**Student Feedback and Complaints about the Students' Union**

**Our approach to feedback and complaints**

We want to ensure that all our students have the best experience possible at University and as a member of the Students' Union. The Students' Union welcomes feedback on how we are doing and understand that occasionally something can go wrong or you may not be satisfied with an aspect of your experience. Where this is the case, we would encourage you to let us know as soon as possible so that we can work with you to try to put it right quickly and make improvements for you and other students.

The information below is a guide to our Feedback and Complaints procedure. Please note this procedure is reviewed regularly and is approved by both our Trustee Board and the University’s Board of Governors.

**FEEDBACK**

We welcome student views and opinions because they help us to understand when we are doing something well, or to identify where we might need to improve. In most cases providing feedback will not be the same as submitting a complaint - it may be an idea for something new or a suggestion on how you feel something could be done better. We encourage students to be involved as much as possible to help us improve our campaigns and services. Here are some of the opportunities you can take to provide us with feedback:

* Direct communication (face-to-face, by email, website or by telephone to the Union)
* Student Committees (Union Council, Societies etc.)
* Student Representatives/Officers
* Any member of staff
* Student satisfaction surveys

If you would like to provide feedback to the Students' Union please complete and submit the feedback form on the [**About us page**](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/contact/)

**COMPLAINTS**

We aim to provide a service that is at a standard acceptable to all our members. If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also to avoid it happening again. This is why we have a complaints procedure which sets out how to make an informal or formal complaint. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly and where a complaint is upheld there will be an effective remedy.

A complaint could be about one of the following:

* The services, facilities or products provided by the Students’ Union
* If a student has been unfairly disadvantaged by opting out of membership of the Students' Union
* The misconduct or behaviour of a member of the Students’ Union using facilities, premises and services or attending events provided by or organised by the Students’ Union or organisations associated with the Union under reciprocal or other agreements.
* The conduct of an employee of the Students’ Union
* Actions contrary to the Articles of Governance, policies and guidance documents
* Sexual, racial, homophobic or any other form of personal harassment
* External organisation/visitors delivering a service for the Students’ Union
* An elected officer/representative
* Students’ Union Society/Committee/Group
* The Students’ Union Elections

This list is not intended to be inclusive or exhaustive; the Students' Union reserves the right to investigate any other conduct which may give rise to disciplinary action or any other matter within the responsibilities of the Students' Union. This document outlines the procedure which should be followed in relation to these complaints and signposts to relevant documents.

**HOW TO MAKE THE COMPLAINT**

The President will work with the Union's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to fully investigate any complaint. Where the complaint relates to the President, this should be directed to the CEO (j.byrd@shu.ac.uk). Where the complaint relates to the CEO, this should be directed to the President (sp4510@exchange.shu.ac.uk), who would work with the Chair of the Trustee Board to investigate the matter.

To make a complaint about the Students’ Union, please complete and submit the Complaints Form on the [**About us page**](https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/contact/)

If the complaint is in relation to the Students’ Union elections, this should be directed to the Returning Officer appointed during the elections and will be dealt with according to the Students’ Union Election Regulations.

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

In the first instance problems and concerns will be raised and resolved on an informal basis. Where the complaint cannot be resolved informally, or the nature of the complaint is serious, the formal procedure will be followed:

**Stage 1**

Complaints should be submitted in writing (via the SU complaints form, link highlighted above) within 5 working days of the event in question. The President will receive the complaint directly, and will respond in writing within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt and outline next steps.

It would be helpful for the investigation into a complaint for the person complaining to provide their name and contact details. All complaints will be considered but the investigation stage may be limited depending on the extent of the information provided by any anonymous complaints.

**Stage 2**

Receiving the complaint will trigger an assessment by the President/CEO about the severity of the circumstances. If the matter can be resolved quickly without a formal investigation then this will happen. If the complaint is serious, an investigation will be triggered.

If the circumstances are extremely serious such as potential criminal activity, the persons involved in the complaint might be suspended until the investigation is complete.

A senior manager and Officer not involved in the complaint will be asked to conduct the investigation. The investigation will involve meeting with the parties who raised the complaint and anyone mentioned/identified in the complaint to get their view on what has happened.

The investigation will aim to be concluded within 10 working days of it being triggered. In certain circumstances this deadline may be extended if the evidence is not clear, or people who need to be interviewed are not easily available.

A report with recommendations will be prepared by the senior manager/Officer and submitted to the President/CEO for action. The detailed content of the report will be kept confidential to protect the people involved, but a summary of the outcome will be sent in writing to the person (s) who made the original complaint, and any action will be communicated to the relevant person/group involved in the complaint.

**POTENTIAL ACTION**

Action can include suspension of membership, being banned from the building, being reported to the University. Any criminal activity identified will automatically be referred to the University and the Police depending on the severity of the activity.

Any University disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings will take precedence over the Students' Union disciplinary procedures, and the Students' Union will only start disciplinary proceedings once the University process has been completed.

Any student who is suspended or banned from the building whether temporarily or permanently, will not be able to be nominated or to stand for election to any Students' Union position during the period of exclusion.

**Elected Officers/Representatives**

Action against the conduct of Elected Officers/Representatives will be dealt with in line with the Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

If a complaint is about a Student Union Society, the Chair and other responsible officers of the Society will be held accountable.

**Motions of "No Confidence" or Censure**

An elected Officer/Representative may be subject to proceedings resulting from a motion of no confidence or censure which is triggered through the student democratic structure. Proceedings of no confidence/censure can be triggered as set out in By-Law 15, paragraph 8 of the Articles of Governance.

**Staff**

Action against the conduct of staff will be dealt with in line with the Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

**APPEALS**

If you are not happy with the outcome of the complaint, you are able to submit an appeal under one of the following grounds:

• The Complaints process has not followed the correct procedure; and/or

• New information has become available that for good reason could not be presented during the Complaints Process at the time of the original investigation; and/or

• The actions applied as a result of the investigation are disproportionate

An appeal should be submitted in writing to the CEO within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome of the investigation. The appeal will be heard by the Chair of Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Trustee Board, and their decision is final.

If you are still not happy with the final outcome, you can appeal in writing for a review of your complaint to the University Board of Governors via ! Governance Services within ten working days of receiving the decision of the Trustee Board. The University Board of Governors will appoint an independent person (or make ad-hoc arrangements as necessary) to report on the complaint. The independent person will not be a member of the University (staff, students or governor) but will be a person of good standing. The independent person will inform you, the University Secretary and the Students' Union of their findings and recommendations.