

Complaining to *The Cambridge Student*

1. Complaints will generally be allowed on the following grounds:

- a. TCS has misrepresented an individual or organisation
- b. TCS has unduly caused offence to its readership
- c. TCS personnel have acted unprofessionally, immorally or illegally in the pursuit of a story
- d. TCS has violated the standards of journalism, especially those standards enshrined in the UK Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice

2. Procedure for handling complaints

- a. Reporters, sub-editors, and the Editors should retain all notes related to TCS' stories for a period of at least six months or, if related to a complaint, for the duration of a complaint until it is fully resolved, whichever is the longer. When possible, these should be kept in the TCS offices.
- b. The Editor should keep a log of all contacts made to the paper that could be considered complaints.
- c. Any contact that the Editor thinks may constitute or develop into a complaint should receive an individual reply.
- d. **To make a formal complaint, a complainant should submit to the editor a text in any reasonable format noting:**
 - their desire to make a complaint
 - the specific story or TCS operative with which the complaint is concerned
 - the details of any offensive material, misleading statements, or unprofessional behaviour concerned in the complaint
 - the details of any specific harms caused by the actions of TCS
 - a method by which the complainant can be reached for correspondenceTCS should have a Complaints Form for this purpose that is easily accessible.
- e. The first reply to any complainant or potential complainant should include a copy of or link to the TCS Complaints Procedure and a copy of or link to the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice, physical copies of those documents or written references to where they can be found.
- f. The Editor should investigate complaints to see if they can be informally resolved.
- g. Informal resolutions should be summarised and reported in writing to each Board meeting.
- h. If the Editor and a complainant cannot agree on an informal resolution, or if the resolution would involve a serious admission of civil or criminal liability, the complaint should automatically be passed to the Board. The complainant should be notified that their complaint is sitting with the Board and of when they should expect to receive a reply.
- i. The Board (with the Editor lacking a vote) shall have fourteen actual days from receiving a complaint to investigate the complaint and either render judgement or seek additional time. The Board may take up to 20 additional days on the grounds that:
 - i. Professional legal advice must be sought on the matter
 - ii. The Board is unable to meet for reasonable logistical reasons (i.e., it is mid-summer and several members are abroad) and must work more slowly.
 - iii. Additional evidence related to the complaint must be gathered and cannot be found within the fourteen-day limit for a specified reason.When taking additional time under i.i-i.iii above, the Board should advise the complainant on the reasons for delay and on when they should expect a reply. Any delay beyond ten days for reasons not specified in i.i-i.iii above or beyond thirty-four days for reasons including i.i-i.iii above must be agreed with the complainant.
- j. Complainants should be advised of all of their avenues for appeal of the Board's formal judgement at the time when that judgment is rendered.

3. Considerations for the Editor and Board

- a. TCS should consider their judgments on complaints on the basis of fairness and not simply on the minimum action required to avoid liability or public embarrassment.
- b. TCS should not harass, threaten, or otherwise unduly dissuade a complainant from proceeding with a complaint and should volunteer procedural information helpful to making a complaint.
- c. TCS should be transparent in its operational practices and in how it handles complaints. It should, at the same time, protect confidential sources and methods of information-gathering.
- d. TCS should maintain accurate records of complaints and judgements and use these to educate its editors and reporters in order to avoid the repetition of harmful mistakes.

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