Annex 2.

¹ Community is defined as any individual or organisation with whom the AHRC interacts.

You should expect that your enquiry is:

- Handled respectfully and sensitively
- Treated in confidence and within current information legislation
- Responded to in full and within the timescale specified.

We will hope to bring about a fair and satisfactory resolution and we may draw upon the experience and feedback to improve our level of service in the future.

Appealing an Outcome

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint and are not happy with the way it was dealt with, you may submit an appeal to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will review your case and aim to provide a full response within 15 working days. The response from the Chief Executive will be final.

If you have gone through our complaints and appeals procedure in full and remain dissatisfied, you have the right to refer the matter to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Contact details for the Ombudsman for further information are as follows:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Telephone: 0345 015 4033
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

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The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Process Chart for Different Stages of a Complaint



