

Student Advice Centre – Complaints Policy

Statement of Intent

"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.

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 at : <http://www.staffsunion.com/union/policy/>

This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve an issue between the Student Advice Centre and any complainant. It requires the Student Advice Centre staff and the Union's Senior Management Team 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 advice 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 Complaint 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 Advice and Information Team Manager.

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

Stage 1

The complaint should be emailed to the Advice and Information Team Manager corinne.osborne@staffs.ac.uk who will prioritise complaints and will endeavour to see a complainant within 5 working days of the complaint being brought to their attention. The complaint email should contain specific details of the complaint, a time line of events and details regarding the outcome the complainant expects.

The Advice and Information Team 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.

(If the complaint involves the Advice and Information Team Manager then the complainant should follow Stage Two of the procedure as outlined below).

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

If a written response 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 (or the matter involves the Advice and Information Team Manager) the manager will immediately pass the complaint file to the Membership Services Manager who will review the Stage 1 complaint process and make any further investigations necessary.

The Membership Services Manager will issue a written response to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being referred to Stage 2.

If a written response is unsuitable, the complainant will be offered an interview with the Membership Services 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.

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 Academic Registrar and Director of the Student Experience. The decision made at this stage is final.

Where the complaint is with regard to advice regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) then the complainant may be entitled to refer the complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). An information leaflet "Your complaint and the Ombudsman" is available from the Student Advice Centre or online at

<http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/faq/complain.html>