

# Complaints procedure policy

## Definition

*Australian Family Physician (AFP)* defines a complaint as a concern about a failure of process, not just a disagreement about a decision. If the issue is a disagreement about a decision, refer to the appeals procedure.

## How to make a complaint

The complaint should be directed to the person involved in the issue that is the subject of the complaint. The complaint should be in written form. If the complainant does not feel able to complain to the person involved in the issue, or is unable to identify the correct person, then complaints should be directed to the Senior Medical Editor or the National Manager, Products and Services, The RACGP.

## Actions by AFP on receipt of a complaint

All complaints will be acknowledged on receipt. Complaints about areas that are not in the control of *AFP* will be directed to the relevant person and the complainant notified. The recipient of the complaint will attempt to deal with it, if they are unable to they will then direct the complaint to the Senior Medical Editor.

## Outcome of complaint

*AFP* will attempt to provide a definitive response to all complaints within 30 days. If a definitive response is not possible, an update and estimated time for definitive response will be provided within 30 days.

## Further avenues of complaint

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response they may escalate the complaint to the Senior Medical Editor. This may not be an option if the Senior Medical Editor has made the decision in response to the complaint.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied they may ask for the complaint to be considered by the National Manager, Products and Services, The RACGP.

If the complaint remains dissatisfied after a final response by the National Manager, Products and Services, The RACGP, they may complain to an external body.

Relevant bodies would be:

- The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)  
COPE publishes a code of practice for editors at: [www.publicationethics.org.uk/](http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/)  
COPE will consider complaints against editors only after the journal's complaints process has been exhausted
- Medicines Australia  
Medicines Australia will consider complaints in respect of pharmaceutical companies marketing prescription medicines in Australia. Information is available at: [www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/](http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/).