Detailed procedure

1 If an individual or group is unhappy with the way in which a member of the BAcC’s staff has behaved or dealt with them, the first step is to write to the manager of the person with whom they have been dealing, explaining fully the nature of their concerns.

2 Confirmation of receipt of the complaint will be sent within seven working days.

3 The manager will first look at the nature of any complaint in order to consider whether it should more properly be dealt with under any other existing British Acupuncture Council procedures.

4 If the manager considers that the complaint should be dealt with under other BAcC procedures, the complainant will be notified of this within a further seven working days and will shortly afterwards receive a confirmation of receipt by the committee to which the complaint was referred together with a timescale for the matter to be resolved.

5 If the manager does not believe that the complaint has sufficient substance to warrant further action he/she will notify the complainant in writing within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint and the matter will be considered closed.

6 If the manager believes that there is prima facie evidence of administrative failures or inappropriate conduct by BAcC staff, he/she will fully investigate the circumstances of the complaint and provide a response in writing within 28 days of the receipt of the complaint, detailing any action taken against a staff member or action recommended to improve BAcC administrative systems, and sending a formal apology to the complainant.
7 A report of the complaint, together with any action taken either against a staff member or action recommended to improve BAcC administrative systems, will be presented to the chief executive.

8 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage of the complaints procedure, either in the action taken or in the manner in which the procedure has been used, the next stage of making a complaint will be to write to the chief executive of the British Acupuncture Council, outlining in full the reasons for not finding the process or outcome acceptable.

9 The chief executive will review both the process of the manager’s investigation and his/her eventual decision. If the chief executive is satisfied that both meet the Principles of Good Administration, he/she will respond in writing to the complainant within seven days reporting this finding.

10 If the chief executive is not satisfied with either the process or the outcome of the complaint, he/she will re-examine the details of the complaint and provide a response in writing within 28 days, detailing what action has been taken to address the issues raised by the complainant and offering a formal apology to the complainant.

11 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the second stage of the complaints process, the next stage of making a complaint will be to write to the chair of the Governing Board of the British Acupuncture Council, outlining in full the reasons for not finding the process or outcome acceptable.

12 At the next available Governing Board meeting, both the report from the chief executive and the further response from the complainant will be considered by the full Governing Board.

13 The Governing Board will make a final decision, to be communicated to the complainant by the chair within seven working days of the Board meeting, and the matter will then be considered closed. If the complaint is upheld the chair will offer a formal apology in writing to the complainant as well as outlining what action has been taken as a result of the complaint.
14 If, in the view of the chair of the Governing Board, there will be too great a delay before the next Governing Board meeting, a Complaints Review Committee may be convened to expedite the process. The Committee will consist of the chair and two other Governing Board members, of whom one must be a lay, ie non-practitioner, member.

15 If the complaint is not about the staff or systems of the BAcC but relates instead to any of the public statements or commitments made on behalf of the BAcC, or to any of the structures or functions of the BAcC, it will be dealt with by the chief executive who will provide a written response in writing within 28 days. He/she may also invite the complainant to a meeting if he/she believes that this will facilitate a resolution to the complaint.

16 A report of the complaint, together with any actions taken, will be formally presented to the Governing Board.

17 If neither correspondence nor a meeting with the chief executive resolves the matter, the complainant will be able to pursue the steps outlined above in paragraphs 11 to 13.

A report detailing all complaints received, apologies offered and remedial actions taken will be presented to the Governing Board every twelve months as a part of the BAcC’s performance review process.

October 2012