

Elections | Complaints Procedure

Last updated: 11th February 2015

1. Submitting a complaint
 - a. Complaints can only be dealt with if they are submitted using the online complaints form, which can be found at www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections/complaints. **Complaints that are submitted in any other way will not be considered.** In particular, complaints should not be made by communicating with Exec Team members or by approaching members of Staff. Informal complaints cannot be considered.
 - b. We take all complaints seriously and will endeavour to ensure that your complaint is resolved as promptly as possible.
 - c. Your complaint will be received by the Deputy Returning Officer who will work to resolve your case, and the Returning Officer will be contacted for a ruling if required. However, if your case relates to a member of staff who is administrating the election your complaint will be passed to an independent member of staff.
 - d. Complaints relating to the conduct of an election can only be accepted up to one hour after the close of voting.
2. Timetable for complaints
 - a. When you submit your complaint we will write to you to inform you that we have received it and that it has been passed to the relevant person. We aim to send this to you by the end of the working day, or for complaints that are after hours, by 11am the following day.
 - b. We aim to have a resolution to all complaints within 48 hours of receiving the complaint, however complaints which are of a complex nature may take longer to resolve.
 - c. If there is likely to be a delay in the outcome of your complaint, we will write to you to inform you of the status of your complaint.
 - d. If you believe your complaint has not been resolved within the timescales as listed , you should contact the independent staff member, who should be contacted by emailing info.su@manchester.ac.uk with the subject line "Late Elections Complaint Response".
3. How complaints will be communicated to you
 - a. If you have submitted a complaint and are a candidate in an election, the status of your complaint will be communicated to you by your Candidate Liaison.
 - b. If you are any other person, the Deputy Returning Officer will contact you directly.
 - c. If you are complaining about a member of the elections team, the independent staff member will contact you directly.
 - d. All communication relating to complaints will be done by email. This is to ensure that all parties are clear and that there is a record of communication.
4. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint
 - a. If you believe your complaint has been resolved incorrectly, and your complaint has not been referred to the Returning Officer, you can ask that the decision is reconsidered by the Returning Officer.

- b. If a decision has been considered by the Returning Officer, and you are a candidate who has been directly affected by this decision, you can lodge an appeal if you think the complaint was resolved incorrectly.
 - c. Appeals against the decisions of the Returning Officer can only be lodged on one or more of the four following grounds:
 - i. The Returning Officer has used an unreasonable interpretation of the Election Rules (i.e. one that no sensible person would have used);
 - ii. The correct procedure has not been followed;
 - iii. The Returning Officer has been prejudiced or biased;
 - iv. The Returning Officer has failed to fully take into account the available evidence (i.e. they have ignored something important).
 - d. Appeals must be made no later than 12 noon on the day after you receive the outcome of your complaint.
 - e. Appeals can only be submitted using the Appeals Form, which can be found at www.manchesterstudentsunion.com/elections/appeals. **Appeals submitted in any other way will not be considered.**
 - f. Your appeal will be heard by a Panel of three independent people who will have the final say on the matter. The Appeals process is described in more detail in a separate document (available on the Students' Union website).
5. Complaints against the elections team
- a. If you have a complaint against one of the members of staff who are administering the election, this procedure will only apply to complaints which cover one of the following issues:
 - i. A Staff member has failed to follow the correct procedure;
 - ii. A Staff member has through neglect adversely affected a candidate's election;
 - iii. A Staff member has been prejudiced or biased in the administration of an election.
 - b. If your complaint does not fall into one of those categories, it will be dealt with under the Students' Union general complaints procedure, details of which can be found in the Bye-Law on Complaints (available on the Students' Union website).
 - c. Complaints relating to staff members under this procedure will be reviewed and resolved by an independent member of staff.
 - d. The decision of the independent staff member is final and cannot be appealed.
 - e. If the independent staff member determines that the actions of a staff member have affected the election, this will be reported to the Returning Officer who will decide the appropriate course of action to take.