

Schedule 7

Complaints Procedure

1 Principles

- 1.1 The complaints procedure is a stepped process. It starts wherever possible with an informal stage. If this is unsuccessful in achieving resolution, a complaint can then be made in writing. The complaints procedure includes a final stage involving a senior member of University staff for those complaints that cannot be resolved within the Students' Union.
- 1.2 The Students' Union may with the written agreement of the complainant, vary the complaints procedure. The following non-exhaustive list of examples indicate some of the circumstances where this might be appropriate:
- 1.2.1 The complainant has special needs and varying the procedure would make it easier for the complainant to pursue their complaint.
- 1.2.2 There is a close personal relationship between the person against who the complaint is made and the person named in the procedure to deal with the complaint.
- 1.3 All written complaints will be recorded in the DSU complaints register. The Director will provide aggregate data on complaints to the Trustees on request.

2 Complaints from Parents

- 2.1 DSU, recognising that its Members are adults, will encourage Members in the first instance to pursue their own complaints wherever possible rather than pursuing them through other parties.
- 2.2 Complaints from parents will be treated as a complaint from a Students' Union member and will be dealt with under the complaints process outlined below accordingly. Students' Union staff will not compromise data protection rules or confidentiality in relation to its members in order to respond to a complaint from a parent.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 Students' Union Staff and officers have a responsibility to try to resolve all complaints to the satisfaction of all parties.
- 3.2 Complainants have a responsibility to :
 - 3.2.1 ensure that they use the stepped process outlined in the procedure;
 - 3.2.2 be clear, accurate and truthful in their explanation;
 - 3.2.3 indicate what might be a satisfactory resolution for them; and
 - 3.2.4 respect the legal, regulatory, financial and other constraints placed on DSU.

4 Complaints Process

- 4.1 Reasonable efforts should be made in the first instance to resolve complaints informally.
- 4.2 Where a party to any informal complaint resolution carried out pursuant to clause 4.1 above, is not satisfied with the outcome, they may complain in writing to the President.
- 4.3 Once a written complaint has been received, the President will liaise with the Director to appoint a senior manager to act on his / her behalf. This manager shall act as a point of contact for the complainant and try to ensure a satisfactory resolution for all parties.
- 4.4 The senior manager shall:
 - 4.4.1 acknowledge receipt of each complaint within 5 clear days;
 - 4.4.2 request investigation by an appropriate staff member and ensure a response from the staff member within 15 clear days;
 - 4.4.3 ensure auditable records are maintained; and
 - 4.4.4 inform the President of the result of the investigation.

- 4.5 The President shall advise the complainant of the proposed resolution on behalf of the Students' Union and determine whether the complaint has been resolved or not. This will be confirmed in writing
- 4.6 If there has been no resolution the President will also advise the complainant of the next stage of the procedure in writing.
- 4.7 If the complaint has not been resolved the complainant may complain to the Pro Vice Chancellor with responsibility for the Student Experience at the University who will act in accordance with the University Complaints Procedure, a copy of which shall be available on request.
- 4.8 In the absence of the Pro Vice Chancellor another senior staff member nominated by the University will consider the complaint.
- 4.9 The complainant may withdraw his / her complaint at any time. Written complaints must be withdrawn by writing to the President or the senior staff member appointed to investigate the complaint. This is to prevent complaints with no formal resolution remaining on file.

5 Service Complaints

- 5.1 Complaints about service delivery should be raised with the individual responsible for that service (The Service Manager). The procedure outlined above shall be followed.

6 Staff Complaints

- 6.1 Any complaints from students or officers regarding staff members should be raised in the first instance with the individual concerned. If the nature of the complaint makes this difficult, it should be raised with the staff member's line manager. The general procedure outlined above should then be followed. In the event of a complaint regarding the Director, Students or Student Officers may approach the President in the first instance and make their complaint either informally or in writing.
- 6.2 The President may choose to use the formal grievance procedure to resolve staffing complaints.

7 Elected Officer Complaints

- 7.1 Any complaints from Students regarding Student Officers should be raised in the first instance with the Student Officer concerned. If the nature of the complaint makes this difficult it should be raised with the President either informally or in writing.
- 7.2 If the complaint is about the President, and the nature of the complaint means that it is difficult to raise it directly, the complaint should be raised with the Vice President and can be made either informally or in writing.
- 7.3 The President or Deputy President may choose to use the disciplinary process to resolve complaints against Student Officers.
- 7.4 All complainants raising an issue about Student Officer conduct will be informed of the process for removal of officers, Bye-Law (4), clauses 18 and 20.

8 Complaints referred by the University

- 8.1 Complaints received and referred by the University from third parties from outside the University will be dealt with according to the process outlined above. Where a complaint has originally been made to the University informally, the Students Union will seek to deal with it informally unless the University requests otherwise.
- 8.2 Complaints received by the University in writing and which are then referred to the Students' Union will be responded to in accordance with the principles for written complaints.
- 8.3 If the University wishes to respond to a complainant directly and seeks information from the Students' Union to contribute to the response, the information requested will be provided in a timely and accurate manner.

9 Complaints originating from the University

- 9.1 The Students' Union reserves the right to distinguish between those complaints that are made by University staff in their formal capacity and complaints made by University staff in a personal capacity.
- 9.2 Complaints made by University staff in their formal capacity will include for example, issues arising from the University in its role as regulator or parent institution. These will be dealt with in accordance to the procedure outlined above.

- 9.3 Complaints made in a personal capacity by staff will include, for example, complaints that reflect the personal stance of the staff member rather than a University position or policy.
- 9.4 University staff making complaints in a personal capacity will be treated with respect and courtesy at all times. However, their complaint will be dealt with in the same manner as a complaint from the general public.

10 Complaints from the General Public

- 10.1 Complaints from the general public will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined above. From time to time the Union may be subject to malicious complaints or organised campaigns. In these instances, the President and Director will liaise with the University to manage its response and ensure that its response has regard for the reputation of both organisations.