



### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

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 a **formal complaint**.

Complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly and where a complaint is upheld there will be an effective remedy.

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:

Complaints should be **submitted in writing within 5 working days** of the event in question to **SUComplaints@shu.ac.uk**. We will respond in writing within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt and outline next steps.

All complaints will be considered but the investigation stage may be limited depending on the extent of the information provided by any anonymous complaints.

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** 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.

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

**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 the By-Laws of the Articles of Governance.

Action against the conduct of **staff** will be dealt with in line with the 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.

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 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 the University Secretary email address: [clerktheboard@shu.ac.uk](mailto:clerktheboard@shu.ac.uk) **within 10 working days** of receiving the decision of the Trustee Board. The University Board of Governors (via the University Secretary) 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.