



Complaints Policy

CLEARING HOUSE FOR POSTGRADUATE
COURSES IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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1 Purpose of the policy

The Clearing House aims to provide a quality service to everyone we deal with. However, there may be occasions when someone using our services is not satisfied about something and if this is the case it is important that we know.

The aim of this policy is to give people and organisations using our services clear details of what steps they can take to try to get things put right where there is a problem. Applicants, course centres, nominees providing Suitability Statements, enquirers and anyone else who uses our services can use this complaints procedure.

Feedback from complainants also allows us to monitor the quality of the service we provide so we can continually work to improve our services and the experience of the people and organisations using those services.

2 Defining a complaint

2.1 WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with services provided by the Clearing House and this can take many forms including:

- Failure to do something we should have done
- Doing something we should not have done
- Providing a poor quality service
- Not meeting or acting within agreed timescales
- Dissatisfaction with any of our processes
- Not meeting our legal obligations

2.2 WHAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is not:

- A request for a service
- A request for information
- A request to review a decision

Also, the Clearing House can only deal with complaints about the services we provide. We cannot deal with complaints about issues that lie outside our services.

For example, any complaints about selection decisions made about applications should be directed to the course centre concerned. The Clearing House is not involved in selection; in other words we do not make decisions about who is and is

not successful at each stage of the selection process. This is done by the course centres and is not part of the Clearing House service.

3 Making a complaint

Complaints are usually made by email as this is our main method of contact for all purposes. It is important that the complainant lets us know exactly what the problem is and how they would like to see it resolved.

3.1 STAGES OF DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

Once we receive a complaint it is dealt with using three stages:

- Stage 1 is the investigation of new complaints.
- Stage 2 is a review of the complaint by the Clearing House Manager. This is used when the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 decision, and requires additional information from the complainant as a basis for the move to Stage 2.
- Stage 3 is consideration of the complaint by the Clearing House Board and is used when the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 decision.

If we find that someone regularly complains to the Clearing House we may have to deal with this outside the complaints process as further investigation may need to be made into why this is the case.

4 Stage 1 - Investigation of new complaints

4.1 WHO WILL INVESTIGATE A COMPLAINT AT STAGE 1?

A complaint will usually be investigated by the member of Clearing House staff who first receives the complaint. This investigation may include contacting the complainant to clarify information.

Due to our limited number of staff, the Clearing House Manager will sometimes be the first to receive the complaint and in these circumstances they may conduct the Stage 1 investigation.

4.2 HOW LONG WILL STAGE 1 TAKE?

We will let the complainant know our decision within 25 working days of receiving the complaint or, where this is not possible, we will let them know why.

5 Stage 2 - Review by the Clearing House Manager

5.1 HOW DOES A COMPLAINT GET TO STAGE 2?

Any complainant who is dissatisfied with the Stage 1 decision should contact us within 25 working days to ask for the complaint to move to Stage 2, and the complainant must provide additional relevant information within this time period as a basis for the move to Stage 2. Where no additional relevant information is provided by the complainant within the time period then the complaint cannot move to Stage 2 unless there are very unusual circumstances.

5.2 WHAT DOES STAGE 2 INVOLVE?

Stage 2 is a review by the Clearing House Manager, using at least the information already gathered in Stage 1 plus the additional information the complainant has provided. Where the Clearing House Manager considers it necessary they may gather further information from any appropriate source as part of the review.

If the complaint is about the actions of the Clearing House Manager, the Stage 2 review will be conducted by a member of the Clearing House Board.

5.3 HOW LONG WILL STAGE 2 TAKE?

The Clearing House Manager will let the complainant know their decision by email within 25 working days of the complaint being moved to Stage 2 or, where this is not possible, they will let the complainant know why.

Where the review is being conducted by a member of the Clearing House Board (see 5.2 above) they will respond in the same way but within 35 working days or, where this is not possible, the complainant will be informed of the reason.

6 Stage 3 - Consideration by the Clearing House Board

6.1 HOW DOES A COMPLAINT GET TO STAGE 3?

Any complainant who is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 decision should contact us within 25 working days to ask for the complaint to move to Stage 3. The Clearing House Board will only consider complaints after Stages 1 and 2 are complete.

6.2 WHAT DOES STAGE 3 INVOLVE?

Stage 3 is consideration of the complaint by the Clearing House Board and, where timescales allow, will usually take place at a Board Meeting. Any Board members who have previously dealt with the complaint will not be involved in the Clearing House Board decision regarding the complaint (see 5.2 above).

The Clearing House Board will have access to information used during all stages of the complaint process, both information provided by the complainant and information provided by Clearing House staff, and where necessary they may gather further information from any appropriate source for their consideration.

6.3 HOW LONG WILL STAGE 3 TAKE?

Board Meetings usually take place at least twice a year and, where timescales allow, the complaint will usually be considered at the next meeting. The Clearing House Manager will inform the complainant of when the complaint will be considered.

The information from all stages of the complaint will be made available to the Clearing House Board by the Clearing House Manager within a reasonable timescale before the complaint is considered.

A member of the Clearing House Board will let the complainant know the decision of the Clearing House Board by email within 35 working days of the decision being made. The decision of the Clearing House Board will be final and binding.

7 Equality and Diversity

All complaints will be dealt with impartially, and no complainant will be discriminated against on the grounds of their: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

8 Confidentiality

We will treat all complaints we receive in the strictest confidence and in line with Data Protection legislation. Where we have to make enquiries with third parties in order to resolve a complaint, we will only share relevant information and will treat this in strictest confidence.