

Joint Surgical Colleges Fellowship Examination

COMPLAINTS POLICY

A clear distinction is drawn between:

- Appeals
- Complaints (relating to adverse incidents in an examination contrary to regulations or standards which did not affect a candidate's result)
- Requests for considerations of Mitigating (extenuating) Circumstances beyond a candidate's control (family illness, transport issues etc)
- Requests for Reasonable Adjustments

JSCFE has a separate mechanism for each of these. Invocation of any of the above will trigger an equality and diversity impact assessment. Collated reports indicating number, theme, out-come and E&D impact are discussed as a standing item at the JSCFE Internal Quality Assurance Committee, which meets twice a year.

Principles of the Complaints Policy:

Candidates are requested to feedback on their examinations after each diet using standardised on-line feedback forms. Additionally, persons wishing to make a formal complaint may do so via e-mail using the complaint form, which is downloadable via the JSCFE website.

The JSCFE will:

- Publicise the existence of its complaints procedure
- Investigate complaints fairly and in a timely way
- Uphold complaints where it finds that there has been a breach of examination regulations or relevant standards that resulted in an injustice.
- Respond in a proportionate manner

When a complaint has been upheld the JSCFE will:

- apologise
- provide an explanation as to what happened
- detail the proportionate measures that have been instituted to prevent a recurrence
- attempt to redress the injustice by returning the aggrieved to the position they were in before the injustice occurred
- never alter a candidate's result. Candidates wishing to have their result reviewed because of an adverse event should invoke the appeals process rather than explore the complaint route

Complaints Process

- A complaint must be submitted by email (enquiries@jscfe.co.uk) using the JSCFE Complaints Submission Form.
- A complaint will be acknowledged within five working days.
- On receiving a complaint the Head of Operations or nominated deputy will conduct an office-based initial review. The Chair of IQA will be informed. Unless the outcome of the complaint is clear from the initial review, the relevant Board Chair, IQA lead and specialty manager will be asked to respond.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person then that person would be informed and given the opportunity to respond.
- The IQA Chair and Head of Operations / nominated deputy will then come to a determination regarding whether or not to uphold the complaint by assessing what happened, what should have happened and whether the aggrieved suffered an injustice as a result of any shortfall.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 30 working days. If this is not possible a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

- Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the JSCFE.