

Student Advice Centre

Students' Union Complaints Procedure

"We aim to provide service of a standard acceptable to all our users. All complaints are welcomed, if you feel dissatisfied in any way please let us know."

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the procedures we will follow when we receive a complaint from users of the service, an organisation, or member of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff or volunteers, which would be dealt with through the Students' Union's grievance and disciplinary procedures or job applicants which would be dealt with via the Students' Union's recruitment procedure.

If you have a complaint regarding a full time officer this would be dealt with through the democratic structure of the Union. Full details can be found in the Students' Union constitution, a copy of which is available on request from the Union's Information Centres.

This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve an issue between the Students' Union and any complainant. It requires the Students' Union's staff and the Union's Executive Committee to do everything that they can to resolve the complaint.

Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- Dissatisfaction with the service, for example, unacceptable delays or failure to deliver a quality service
- Disputes between the service user and the organisation regarding policy, procedures or activities
- Discourtesy, inappropriate language/behaviour or unhelpfulness on the part of staff

THE PROCEDURE

In the event of a complaint being of a minor nature, but requiring immediate attention, the issue should be reported to the nearest member of staff, who will address the matter as soon as possible.

Staff will log all complaints received in a complaint log, which will be monitored by the appropriate service manager.

When someone wishes to formally register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted:

(NB where the complaint is against the Service Manager, the same procedure will be followed, but with the Students' Union's General Manager substituting for the Manager's role at all stages.)

Stage 1

The complaint should be discussed with the service's manager. All managers will prioritise complaints and will endeavour to see a complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being brought to their attention.

The details of the complaint will be recorded using a standard complaints form (copies of which can be found at reception, student activities, Student Advice Centres & Information Centres). The manager will record the details of the complaint and ask the complainant to agree and sign the complaint form, a copy of which will be given to the complainant.

The manager will do all they can at this stage to resolve the complaint, but may need to make further enquiries. If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the manager should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by interview.

The complainant should receive a written response within 10 working days of the initial meeting with the manager. This letter will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this letter should be attached to the complaint record.

If a response by letter is unsuitable, the complainant will be offered an interview with the manager to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days as before. A written record of this interview will be kept and signed by the complainant.

If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they should ask for the matter to be dealt with under Stage 2 of the complaints procedure, within 10 working days of being notified of the outcome of their complaint.

Stage 2

Where the matter is not resolved by stage 1, the manager will immediately pass the complaint file to the General Manager who will notify the Students Union Council, or, where the complaint involves a member(s) of staff the Students' Union Executive Committee, providing them with a full record of the complaint.

The complainant will be informed that their complaint has been passed to the Executive Committee or Union Council and advised of the date that they will next be meeting.

The Executive Committee/Union Council will review the decision made at Stage 1 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

The Executive Committee/Union Council will notify the complainant of its decision and the reasoning behind it within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint. An accurate written record of the proceedings must be kept and this should be copied to the manager concerned. The service manager is responsible for maintaining and monitoring records of all complaints received.

In the event of the complainant not being satisfied with the decision of the executive committee/Union Council, they can submit an appeal.

Stage 3

If dissatisfied following stage 2, complainants have a right of appeal. The complainant should put his/her request for appeal in writing to the Students' Union's General Manager within 10 working days of being notified of the resolution of stage

The General Manager will then refer the matter over to the University, to be considered by the Dean of Students. The decision made at this stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

Where a complaint has been upheld against a member of staff, the manager concerned will refer this to the General Manager who will consider whether formal disciplinary action should be taken.

The full text of this procedure is available from the Student Information Centres and Student Advice Centres.

Student Advice Centre
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Email: sac@staffs.ac.uk
Log on to www.staffsunion.com for more information.

