



Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK

COMMONWEALTH SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Complaints Policy

1. Purpose and scope

- 1.1 This policy relates to complaints against actions taken by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC), its members, members of the CSC Secretariat, any other organisation contracted to provide specific administrative or other services on the CSC's behalf, over which it can reasonably be expected to have control (hereafter referred to as 'CSC delivery partners'), and CSC Scholars and Fellows in so far as their actions are related to the CSC, subject to the qualifications below.
- 1.2 In all cases, before a complaint is lodged all reasonable efforts should be made to resolve the matter before invoking the formal Complaints Policy.
- 1.3 The policy does not:
 - (a) apply to reporting of actual, attempted or suspected fraud, corruption or bribery. Reporting of fraud, corruption or bribery should follow the CSC's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy;
 - (b) apply to reporting of safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding concerns should be reported using the CSC Safeguarding Policy.
 - (c) apply to any complaint about the actions of a university or other host organisation at which a Commonwealth Scholar or Fellow is based. Such complaints should be addressed directly to the institution involved;
 - (d) apply to individual selection or placement or on award decisions of the CSC, unless the complaint concerns an alleged breach of procedure.
- 1.4 This Policy is in addition to any other rights of complaint that may be available under UK law regarding Non-Departmental Public Bodies. It does not seek to replace these procedures, however those making complaints should take into account that a failure to use the CSC's own policy in the first instance might later be regarded as a significant weakness in any such case.

2. Reporting Complaints

- 2.1 Where the complaint is against a CSC delivery partner (including a nominating agency, contracted travel or finance provider, or the British Council), the complaint should be raised in the first instance with the organisation concerned, according to their complaint procedure.
- 2.2 Where the complaint is against the CSC, the CSC Secretariat, a Scholar or Fellow, or against a CSC delivery partner but it would not be appropriate to address the complaint with the partner directly (or an unsatisfactory response has been given when the complaint was made directly), the complaint should be made in writing to the CSC addressed to the Executive Secretary (or the Deputy Chair of the Commission only if the complaint is against the Executive Secretary), either by email to

complaints@cscuk.org.uk or clearly marked as a complaint by post to Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H9HF, United Kingdom.

3. Investigation, Response and Appeal

- 3.1 The CSC/CSC Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of a complaint within 10 working days.
- 3.2 The CSC 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, the CSC will not inform the party without seeking express permission from the complainant in advance. The CSC's Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy may also be invoked if appropriate in order to maintain confidentiality.
- 3.3 The CSC will, after considering the full evidence presented in the complaint, respond in writing to the complainant within 30 working days of the complaint being received.
- 3.4 If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response from the Executive Secretary they may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (or the Deputy Chair if the complaint is against the Chair of the Commission) either by email to complaints@cscuk.org.uk or clearly marked as a complaint appeal by post to Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, Woburn House, 20-24 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H9HF, United Kingdom.
- 3.5 The Chair or Deputy Chair of the Commission or their delegate will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 10 working days.
- 3.6 The Chair of the Commission will, in consultation with the Deputy Chair of the Commission, after considering the full evidence presented in the complaint, respond in writing to the complainant within 30 working days of the complaint being received.
- 3.7 The procedures outlined above represent the sole channels for complaints to the Commission, and we will be unable to enter into any further correspondence once these have been exhausted. It may, however, be possible to make a complaint through other routes. Whilst we are unable to give detailed advice on these, those seeking to make complaints might wish to consult the website of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, who is empowered to consider complaints against Non-Departmental Public Bodies. The Ombudsman helpline can currently be contacted on 0345 015 4033.

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Complaints Procedure

1. Receipt of Complaint

- 1.1 Complaints emailed to complaints@cscuk.org.uk or received by post will be directed to the Executive Secretary or their delegate.
- 1.2 The Executive Secretary or their delegate will log the complaint on the Complaints Register.
- 1.3 The Executive Secretary or their delegate will assess whether the complaint falls within the Complaints Policy.
- 1.4 Within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint, the Executive Secretary or their delegate will either acknowledge receipt of the complaint or respond noting that the matter falls outside the Complaints Policy. The Executive Secretary may refer the complainant to another policy if appropriate (such as the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption or Safeguarding Policy). The response will be made to the complainant by the communication method in which the complaint was received.
- 1.5 Where the complaint falls within this policy, the Executive Secretary or their delegate will, within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint, make the Executive Secretary (where the responsibility for handling complaints has been delegated) and the Deputy Chair of the Commission aware of the formal complaint.

2. Investigation

- 2.1 The Executive Secretary, or their delegate will consider the full evidence of the case and investigate as appropriate and proportionate and will, in consultation with the Deputy Chair of the Commission agree:
 - (a) that the complaint has no basis and should be rejected;
 - (b) that the complaint should be upheld; or
 - (c) in exceptional circumstances, for example where an issue of principle is thought to be involved, that the complaint should be further considered by a committee of Commission members convened specifically for the purpose. Such a committee may meet in person or virtually.

3. Communication of decision

- 3.1 In the event of (a) or (b) above the Executive Secretary or their delegate shall inform the person making the complaint of the decision within 10 working days of it being made.
- 3.2 In the event of (c) the Executive Secretary will notify the person making the complaint of an anticipated date by which a decision is expected, taking into account reasonable delays in assembling the views of the Committee.

4. Reporting

- 4.1 The details and outcome of the complaint will be recorded in the Complaints Register.
- 4.2 A summary of the Complaints Register will be tabled to the Audit and Risk Management Committee of the CSC 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.

- 4.3 The CSC will, on an annual basis report the summary of the Complaints Register to DFID UNCD even if it is a nil return.