



University of Bath

Students' Union

Bye-Law 9

Complaints

Complaints

Contents

Stage 1: Informal Complaint	- 2 -
Stage 2: Formal Complaint	- 2 -
Stage 3: Review.....	- 3 -

Complaints

1. Any Student or group of Students who is dissatisfied in their dealings with the SU, or who claims to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised their right to be released from SU membership, shall have the right to complain.
2. All complaints should be dealt with promptly and fairly and should be investigated and resolved in accordance with the following stages:

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

3. It is expected that most complaints can be resolved by discussing the matter informally at the earliest opportunity. A Student should therefore bring the matter to the attention of the Line Manager or SU Officer in charge of the relevant area, who will aim to resolve the matter by informal discussion.
4. Recipients of informal Student complaints are responsible for addressing them promptly and fairly. The recipient will normally let the Student know within five working days of receiving the initial complaint what steps (if any) will be taken to address the complaint and the expected timescale.
5. Should the complaint not be resolved by the above action, the complainant may bring the matter to the attention of the SU President, who will make his / her own investigations and come to a judgement on the complaint, and inform the complainant accordingly. If the complaint is against a member of staff, the SU President will normally pass the matter to the SU's Chief Executive or his/her deputy who will be responsible for addressing the complaint and for letting the complainant know the outcome.
6. It should be noted that this stage will normally be an informal oral process (or via email if a meeting is not possible) and a written record will not normally be made.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

7. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant under Stage 1, they may make a formal complaint in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to delegate to no less than two of their number to hear the case. The Trustees will have the discretion to make a judgement on the complaint based on the evidence received from the complainant and the SU President (or in the case of a complaint against a member of staff, the Chief Executive or his/her deputy), or hold a formal meeting with both parties. At this meeting the complainant may be accompanied by one other person, who should be another Member, who may participate in the proceedings. Other parties to the complaint may also be invited to attend the meeting at the discretion of the Trustees.
8. If convened, the meeting will follow this format:

Complaints

- The complainant will be asked to explain their complaint and present any supporting evidence, with the assistance of their companion as necessary, following which they may be asked questions by the Trustees, the SU President (or Chief Executive, or his/her deputy where appropriate) or by any other parties to the complaint present;
 - The SU President (or in the case of a complaint against a member of staff, the Chief Executive or his/her deputy) will then respond to the complaint, following which s/he may also be asked questions by the Trustees and the complainant (or their companion).
9. The complainant will receive a full written response to their complaint, which should detail the nature of the complaint, the findings of the Trustees, and the points covered in the formal meeting (if held). The complainant should receive this written response within 4 weeks of submitting a formal complaint (or eight weeks when a complaint is submitted during or shortly before a vacation). If this is not possible, the Student will be informed in writing of the progress being made towards the consideration of their complaint and given a timescale for completion.
10. If the complaint is considered justified, the Student will be informed of the action taken to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is not upheld, then the Student should receive an explanation of the reason for this decision.

Stage 3: Review

11. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Trustees, the complainant may ask for their complaint to be reviewed by the University Secretary in conjunction with the SU. The complainant should state the grounds for review, which should meet one of the following criteria:
- That there were procedural irregularities in the investigation of the complaint; or
 - That fresh evidence can be presented which was not or could not reasonably have been made available to the investigation; or
 - That the finding of the investigation was inappropriate in light of the evidence.
12. A judgement on the complaint may be made on basis of the evidence already available, or another formal meeting may be called, in which case it should follow the format outlined in paragraph 8 above.
13. If the complaint is considered justified, the Student will be informed of the action taken to resolve or redress the complaint. If the complaint is not upheld, then the Student should receive an explanation of the reason for this decision.

Complaints

14. The above represents the final internal stage of the SU's complaints procedure. Should the complainant feel that their complaint has still not satisfactorily resolved, they should request that the Independent Person appointed by the University and SU adjudicate on the case. Details of the Independent Person can be obtained from the Chief Executive of the SU. If the Independent Person upholds the complaint, the University shall ensure that there is an effective remedy.