

# Appeal Process for AMSA Conference Participants

This document provides guidelines and procedures to be followed by the AMSA Board and those attending AMSA conferences in the instance of an appeal of a sanction related to a conflict that occurred at an AMSA conference.

The AMSA Board ensures conference participants that:

- All disputes and complaints will be handled fairly, respectfully, confidentially, and in a timely manner;
- All Board members are aware of the “Conference Behaviour” policy and the “Appeal Process”;
- These guidelines—and the “Statement of Appropriate Conduct at AMSA Conferences”—will be regularly reviewed at the biennial AMSA Board retreats.

AMSA has a dispute resolution process to manage appeals of sanctions following problems that develop between or among conference participants. Anyone appealing a sanction will receive a response within four weeks of the receipt of such a request. This response will depend on the issue being raised and the context within which the original problem occurred.

**Options for handling appeals of sanctions following AMSA conferences include—but are not limited to—the following:**

**Option 1:** Wherever possible, an attempt should be made to resolve the issue between the parties in an informal way. AMSA will not consider a formal grievance unless the parties to the dispute have met and discussed the matter in dispute within 14 days after AMSA has issued a sanction to one of the parties. The meeting between the parties must be documented in writing. Information in the documentation must include: 1) the date and location of the meeting; 2) names of any mediating parties who took part in the discussion; 3) a brief outline of the discussion, highlighting the particular issue that could not be resolved. If the parties are still unable to resolve the dispute at this meeting, then an appeal of the sanction may be sent to the AMSA president as outlined in Option 2.

**Option 2:** If an issue requires further consideration, or cannot be resolved as stipulated in Option 1, a formal appeal—including documentation of the meeting held between the parties (as described above, in Option 1)—should be sent in writing to the President of AMSA outlining the dispute, the type of sanction that was given, and the response sought. Such complaints must present factual accounts and avoid the use of abusive and insulting language. Complaints not written according to these guidelines will not be addressed by the organization.

The President of AMSA will form an ad hoc committee comprised of no fewer than three Board members: a minimum of two members of the AMSA Executive (ex-officio members may be selected to serve on this committee) and one AMSA member who is not a member of the AMSA Executive committee but has been a member of AMSA for at least two years. [The complainant will be consulted in the appointment of the AMSA member external to the AMSA Executive Committee.] The President will select one of these committee members who will serve as chairperson for this ad hoc committee. Members of the ad-hoc committee for appeals of sanctions may not have a conflict of interest involving the issue under dispute or the person making the complaint.

**The dispute resolution ad-hoc committee will**

- Consider the materials presented from the complainant and the respondent
- Determine whether there are grounds for AMSA to reconsider the sanction;
- If yes, then suggest avenues and options to address the dispute;
- If no, then have clear reasons why this decision was reached;
- Recommend action to the Executive Committee in response to the appeal.

**The Ad Hoc Committee Chairperson will**

- Request relevant information relating to the grievance from the complainant and the respondent;
- Keep records of communications and discussions about the situation;
- Call meetings of the committee to discuss the problem and the sanction being appealed;
- Provide a report on the situation as a whole to the Executive Committee of AMSA.

The President of AMSA will then notify the complainant and respondent in writing about the ad hoc committee's decision. This decision shall be final; no additional appeals of the case will be considered.

**Option 3:** Where the original issue is of a legal nature, it will be referred to an external body for mediation or processing.

*The AMSA Board thanks The Australian Sociological Association for allowing us to use their "Grievance Procedures" as a model for this statement.*