

# Hull University Union (HUU) Raising a Concern or Complaint Policy

## **Policy statement:**

HUU recognises its responsibility to deal fairly, constructively and consistently with expressions of concern or dissatisfaction. It is the policy of HUU to have an open and equitable procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints raised by students, University of Hull staff and the public.

As a Students Union we operate within a Democratic structure using Bye-laws and standing orders of the Union Council to deal with matters relating to student representatives either in full-time or part-time Officer Roles.

Concerns or complaints regarding incidents in HUU elections and referenda processes should be received within 24 hours of the incident in question and by the last day of voting and submitted in line with guidance which is published on the website.

Current Students of the University of Hull also have the right to make a complaint if they claim to have been unfairly disadvantaged as a result of opting out of HUU membership.

Complaints raised which involve the behaviour of student members on HUU Licenced premises or at HUU events or who are members of clubs and societies will normally be addressed through HUU disciplinary procedures (Standing Order 8012).

## **We promise to:**

- Deal with all complaints with consistency and in a reliable, fair and objective manner.
- Handle all complaints pro-actively.
- Ensure that resolutions and outcomes will contribute to a process of continuous improvement for the organisation.

## **Our policy principles are:**

- Whenever possible, the person to whom the concern or complaint is raised should first endeavour to resolve the situation informally and in discussion with the complainant. This can include the support of additional team members from HUU.
- Formal Complaints received via the website will be passed on to the most appropriate line manager for resolution.
- Formal complaints must be made in writing using the digital form on the website. If there is a genuine reason that the complainant cannot make a formal written complaint, then it should be made orally and the person acknowledging it should, for the sake of clarity, summarise the complaint in writing to the complainant and then check it is an accurate record of their conversation.
- Formal Complaints received via the website will be acknowledged in writing within seven working days of receiving the complaint.
- Complainants should be directed to a copy of the "Hull University Union guide to raising a concern or complaint" resource which can be found on the website.
- Complainants should be kept updated regularly on the progress of their complaint

- We will ensure that members of staff, including Presidents, will not deal with complaints in which they are personally involved.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of concern or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the behaviour or service of HUU and its activities.

The procedure for resolving concerns or complaints seeks to:

- Resolve concerns or complaints as early as possible.
- Identify and act on opportunities for change and improvement.

### **Complaints Procedure**

#### **1. General**

Complaints will be considered on a case by case basis normally within six months of a concern or dissatisfaction. (All CCTV at Hull University Union is only available for 30 days.)

- If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint having gone through the first and second stages below, there is a right for one appeal only.
- In the event of a Student members complainant not being satisfied following the conclusion of HUU procedure having gone through the appeal stage. They may request that their complaint 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 Student's Union.
- HUU does not accept complaints that are:
  - (1) Raised on behalf of others without the express permission of the individual concerned.
  - (2) Broadly or substantively the same as a previous complaint raised by the same individual.
  - (3) Complaints found to be malicious.

#### **2. Informal Concerns/Complaints (stage 1)**

Many complaints can be resolved via informal discussion about the matter at the earliest opportunity. Complainants are encouraged to explore this route in the first instance. Concerns should, therefore, be brought to the attention of a staff member, or Student President responsible for the area in question. Informal concerns/complaints may be received orally or in writing. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at stage one, they may progress to stage 2 by submitting a formal complaint.

#### **3. Formal Complaints (stage 2)**

A formal complaints process will only be followed when a complaint is submitted in writing using the "Hull University Union Formal Complaints Form" which can be found on the [www.hulluniunion.com](http://www.hulluniunion.com) website.

Formal 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 of occurrence giving rise to the complaint.
- Complaints will be considered on a case by case basis normally within six months of a concern or dissatisfaction. (All CCTV at Hull University Union is only available for 30 days.)

Upon receipt of a formal complaint HUU will appoint a suitable complaint investigation lead who will gather relevant information pertinent to the complaint. If the complaint is in relation to a paid member of staff including full time officers this will be referred to HR and dealt with through HR policy and procedure. The complainant and others involved may be asked to provide verbal or written evidence for clarification and additional information. If the complaint is against a club/committee, their chair/President or relevant nominee will normally represent them in the investigating stage.

For all formal complaints (with the exception of HR related complaints) a panel will be established, this panel will normally consist of not less than three members, including at least one President. The panel will consider all of the evidence gathered by the appointed investigation lead in the complaint. The panel may dismiss or uphold the complaint wholly or partially with an appropriate outcome, resolution or penalty applied. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision made at stage 2 they may appeal (stage 3).

#### **4. Appeal panel (Stage 3)**

The appeals panel is the final stage of HUU procedures and may accept or reject the appeal in full or in part and as a consequence may remove, reduce or increase any outcomes, or resolutions from stage 2.

Appeals will be heard if they are submitted in writing to the investigation lead of the original complaint within 7 working days of the appeal panel outcome.

The appeals panel will be made up of individuals who have not been involved in any of the previous stages of the complaint process. The panel follows the same procedure as stage 2.

#### **5. Right of complaint to the University (Students only) (stage 4)**

If the complainant is a current student of the University of Hull and in the event of the complainant (Student) not being satisfied having gone through the appeals panel at HUU, 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 student's union.

## **6. Reporting**

An anonymised summary record of formal complaints received by HUU and their outcomes will be received by the HUU Board of Trustees at every Trustee Board meeting. The Board will utilise this information to identify opportunities for improvement.

## **7. Basic Principles of the complaints procedure by a team member or Line-Manager.**

*The procedure for dealing with complaints should be easily accessible and available*

- All members involved in a complaint should be made fully aware of the procedure and their role within it.
- Details of the procedure will be made readily available to members and non-members.
- Complainants should be advised of the procedure and informed how they can use it.
- Appropriate adjustments may be made to the way in which the procedure is carried out to cater for any additional needs of those making a complaint.

*Full support will be given to all those involved with complaints*

- Local arrangements should be made to provide advice and support to those dealing with complaints as required.
- Members must be fully supported in completing any training requirements that arise as an outcome of the resolution of a complaint.
- Any learning points identified should be acted upon in a stated timescale.
- Support to all those dealing with the complaint should be provided locally. Further support, guidance and advice on dealing with complaints can be sought from your line manager if required.

All record relating to the Complaints Policy shall be process and stored in accordance with HUU's Data Protection Policy.