



Complaints Policy

Complaints Procedure

1. A complaint that the Scottish Economic Society (SES) Code of Conduct has been breached can be made by either the individual who considers they have been the subject of a violation or by a witness to an incident they consider violates the Code. Complaints will be considered only if the alleged breach(es) relate to:
 1. the conduct of a participant or attendee at an event organised by the Society (such as the Annual SES Conference), or
 2. the conduct of an SES member at an event sponsored by the Society or
 3. the professional conduct of a member of the SES Council, an editor of an SES journal or the chair of an SES committee. The SES will only investigate complaints that have a direct bearing on the individual's capacity to perform their role in the SES and will exclude from consideration matters arising exclusively from activities undertaken as part of their duties at their home institution. Complaints against a journal editor in their editorial role should be handled using the journal's complaints procedure.
2. Complaints will normally be considered a maximum of three years after an alleged breach of the Code. However, complaints will normally not be considered when the alleged breach(es) occurred prior to the formal adoption of an SES Complaints Policy at the 2024 SES Council Meeting on 27/10/23. Allegations or complaints involving the commission of a criminal offence will be referred to the police or other appropriate regulatory authority.
3. The Society recognises that both the Code of Conduct and the Complaints Policy will be revised and further developed by the SES Council over time, taking into account guidance from Scottish Charity Regulator with which the SES is registered.
4. A complaint under the Complaints Policy must be made in writing to the SES President at president@scotecon.org. The SES President will ensure that all information relating to a complaint is treated as strictly confidential. The complaint should include the following information:
 1. The name and email address of the person making the complaint (the Complainant);
 2. An outline of the conduct considered to be in breach of the SES Code of Conduct, including (if possible) the name of the

- person who is alleged to have breached the Code (the Respondent);
3. The date(s) and time(s) at which the possible breach(es) occurred;
 4. If possible, the names of people who may have witnessed the conduct alleged to be in breach of the Code.
5. A complaint received under #4 will be referred to the SES Council. Normally the President will nominate two members of the SES Council to review the complaint. If the President has a potential conflict of interest, the complaint will be passed to another member of Council who will nominate the reviewers. A Council member who has a potential conflict of interest in relation to a specific complaint, such as being a colleague of the Complainant, Respondent or a person who may have been subject or a witness to the alleged violation(s), will take no part in the review or in any subsequent investigation and report. In the circumstances where there are not two members of the Council available without potential conflicts of interest the Council may co-opt suitable persons (such as past members of the Council or legal professionals) to review the complaint.
 6. The review in #5 will consider the information provided in the complaint. If the reviewers consider that the complaint does not fall under the Code, if the alleged breach does not meet the conditions in #1 to #3, or the information provided is not considered sufficient to warrant further investigation of the alleged breach, this will be communicated in writing to the Complainant and the complaint will not be pursued further.
 7. Otherwise, the complaint will be viewed as a Serious Complaint and the reviewers will recommend to the Council that a Complaints Committee be set up to investigate the complaint. The Complaints Committee will be nominated by the Council and will consist of at least three members, who may include the individuals who reviewed the complaint and will typically be drawn from the Council unless conflicts of interest or other considerations preclude this. As in #5, the Council can co-opt suitable persons outside of the Council to the Complaints Committee.
 8. In its investigation, the Complaints Committee will initially aim to take statements from both the Complainant and the Respondent. The Complaints Committee may at this stage agree that one of its members should act as a mediator or recommend that an external mediator be appointed by the Council with the aim of resolving the complaint. Should mediation be successful, as agreed by both the Complainant and the Respondent, no further investigation will be undertaken.
 9. In its investigation, the Complaints Committee may ask for further information from the Complainant and/or Respondent and may also request statements or other evidence from witnesses or other

individuals who may have information related to the alleged breach(es) of the Code.

10. Participants are expected to co-operate with an investigation by the Complaints Committee, and the Committee may consider any lack of co-operation by the Complainant or Respondent as a factor in drawing up its recommendations.
11. At any stage of its investigation, the Complaints Committee can provide a confidential recommendation that safe-guarding measures be put in place in respect of the participation of the Respondent in Society activities. Such measures will be proportionate and confidential, and require the agreement of the Society's President and President-Elect.
12. At any stage, and with the agreement of the Council, the Complaints Committee may choose to seek legal advice to aid the investigation.
13. The Complaints Committee will provide a confidential written report to the Council on its investigation of each Serious Complaint, including those resolved by mediation. Any member of the Council with a potential conflict of interest in relation to the complaint will neither receive the report nor be involved in any discussions relating to it. The report will summarize the complaint and the Committee's investigation, including any mediation undertaken, provide its conclusion as to whether the Code was violated or not and make a recommendation as to the appropriate sanction in relation to any identified Code violation. With due consideration given to confidentiality, the report may also be made available to the Respondent and the Complainant. The report will not be circulated outside the Complaints Committee, the Council, the Complainant and the Respondent, all of whom are expected to respect confidentiality. However, if removal as an SES Council member or SES Officer is recommended and approved by the Council and the Annual General Meeting, then sufficient information will be provided to the Council to support this recommendation for removal.
14. The outcome of an investigation will be either that misconduct was identified or that it was not. Depending on the nature and level of severity of the identified breach(es) of the Code of Conduct, the recommended actions may include, but are not limited to:
 1. Providing guidance on appropriate behaviour to the Respondent.
 2. A letter of reprimand to the Respondent.
 3. Suspension of the Respondent's membership of the Society for a specified period.
 4. A ban on the Respondent attending the SES event where the offence(s) took place for a specified period of time.
 5. Revocation of the right of the Respondent to hold any office in the Society or play a role as a committee or sub-committee member for a specified period or permanently.

6. Permanent termination of the Respondent's membership of the Society and/or their permanent exclusion from events organised by the Society.
15. The report from the Complaints Committee will be considered at a meeting of the Council, which may be a special meeting convened for the purpose. If a sanction is recommended, notice of the Council meeting will be sent at least 21 days in advance to all members of the Council except any with a potential conflict of interest and also the Respondent to the complaint. The notice will:
 - (i) state the names of the members of the Complaints Committee who have undertaken the investigation, (ii) state the general nature of the grounds for the recommended action and (iii) inform the Respondent they may be heard at the meeting in person (with or without a representative) or submit a written representation at least seven days prior to the meeting.
16. If the Board accepts the report and the Respondent has breached the Code, the Board can either approve the recommended action or may choose an alternative. Imposition of a specific sanction (namely one of the actions ii to vii of #14) will require at least two thirds of the members of the Council who are present to vote in favour. Should the Council, for any reason, not be satisfied with the investigation conducted by the Complaints Committee, it will ask the Committee to conduct additional investigations and provide a new report.
17. The decision of the Council with respect to a complaint will be communicated to the Complainant and Respondent in writing by the SES President, or by another Council member should the President have a conflict of interest or otherwise be unavailable. A record will be kept of the outcomes of all complaints received.
18. An appeal against the decision will be permitted only on procedural grounds and must be made in writing to the President or other Council member who communicated the decision in #17. The Council, excluding any member with a potential conflict of interest, will consider the appeal and, if it agrees that procedures were not followed correctly, will set up an Appeals Committee which will consider the alleged breach(es) and follow the procedures as in #5 to #17 above. As far as practical, the Appeals Committee will consist of current and former members of the Council, but will not include any individual considered to have a potential conflict of interest in relation to the alleged breach(es) or any involvement in the previous investigation.