

Corporate Complaints Policy



1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure covers complaints submitted by individuals, organisations or groups about the York University Students' Union, in particular services, corporate activities and standards.

1.2 A complaint is normally an expression of dissatisfaction by individuals, organisations or groups about action taken, lack of action, or about the standard of service provided.

1.3 YUSU endeavours to deliver our charitable work to the highest possible standard. We encourage and welcome feedback when this does not meet expectations. We are committed to ensuring complaints are received as useful feedback and will welcome complaints as opportunities to learn and improve the experience of others dealing with our organisation.

1.4 Complaints relating to other aspects of YUSU business will be dealt with under the following channels:

- Staffing matters must be handled via staffing protocols and the Grievance Process as appropriate.
- Sports and societies complaints must be handled via the Code of Conduct.
- Complaints about student media must be handled under the Media Charter.
- Election procedures or practice must be handled under the Election Guidance Bye-Law, and relevant rules for individual elections.

1.5 Any questions or disputes about the most appropriate procedure for handling a particular matter will be resolved by the supervising trustee.

2. General Principles

2.1 Frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints will not be accepted.

2.2 Any investigating leads should be unbiased. They should not be or remain in an investigating role if they have, or subsequently find they have, a conflict of interest.

2.3 Students considering making a complaint against YUSU may wish to seek independent help or guidance from the Advice Service at the Graduate Students' Association.

2.4 It is expected that all parties will act reasonably, fairly and courteously towards each other, and respect the process.

- 2.5 In the case of a group complaint, the Union shall invite the group to nominate one individual to act as a group representative, liaising with others concerned, and ensuring that they are kept informed.
- 2.6 Individual confidentiality will be respected as far as practicable, subject to appropriate reporting and the need to safeguard students, and ensure a full and fair investigation.
- 2.7 Anonymous complaints will not normally be accepted other than in exceptional circumstances which will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 2.8 All complaints will be dealt with fairly and in a timely way, in line with the process set out below.

3. Stage 1: Informal Stage

- 3.1 The majority of complaints and concerns should be easily and amicably resolved. In the first instance a complainant should contact relevant YUSU officer or staff member for complaint resolution, for example the person about whom the complaint is being raised (where appropriate) or a departmental manager. Staff members should listen to concerns and endeavour to resolve matters on a one to one basis. As the matter is considered, it may involve meetings, discussions, giving of further information, explanations, suggested solutions and/or an apology as appropriate.
- 3.2 Staff should request the attendance of a line manager if practicable, and if they believe that would help resolve the issue swiftly.
- 3.3 Only when the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved through informal discussions should the formal complaints procedure be used.

4. Stage 2: Formal Stage - Response

- 4.1 Complaints should be submitted to the Director of Representation and Support Services in the first instance, when the informal stage has been exhausted. Complaints will be considered valid if the complainant:
- Provides full contact details
 - Provides details of the event or occurrence giving rise to the complaint
 - Raises the complaint within six months of the event giving ground for the complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 4.2 When we receive your complaint we will acknowledge it as soon as possible, and within five working days of receipt.
- 4.3 The Director will decide whether the complaint should be investigated under the formal complaints procedure, or whether it would be more appropriately dealt with under another procedure, notifying the complainant accordingly. He/she will initiate an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the complaint, or appoint another colleague to investigate on his or her behalf and report back as the basis for a response.

- 4.4 The investigation should request a written statement from relevant parties and/or include minuted meetings as appropriate in order to establish the facts surrounding the complaint, any mitigating circumstances, consideration of mediation or conciliation if appropriate, and appropriate further action if any, as soon as feasible.
- 4.5 The aim should be to provide a satisfactory response to the complainant within twenty working days. In exceptional, or complex cases timescales may need to be extended. The investigation lead should ensure the complainant is kept updated and advised of any delay in proceedings.
- 4.6 Documentation relating to the complaint will be retained for twelve months.
- 4.7 On completion of the investigation, the Director will respond to the complainant in writing, setting out the reasons for any decision and a statement of the outcome, along with information on next steps available to the complainant.

5. Stage 3: Appeal

- 5.1 Once a response has been received, should the complainant remain dissatisfied, the matter can be referred to the Chief Executive for appeal (or an alternative member of the senior team in his or her absence or unavailability, or Supervising Trustee in exceptional circumstances).
- 5.2 Such requests should be referred within ten working days of the date of the response.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive (or relevant person) will consider any further comments submitted by the complainant, along with any new material or evidence produced by the subject of the complaint. He/she will then consider: the process of the formal complaint, and whether appropriate procedures were followed in the investigation, and whether the decision was reasonable. If felt justified, the Chief Executive can overturn the earlier outcome and substitute a new one.
- 5.4 The aim should be that requests for an appeal are dealt with within fifteen working days. In exceptional circumstances when the timescales become extended the Chief Executive will keep relevant parties informed on progress.
- 5.5 On completion of the review, the Chief Executive will write to the complainant setting out the reasons for any decision and a statement of outcome.
- 5.6 The outcome of the appeal will be notified to the complainant.