



Complaints Procedure

Information for Complainants and Practitioners

1. Scope

The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture UK (ATCM) can only consider complaints made against registered members of the Association. ATCM cannot consider complaints concerning practitioners who are not members of the Association.

This procedure is designed to address complaints relating to the professional conduct, competence, or health of ATCM members, as set out in the Code of Professional Conduct and Code of Practice. It is not intended to duplicate or replace the complaints procedures of other organisations, such as the NHS or private healthcare providers in which members may also work.

2. Governance and Oversight

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) of ATCM is responsible for handling complaints concerning members. The PCC comprises experienced professional members appointed by the Executive Council (EC), together with impartial lay members (members of the public). The PCC operates independently, following the Code of Professional Conduct, the Code of Practice, and any other relevant guidelines issued by ATCM. The Council provides oversight to ensure that complaints are managed fairly, consistently, and transparently.

3. Purpose

ATCM and its members welcome constructive feedback regarding professional conduct. While members are expected to adhere to ATCM's professional codes at all times, the Association recognises that misunderstandings or errors may occasionally occur. ATCM seeks to resolve concerns promptly and fairly, while protecting the interests of both the public and practitioners.

4. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be made in writing

Sent via post office to:

ATCM, UNIT 15, Siddeley House, 50 Canbury Park Road, Kingston, KT2 6LX

Or

Sent via E-Mail to: info@atcm.co.uk

The complainant should:

- Clearly state that they are making a complaint.
- Provide essential details of the issue, including the name and location of the practitioner concerned.
- Indicate whether they wish to register a concern (informal complaint) or make a formal complaint to be considered by the PCC.
- Provide full contact details, including telephone number and email address.
- Supply any relevant documents or evidence supporting the complaint.

5. Informal Complaints

ATCM will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days. The complaint will be recorded confidentially in the ATCM Complaints Register. Where appropriate, ATCM may encourage local or informal resolution between the complainant and practitioner, if this can be achieved safely and satisfactorily.

6. Formal Complaints

If a matter cannot be resolved informally or raises serious professional concerns, it will be handled as a formal complaint.

The Chair of the PCC will acknowledge the complaint within 10 working days and appoint an Investigating Officer. The complainant will be informed of the appointed officer's contact details. The complainant must confirm in writing that they understand and agree to proceed under ATCM's complaint procedure. The Investigating Officer will send a copy of the complaint and this procedure to the practitioner concerned, who must respond within 21 working days. The PCC may:

- exchange written statements between both parties for comment;
- request further evidence or clarification from third parties;
- seek legal or professional advice if necessary.

The Investigating Officer will notify both parties of the schedule for the next PCC meeting where the complaint will be reviewed.

7. Adjudication and Outcomes

Once all evidence has been considered, the PCC will make findings and recommendations to the Executive Council (EC), which will make the final decision.

Possible outcomes include:

- No case to answer.
- Formal warning or reprimand issued to the practitioner.
- Referral to another committee for professional review or further assessment.
- Temporary suspension of membership (not exceeding 90 days) pending further action.

- Removal from the register (disqualification from ATCM membership) for serious breaches of professional conduct or law.

The Executive Council will issue the final decision in writing to the practitioner within 14 days, and will inform the complainant of the outcome.

8. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All complaints are handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection laws. Records of complaints are retained securely and reviewed periodically to identify trends and promote learning.

9. Right of Appeal

Practitioners have the right to appeal decisions of the PCC or EC in accordance with ATCM's Appeals Procedure. Details of this process will be provided with the written decision.

10. Transparency

ATCM may publish anonymised information or case summaries in accordance with its Publication Policy, to promote transparency and public confidence.

(Approved by ATCM Executive Council in November 2000, Revised in March 2025)