

## **Bye Law 2 Complaint Procedure**

### **b.2.1 General – Union Commitment**

- i) The University of Sunderland Students' Union are committed to providing the highest possible quality service to all its members and the general public.
- ii) All complaints will be dealt with quickly and fairly, through an accessible and straightforward procedure;
- iii) The Union will, whenever possible, strive to ensure that complaints are dealt with immediately, by the member of staff who is best able to deal with the complaint;
- iv) However, if the initial response is not satisfactory, this Complaint Procedure will enable complainants to know clearly how, where, when and to whom complaints should be made;
- v) If a complaint is upheld, the Union will, wherever possible, offer an appropriate resolution. If a complaint is not upheld, then reasons for the decision will always be provided to the complainant in writing;
- vi) The Union will monitor this Complaint Procedure to ensure we maintain and continually improve our service and standards within our available resources.

### **b.2.2 Complainant Requirements**

- i) All complainants are required to follow the procedure correctly;
- ii) All complainants are required to process their complaint within the specified timescales;
- iii) At all stages of the procedure, the complainant must provide all relevant information regarding their complaint;
- iv) Complainants should not make frivolous, vexatious or erroneous complaints.

**b.2.3** The Union's Complaint Procedure is designed to ensure that, if anyone is dissatisfied in their dealings with the Union or claims to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of exercising their right not to be a member of the Union, their complaint will receive timely and appropriate attention. We aim to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, quickly and to the complainant's satisfaction.

b.2.4 Initially, complainants should, wherever possible, bring their complaint to the point at which it arises, as soon as possible after the cause of the complaint occurs. This will provide Union staff with an early opportunity to address the complaint and take the appropriate action.

b.2.5 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the way they have been treated by the Union, they should follow the complaint procedure to ensure their complaint is dealt with in the best possible way. It is also essential that they make the complaint as soon as possible or within a reasonable time of the situation which gave rise to it.

#### b.2.6 Informal Complaints Procedure - Making an initial complaint

i) A complainant should make their complaint to the person who they feel is best able to deal with it immediately. This is likely to be the person who they dealt with at the time of the incident giving grounds for complaint.

ii) If this is not possible, the complainant should make their complaint to the staff at the Union's reception areas on the ground floor of Edinburgh Building, City Campus or Wearbank House at the St Peter's campus.

iii) This will give Union staff the opportunity to address the complaint and rectify the situation as soon as possible. Complainants must make the complaint themselves, either verbally or in writing.

iv) The member of staff who receives the complaint will strive to resolve the issue immediately and/or ensure the complaint is passed to the relevant member of staff for consideration.

v) The complainant will be provided with a response, either personally or in writing, no later than five working days following receipt of the complaint.

vi) If the complaint is considered to be justified, but there is no possible immediate resolution, the complainant will be given the reasons for this.

vii) If the complaint is considered to be unjustified, the complainant will be given the reasons for this decision.

viii) A record of the complaint and the response will be sent to the Union's Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator.

#### b.2.6 Formal Complaint Procedure

- i) The complainant should contact the Union's Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator who, if necessary, will help to progress their complaint. This must be done within 5 working days of the complainant receiving the initial response to their complaint.
- ii) The complaint will be passed to the relevant Students' Union Senior Manager, who will investigate the complaint and the initial response given to the complainant.
- iii) The complainant will be provided with a written response, no later than 10 working days following the date they contacted the Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator.
- iv) If the complaint is upheld, the complainant will be informed what action is to be taken to resolve their complaint.
- v) If the complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be given the reasons for the decision.
- vi) A record of the investigation of the complaint and the response given at this stage will be sent to the Union's Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator.

#### b.2.7 Appeal Procedure

- i) The complainant should contact the Union's Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator, who, if necessary, will help them to lodge an appeal. This must be done within 5 working days of the complainant receiving the response from the Students' Union Senior Manager.
- ii) The appeal will be heard by the Union's Human Resources Committee, who will investigate the complaint and the responses given to the complainant.
- iii) The complainant will be provided with a written response, no later than 10 working days following the date they contacted the Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator to inform the Union that the complainant wished to lodge an appeal.
- iv) If the appeal is upheld, the complainant will be informed what action is to be taken to resolve their complaint.
- v) If the appeal is not upheld, the complainant will be given the reason for the decision.

vi) A record of the investigation of the complaint and the response given at this stage will be sent to the Union's Human Resources and Admin Co-ordinator.

vii) The decision of the Human Resources Committee will be final and will conclude the Students' Union's Complaint Procedure.

#### b.2.8 Independent Person

i) Once the right of appeal has been exercised and the Students' Union's Complaint Procedure has been exhausted, the complainant will have the right to submit an appeal to the University.

ii) The University shall appoint an independent person to consider the appeal, on procedural grounds only. The independent person will investigate the complaint and inform the complainant, the University and the Students' Union of their findings/recommendations.