

# Complaints Procedures

## 1. IATEFL's commitment

1.1 IATEFL is committed to delivering a high quality service to its members. Members are provided with procedures to follow where there is cause for concern.

1.2 These procedures also apply to members of IATEFL office staff.

1.3 We aim to handle complaints in a way that

- encourages informal conciliation
- is fair and efficient
- treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality
- aims for early resolution.

## 2. Types of complaints

The following list indicates examples of the type of complaint covered by this procedure

- the behaviour of a committee member
- the behaviour of a member of IATEFL
- the behaviour of a member of office staff
- a failing in an IATEFL service
- discrimination (on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.)
- harassment.

## 3. Results of complaints

Complaints will not always produce the results preferred by the complainant. For instance, policy decisions or resourcing may affect the level of service provided. However we undertake to inform you of the results of a complaint and the reasons for it.

## 4. Anonymity

A copy of the written complaint will normally be supplied to the person who is the subject of the grievance. In general those about whom a complaint is being made have a right to know what is being claimed and who is making a complaint. There are exceptions to this rule, for instance in the early stages of some cases of harassment where the person making the complaint has the right to remain anonymous until the outcome of the investigation has been decided.

## 5. Confidentiality

It is IATEFL's expectation that the confidentiality of the documentation generated by a complaint will be respected by all parties.

## **6. The complaints procedure**

### **Stage 1**

Complaints of a minor nature should be raised with the person responsible or with the chair of an appropriate committee with the aim of resolving the problem directly and informally.

If the person making the complaint is a member of the office staff, the complaint should be discussed with the person's line manager first.

### **Stage 2**

Where it has not been possible to resolve matters to your satisfaction under stage 1, you should write to the President. Your complaint must be specific and comprehensively documented. You should present full details, including your name and address, any relevant documentation, dates, locations and witnesses as appropriate. You should also detail any previous unsuccessful attempts at resolution.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your complaint. This will normally be within 5 working days, but there are occasions when the President is unavailable. You will be informed if there is likely to be any delay in the process.

A meeting will be arranged between you and the President or other appropriate authority delegated to carry out the task on behalf of IATEFL to discuss the matter. Wherever possible the President or delegated person will take a second party to observe the meeting. If there is no appropriate person available within the country of the complainant then a virtual meeting may be held. You may, if you wish, be accompanied by a fellow member. A written record of the meeting will be made by the President or appointed person.

The President or appointed person, and a second party, will hold a separate meeting with the person who is the subject of the complaint, who may be accompanied by a fellow member. The President or delegated person may interview any witnesses. A written record of the meeting will be made.

The President may delegate the task to another person in the event that he/she considers that he/she knows the other party too well and that this might compromise the impartiality of the result.

Each party will be informed about the information obtained from the other party and a resolution sought.

The procedure outlined in Stage 2 will normally be completed within a month.

### **Stage 3**

If the complaint remains unresolved under stage 2 to your satisfaction, you may write to the President explaining why this is so and seek an enquiry by a Complaints Committee.

A Complaints Committee will be formed from at least three of the trustees of the Company who will investigate further. They may seek further written evidence from you to clarify matters. They may also decide, if in their opinion the evidence justifies it, to uphold (or not to do so) a complaint without proceeding further with investigation.

The Complaints Committee may decide to further interview you and the person who is the subject of the complaint and any witnesses. You may be accompanied by a fellow member. The person who is the subject of the complaint may also be accompanied by a fellow member.

A written record will be made of the proceedings.

IATEFL will notify you in writing of the decision reached and the reason for it, together with any consequent action.

## **7. Consequences**

If a complaint is upheld, the subject of the complaint will be notified in writing. If a second complaint is upheld against the same person, the trustees will consider whether the person should be excluded from IATEFL (eg. in the case of gross professional misconduct), or, in the case of a committee member, asked to step down from the committee.