

SAAB Complaints Policy

Complaints procedures for the management of the South African Archaeological Bulletin (SAAB)

The aim of this policy is to ensure the smooth operation of the South African Archaeological Bulletin (SAAB). This policy is founded on the principles of professionalism and guarding the confidentiality of the complaint and the complainant. It is important to note that while complaints are not desirable, in cases where they do arise, they must be handled without favour but with absolute fairness. Complaints should be viewed positively as allowing us an opportunity to improve our internal operations, ensuring that the SAAB continues to be an internationally recognised and ISI rated journal.

In the context of this policy, a complainant is defined as someone who has a grievance with the behaviour of or management from our Editorial Team; someone who feels that the submission guideline which guides our operations has been compromised. There are three types of complaints dealt with in this policy. These are complaints by : (i) authors, (ii) members of the Editorial Team, and (iii) members of the Editorial Board, and the Councils of ASAPA and SAAS. Authors are defined as prospective individuals who have submitted an article publishable within the South African Archaeological Bulletin. Editorial Team (appointed by the ASAPA) is composed of all the members responsible for the ongoing publication of the Bulletin. Editorial Board members are appointed by the ASAPA Council while the Council of SAAS provides, as publishers of the Bulletin, an oversight responsibility over the journal. To always ensure good working relationship amongst members of the Editorial Team, complaints should be attended to internally as best as possible under the leadership of the Editor-in-Chief. However, in instances where this has not been possible, the Appeals Committee should be approached by the Editor-in-Chief who must provide details of the complaint and the resolution he or she had reached to the dissatisfaction of the people/person concerned. In the event that the Editor-in-Chief does not submit the appeal within 14 days of receiving it, the aggrieved people/person can approach the Appeals Committee directly.

Two Editorial Board members must be appointed (nominated by other Editorial Board members) to serve on the Appeals Committee composed of these members and the ASAPA Council. This Appeals Committee shall resolve complaints not addressed by the Editor-in-Chief to the satisfaction of the people/person concerned.

Handling of complaints

It is our intention that complaints must be addressed quickly, fairly, and with absolute confidentiality as the cornerstone. There are three type of complaints and the nature of the complaint determines how it

must be reported, who is responsible for handling the complaint, how it shall be resolved, and the procedure to follow to appeal against a decision made Any decision made thereafter. Complaints must be addressed within 14 working days from the official acknowledgement of the complaint received (informing the complainant of the progress made at various stages. The following procedures shall appropriately guide the handling of all complaints received.

General procedures

1. All complaints must be written and signed by the aggrieved people/person.
2. Once received, every complaint shall be officially acknowledged by the Editor-in-Chief, thus informing the complainant within three days of receiving it.
3. The complaint will be investigated following the general procedures presented in this policy, depending on the nature of the complaint.
4. Within 14 days of acknowledging the complaint, the complainant should be furnished with the final decision and advised of the appeal procedure in the event of dissatisfaction with the decision made.
5. Appeals must be formally acknowledged within three days of receipt and be resolved within 14 days from the date of acknowledgement.
6. Complaints by members of the Editorial Board and the ASAPA Council must be addressed first to the Editor-in-Chief for review by the Editorial Team. In instances where the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainants, appeals should be sent directly to the Honorary Secretary of the SAAS.

Complaints by authors

1. An author submits a formal complaint addressed to the Editor-in-Chief.
2. The complaint is formally acknowledged by the Editor-in-Chief within three days of receipt.
3. The Editor-in-Chief alerts the Editorial Team, providing them with the full details of the complaint and the background of the complaint. A meeting to discuss and resolve the complaint must be organised within a reasonable time thereafter and considering the 14 day period from the acknowledgement of the complaint.
4. The Editor-in-Chief formally communicates with the complainant, informing him or her of the outcome of the review of the complaint. The complainant must be advised of how to appeal in the case of dissatisfaction.
5. In case of an appeal, this must be addressed to the Chairperson of ASAPA, who must constitute another review of the complaint by the Appeals Committee (composed of members of Council together with two Editorial Board members).

6. The Chairperson of ASAPA Council officially communicates the decision of the Appeals Committee to the complainant, also advising the Editor-in-Chief of the outcome. The decision by the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.

Complaints by members of the Editorial Team

1. Concerned member(s) must officially notify the Editor-in-Chief of the complaint. In the event that the Editor-in-Chief is the complainant, he or she must notify one of the Editors (Field and Technical Reports/Book Reviews) who must then act as per the procedures in this policy.
2. The complaint(s) is/are formally acknowledged by the Editor-in-Chief within three days of receipt. The Editor-in-Chief must also notify all other Editorial Team members of the complaint received soon after acknowledging it, providing them with the full details of the complaint(s) and the background of the complaint(s). The 14 day period from the acknowledgement of the complaint must be noted. The Editor-in-Chief arranges a meeting with the concerned member(s), with the aim of discussing the complaint to reach some form of finality. The Editor-in-Chief formally communicates the decision to the complainant(s), informing him or her or them of the outcome of the review of the complaint. The complainant(s) must be advised of how to appeal in the case of dissatisfaction.
3. In the case of an appeal, this must be addressed to the Chairperson of ASAPA, who must constitute another review of the complaint by the Appeals Committee (composed of members of Council together with two Editorial Board members).
4. The Chairperson of ASAPA Council officially communicates the decision of the Appeals Committee to the complainant, also advising the Editor-in-Chief of the outcome. The decision by the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.

Complaints by members of the Editorial Board and Council members of ASAPA

1. Concerned member(s) of the Editorial Board and Council members of ASAPA must officially notify the Editor-in-Chief of the complaint.
2. The complaint(s) is/are formally acknowledged by the Editor-in-Chief within three days of receipt. The Editor-in-Chief must also notify all other Editorial Team members of the complaint received, providing them with the full details of the complaint and the background of the complaint.
3. The Editor-in-Chief arranges a meeting with the concerned member(s) within a reasonable time to discuss and resolve the complaint to reach some form of finality. The 14 day period from the acknowledgement of the complain must be noted..The Editor-in-Chief formally communicates the

decision to the complainant, informing him or her or them of the outcome of the review of the complaint. The complainant(s) must be advised of how to appeal in the case of dissatisfaction.

4. In case of an appeal by the Editorial Board members and Council members of ASAPA, this must be addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the SAAS Council, who must constitute another review of the complaint by the Council members of the SAAS.
5. The Honorary Secretary officially communicates the decision of the of the SAAS Council, also advising the Editor-in-Chief of the outcome. The decision by the SAAS Council shall be final and binding.

Complaints by members of the SAAS Council

1. Concerns by a member(s) of the SAAS Council must be formally communicated via the Honorary Secretary to the Chairperson of the ASAPA Council.
2. Resolving the complaint from the SAAS Council should be considered in the context of the ASAPA and SAAS five-year agreement (2015-2020).

This complaints policy shall be reviewed annually to make necessary amendments where this has been considered necessary.