

SO8007

STANDING ORDER GOVERNING COMPLAINTS AGAINST HULL UNIVERSITY UNION. THE CHARITY

Introduction

1. This standing order is designed to ensure that there is a fair and systematic approach to the investigation and resolution of complaints. Hull University Union aims to provide high quality services, activities and experiences, 'Be Outstanding' is one of Hull University Union's values. Complaints are both a way to address specific issues and a means for us to make lasting improvements in our organisation.
2. Where members, University staff or the wider public consider that we are failing in this aim we encourage them to make a complaint. Students also have the right to make a complaint if they claim to have been unfairly disadvantaged as a result of opting out of Hull University Union membership.
3. Examples of the types of issues which may be the subject of complaints include, but are not limited to:
 - The fair and equitable conduct of democratic processes
 - The provision of goods and services of an acceptable standard
 - The implementation of Hull University Union policies and processes
 - The conduct of societies and sports teams in line with their articles
 - The conduct of student media in line with their agreed protocols.
4. Complaints about the behaviour of other student members on Hull University Union premises or at Hull University Union events will normally be addressed through Hull University Union Disciplinary Procedures (SO 8012).
5. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly.
6. Complaints should normally be made in line with the timescales outlined here, however complaints submitted without the timescales will be considered on a case by case basis and should include a rationale regarding the reason for late submission.

Informal Complaint and Resolution

7. We expect that many complaints can be resolved via an informal discussion about the matter at the earliest opportunity. We encourage complainants to explore this route in the first instance. Concerns should, therefore, be brought to the attention of a staff member, service manager or Student Officer responsible for the area in question. Informal complaints may be received orally or in writing.
8. The recipients of informal complaints are responsible for responding to them promptly and fairly. This would normally be within seven working days of receiving the complaint.
9. Where practical informal complaints will be captured and logged within departments and the information used for review and enhancement.

Formal Complaints

10. A formal complaints process will only be followed when a complaint is submitted in writing using the Hull University Union Formal Complaints Form.
11. Complaints will be considered valid if the complainant:
 - provides details of their name, address and telephone number

- gives clear grounds for complaint by providing details of the event or occurrence giving rise to the complaint.
- raises the complaint within 10 working days of the event or occurrence.

12. Informal resolution will be explored if this route has not previously been considered.

13. Complaints relating to staff conduct or behaviour will be handled through Hull University Union Human Resources.

Complaints regarding Hull University Union Elections and Referenda

14. Complaints regarding incidents in Hull University Union elections and referenda processes should be received within 24 hours of the incident in question and by the last day of voting.

Complaints Regarding Elected Student Officers

15. The process for the consideration of complaints against elected Student Officer trustees is set out in the Terms and Conditions and Code of Conduct for Student Officers. Where complaints relate to failing to undertake the duties and role of the post to which the Student Officer trustee is elected the complaint will normally be considered through democratic processes including motions of censure, caution and no confidence. Where complaints relate to issues of conduct or behaviour these will normally be considered through Hull University Union's Human Resources processes.

Formal Complaint Investigation

16. On receipt of a formal complaint Hull University Union will appoint a suitable complaint investigation lead, a member of staff or Student Officer, who will investigate the matter and subsequently produce an overview report, normally within 15 clear days of the receipt of the complaint.

17. During the investigation stage the complainant and others involved may be asked to provide verbal or written evidence for clarification and additional information.

18. If the complaint is against a club/society/committee, their Chair/President or relevant nominee will normally represent them in the investigation stage.

Confidentially

19. All those involved in the investigation or consideration of a complaint in any capacity, including the complainant, should respect the confidentiality of the process and of any document or information generated through the process.


Complaints Panel

20. The Complaints Panel will be established dependant on the nature of the complaint but will normally consist of not less than three members, including at least one elected Student Officer.

21. No formal hearings will take place.

22. A Complaints Panel may decide to partially or fully uphold the complaint or rejected complaint. The Complaints Panel may identify action or actions which need to be taken in order to address the issues raised.

23. Where evidence suggests that the outcome of the complaint may be disciplinary investigation regarding a student or Hull University Union staff member a separate disciplinary process will be initiated and the relevant timescales used. Complainants will be informed in writing of this decision. It may not be appropriate to share specific details



affecting individual students or staff members with complainants, particularly where disciplinary action may be taken.

24. The decisions of the Complaints Panel will be confirmed in writing to all parties within 3 clear days of a decision. The decision letter will include reasons for the decision of the panel and information about the review process.

Review

25. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Complaints Panel, he/she may request that the issue is referred to the Complaints Review Panel by writing to the President within 5 clear days of receiving the Complaints Panel decision. Grounds for the requested review should be included. The President will arrange for the Complaints Review Panel to meet no later than 10 clear days after the request is received.
26. A review will normally only be undertaken on the grounds of significant new evidence that has not been considered, that the correct process has not been followed or that the decision is irrational.
27. A Complaints Review Panel will normally consist of not less than three members, including at least one Student Officer. The panel will include staff / officers not involved in investigating or considering the original complaint.
28. Hull University Union will consider the merit or relevance of inviting an external member (such as a member of University staff) to participate in the review panel.
29. The Complaints Review Panel will review the evidence, may request copies of investigation materials and evidence deemed necessary, and will normally report on its findings within 15 clear days of the submission of the review request.
30. The panel will decide whether the review is partially or fully upheld or rejected and may refer the matter back to a complaint investigation lead for re-investigation. The panel will identify any additional action to be taken including any action to enhance the Hull University Union complaints process.
31. The decision of the Complaints Review Panel will be confirmed in writing to all parties within 3 clear days of a decision. The decision letter will include reasons for the decision of the panel and information about the right of complaint to the University.

Right of complaint to the University

32. In the event of the complainant not being satisfied, they may request that the issue is referred to the University in accordance with the Regulations for the Investigation and Determination of Student Complaints. Recourse to the University is limited to challenging the application of the procedure through which the complaint was investigated by the Students' Union.
33. Where the University Complaints Officer upholds the complaint the Students' Union shall re-consider the original complaint, taking into account any evidence, obtained through the University's investigation, addressing any defect in the application of the Students' Union's procedures identified by the Complaints Officer.

Reporting

34. An anonymized record of formal complaints received by Hull University Union, and their outcomes, will be received by the Hull University Union Board of Trustees at every Trustee Board meeting. The Board will utilise this information to identify areas of concern or enhancement.

Passed Union Council: 8 May 2017