



## **Suspension, Reinstatement, and Publication of Disciplinary Decisions**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy provides a clear and fair procedure for the suspension and reinstatement of membership following findings of misconduct, whether related or unrelated to professional practice, and sets out the circumstances under which disciplinary decisions may be announced to members or the public.

Its purpose is to uphold ATCM's professional standards, protect the public, and maintain confidence in the profession and the Association.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture UK (ATCM) who are subject to disciplinary action under the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) and Council authority.

It covers:

- Professional-related misconduct – offences or behaviour directly related to clinical practice, professional ethics, or fitness to practise.
- Non-professional-related misconduct – offences or conduct outside professional practice that may affect the reputation of ATCM or public confidence.

### **3. Principles**

- All disciplinary actions shall be fair, proportionate, and transparent.
- Reinstatement of membership after suspension shall be subject to formal review and not automatic.
- Decisions on publication or announcement shall be guided by public interest, confidentiality, and reputational impact.
- ATCM shall always act in a manner consistent with its Code of Professional Conduct and Data Protection Policy.

### **4. Suspension Procedure**

#### **4.1 Grounds for Suspension**

A member may be suspended if:

- The PCC finds evidence of serious misconduct, breach of ethical or clinical standards, or unfitness to practise; or
- The member is convicted of an offence that may bring ATCM or the profession into disrepute.

#### **4.2 Duration and Conditions**

- The PCC shall recommend a defined period of suspension (normally 3–12 months).
- The Council shall confirm the decision in writing, including reasons, effective dates, and any conditions.
- During suspension, the member:
  - Must not use ATCM membership or credentials;

- May not participate in ATCM activities, committees, or voting;
- Must comply with any requirements set by the PCC or Council (e.g., training, reflection, or supervision).

## 5. Reinstatement Procedure

### 5.1 Application

At the end of the suspension period, the member must apply in writing for reinstatement within 30 days, providing:

- Confirmation that all conditions have been met;
- Evidence of rehabilitation (e.g. ethics CPD, reflective statement, completion of community service if applicable);
- A statement affirming future adherence to ATCM's professional standards.

### 5.2 Review by the Professional Conduct Committee

The PCC shall review the application and supporting evidence.

- **For professional-related cases:** The PCC shall assess whether the member is now fit to practise, and whether sufficient insight, remorse, and professional rehabilitation have been demonstrated.
- **For non-professional-related cases:** The PCC shall assess whether the member's conduct continues to affect ATCM's reputation and whether the individual has demonstrated responsible behaviour since the offence.

The PCC may request additional evidence, such as a supervisor's report or interview with the member.

### 5.3 Recommendation and Council Decision

The PCC will recommend one of the following:

1. Full reinstatement;
2. Reinstatement subject to conditions (probation, supervision, or training);
3. Extension of suspension; or
4. Termination of membership (for ongoing unfitness to practise).

The Council shall make the final decision and inform the member in writing within 30 days.

## 6. Publication and Announcement of Disciplinary Decisions

### 6.1 Principles

ATCM recognises the importance of transparency while respecting confidentiality. Disciplinary decisions will be published only where necessary to protect the public or maintain confidence in the profession.

### 6.2 When to Announce

ATCM may publish or announce a disciplinary decision (with or without the member's name) if:

- The misconduct relates to professional practice, patient safety, or ethical breaches;

- The matter has already entered the public domain (e.g. court decision);
- The member held a public or official role within ATCM;
- Omission would risk damaging public trust or transparency.

### **6.3 When Not to Announce**

ATCM will not normally announce cases that are:

- Minor or administrative in nature;
- Unrelated to professional practice and not in the public domain;
- Resolved with evidence of rehabilitation and low risk to the public.

### **6.4 Format of Publication**

Where publication is justified, ATCM shall issue a brief factual statement stating the nature of the misconduct, sanction, and duration, avoiding unnecessary personal or identifying details.

### **6.5 Retraction of Publication**

If a suspended member is reinstated, ATCM may issue an update confirming reinstatement and completion of conditions or remove prior online announcements after a defined period, at Council's discretion.

## **7. Record Keeping**

All documents, evidence, and decisions relating to suspension and reinstatement shall be securely stored for seven years. The PCC shall maintain a confidential log of all disciplinary outcomes, accessible only to authorised officers.

## **8. Confidentiality**

All proceedings are confidential. Disclosure beyond authorised Council or PCC members is prohibited unless required by law or justified under section 6 of this policy.

## **9. Policy Review**

This policy shall be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legal, regulatory, or governance changes.

## **10. Effective Date**

Approved by ATCM Council on 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2025

Effective from 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2025

Policy version: 1.0

Responsible Committee: Professional Conduct Committee