



Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University of East London Students' Union (UELSU) aims to provide a service of a high standard that is acceptable to all users of our services. It actively encourages its users to provide feedback and suggestions on improvements and also where there may be a cause for concern. This policy aims to enable users of our services to make a complaint about UELSU's service provision.

2. Definition and Scope

- 2.1. A complaint is a verbal or written submission of dissatisfaction about an experience or service received from UELSU.
- 2.2. This policy refers to all members of UELSU and users of its services. Members are current registered students of the University of East London who have not opted out of membership to UELSU. Users are invited guests of UELSU and its affiliates or a valid user of one of UELSU services or activities.
- 2.3. The final decision regarding a matter raised under this Complaints Policy or any of the associated procedures shall normally be considered to be the final decision of the Students' Union: there is no right to further consideration of the same matter under a different associated policy.
- 2.4. A complaint will be received and handled with the appropriate level of confidentiality. It will be considered on its own merits, subject to any relevant legal or professional obligations.
- 2.5. The complainant will not be subject to any disadvantages or detrimental treatment arising from a complaint being received from or about them, regardless if the complaint is successful or not. Anonymous or malicious complaints will not be considered.
- 2.6. Any member mentioned in a complaint will not be treated less favourably by the Union than if the complaint had not been brought. If, however, a complaint against a member of Union staff is upheld, that staff member may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under UELSUs policies.
- 2.7. If a complaint about a Union member is upheld, that member may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under the Union's policy.
- 2.8. This policy doesn't cover complaints that specifically are about UELSU elections as this is covered by the regulations governing elections as specified in UELSU's Articles of Governance
- 2.9. Should the complaint be about a criminal offence the appropriate law agency will be contacted and the matter will be dealt fully by them. The Board of Trustees will be informed and retains the right to subject the complaint to UELSU disciplinary proceedings once the final decision has been given about the criminal offence by the appropriate law agency.

3. Time Frame for submission of a complaint

- 3.1. Complaints must be received within 7 working days of the incident taking place. This may be done:
 - 3.1.1. Verbally to a member of staff
 - 3.1.2. By using a web-based user response form
 - 3.1.3. By email to students.union@uel.ac.uk

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3.1.4. In writing to the Students' Union Chief Executive Officer or the President of the Students' Union: University of East London Students' Union. UEL Docklands Campus North Building 4 – 6 University Way. London E16 2RD

3.2. If a series of events arises to a complaint being submitted it must be done within 7 working days after the last event occurred.

4. Delegation of Responsibility

- 4.1. The submitted complaint will initially be dealt with by the staff member or officer who received the complaint. If the complaint is about the staff member or officer who receives it. It will be immediately referred to the relevant line manager. In the case of the complaint being about an officer this will be referred to the Head of Membership Deputy Chief Executive who may choose to follow the regulations and procedures as laid out in UELSU's Articles of Governance for complaints received about Executive Committee members, Union Council Members and NUS Annual Conference Delegates.
- 4.2. If the complaint is about a server breach of UELSU regulations, policies and or gross misconduct it will be directly referred to the Chief Executive who will follow the procedures of Stage 1 of a formal complaint. Should the complaint be about the Chief Executive it will be referred to the Students' Union Board of Trustees who may appoint a delegate to deal with matter, following the steps in Stage 1 of a formal complaint.

5. Complaints Procedural Stages

5.1. Informal Stage Early Resolution

- 5.1.1. The complainant should contact the Students' Union within the timeframe and methods as stated above.
- 5.1.2. The initial member of staff or officer should deal with the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter immediately.
- 5.1.3. If the initial staff member or officer is not able to resolve the complaint it will be referred to the relevant line manager who will attempt to resolve the issue immediately. Unless the issue involved refers to situations as outlined in delegation of responsibility. Every effort should be made by all parties to resolve the matter simply and quickly.
- 5.1.4. If the matter is not resolved immediately an informal meeting or discussion will be arranged at the earliest convenient time available to all parties involved to obtain a resolution.
- 5.1.5. Should a satisfactory resolution not be reached. The line manager will contact the complainant in writing within 3 working days of the date the meeting was held, with details of the complaint and record of the informal discussion along with the next procedural steps.
- 5.1.6. The complainant must confirm in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written record why they are not satisfied with the resolution given and that they wish to proceed onto the formal stage.
- 5.1.7. Should no written confirmation be received within the given timeframe. The complaint will be considered closed and the matter resolved.

5.2. Formal Stage; Stage 1 Investigation and Resolution

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- 5.2.1. The Line Manager will begin a formal investigation of the complaint. The manager may contact all parties concerned to make formal statements and submit additional evidence if required.
- 5.2.2. The investigation will focus on the key areas of the complaint and complainants desired outcome.
- 5.2.3. The investigation should take no longer than 20 working days from the complainants request to proceed to the formal stage. If due to the nature of the complaint or should circumstances prevent the completion of the investigation. The investigation period may be extended, however the complainant must be informed of this extension no longer than 1 working day before the original completion date deadline and be kept informed of any changes.
- 5.2.4. Within 3 working days of completion the complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the investigation. Which will state:
 - 5.2.4.1. Details of the proposed resolution; OR
 - 5.2.4.2. If no resolution has been proposed an explanation as to why it has not been considered possible
 - 5.2.4.3. A recommendation to the Union's Board of Trustees to establish a Disciplinary Panel
- 5.2.5. If the resolution proposed is not satisfactory the complainant will have 15 working days after the date of receipt of the outcome of stage 1 to appeal. This must be done in writing to the relevant line manager.
- 5.2.6. If no written request is received the complaint shall be considered closed and the matter resolved.

5.3. Stage 2 Appeal

- 5.3.1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 and has submitted a written request to appeal. The matter will be referred to the UELSU Board of Trustees who may choose to appoint a delegate (normally this will be the Chief Executive Officer) to review the complaint and investigation. If the complaint has been passed on to be dealt with by a UELSU Disciplinary Panel at stage 1, the final decision by the Disciplinary Panel will stand. The complainant may not seek to go to Stage 2 of this policy.
- 5.3.2. The reviewer shall have the power to:
 - 5.3.2.1. Consider whether there has been a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Stage 1 investigation
 - 5.3.2.2. Review the resolutions suggested to see if they are reasonable, practical and in line with the original complaint and desired outcome
 - 5.3.2.3. Consider new information that has come to light which was not available during the original investigation period that would have materially impacted upon the outcome.
- 5.3.3. Decided that:
 - 5.3.3.1. The resolution/outcome of Stage 1 was reasonable and practical and should stand
 - 5.3.3.2. Offer an alternative resolution based on the evidence produced from the review
- 5.3.4. The reviewer's decision will be final

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5.3.5. The review process should be conducted within 20 working days upon receipt of the written request to appeal. If due to the nature or circumstances of the appeal the review may be extended, the complainant must be notified no less than 1 working day before the deadline and kept informed of any changes. The reviewer will make every effort to complete the review in a timely manner.

6. Record of Complaints

- 6.1. All complaints will be recorded and kept on file. The minimum information being the nature or the complaint and the outcome. All complaints shall be treated with regard to the Confidentiality Policy of the Union.
- 6.2. An annual report will be given to UELSU's Board of Trustees detailing the minimum details of the complaint and the outcomes.

7. Publication of procedure and review

- 7.1. This policy and procedure will be available to view on UELSU's main online platform (normally this shall be the UELSU website). It will be reviewed at a minimum of every 2 years or when directed by legislated, regulated or procedural changes