

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

This Complaints Procedure is the *formal* procedure for dealing with disputes with the Students' Union, in particular complaints arising from disputes between a student/other member of the University and elected officers, staff and/or the Union itself.

The procedure allows any student, group of students or other member of Anglia Ruskin University to make a formal complaint against the Students' Union relating to their treatment by the Union, or anyone acting on the Union's behalf or that they feel they have been unfairly disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right to opt out of membership of the Union.

This Complaints Procedure shall be interpreted to comply with the terms of the Education Act (1994) and Anglia Ruskin University's Code of Practice Relating to the Students' Union (as outlined in 'Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students').

Throughout this procedure, the "Students' Union" and "SU" will be used to denote Anglia Ruskin University Students' Union and its trading company.

Where time limits for action are defined, they are to be considered as maximum limits; all complaints and appeals will be dealt with in confidence and as promptly as possible. Where there is good reason why a time limit cannot be met, the complainant(s) will be informed immediately if such a situation becomes apparent (this is more likely to occur during University non-teaching periods).

Efforts should be made in every case to resolve the complaint(s) **informally** before this procedure is invoked.

Complaint Handling Procedure (in brief)

- 1 – You must complain in writing to the Students' Union President (within 28 days of event/incident)
- 2 – The President will acknowledge your complaint in writing, normally within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint
- 3 – The President (or nominated person) will attempt to deal with the complaint informally
- 4 – An investigation will be conducted
- 5 – The Complainant will normally be notified of the investigation outcome within 10 working days (Where this is not possible the complainant will be informed of reasons for delay and given an alternative date to receive investigation outcome)
- 6 – The outcome of the complaint is agreed – upheld or not upheld
- 7 – The Complainant is informed of their right of appeal (if applicable)

2. Application

This procedure shall apply in all instances except where the operational policies and procedures of the Union, as approved by the relevant Union Committee or the University's Board of Governors, allows for variation. If there is no operational policy or procedure, this section shall apply absolutely.

3. Making a Complaint

Complaints may be made about:

- (a) The services and facilities provided by the Union, or
- (b) An individual or group within the Union.

3.1 Valid Complaints

Complaints shall be considered valid if the complainant:

- (a) Provides details of their name, address and contact telephone number (if any).
- (b) Provides details of the event or occurrence which gave rise to the complaint.
- (c) Raises the complaint within 28 days of the event or occurrence giving grounds for complaint.

3.2 Persons to whom Complaints shall be addressed

Complaints shall be addressed to:

The President,
Anglia Ruskin Students' Union, East Road, Cambridge, CB1 1PT
or
Anglia Ruskin Students' Union, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 1SQ

If the complaint is against the President then it should be addressed to
The Vice President c/o either of the Union addresses above.

The President/ Vice President will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days.

4. Investigation of Complaints

All valid complaints shall be investigated and the results of that investigation normally communicated to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint form by the President. (except as detailed above in Complaint Handling Procedure)

The President will investigate all complaints about the Chief Executive, elected officers and Union committees.

The President may delegate responsibility for the investigation into the complaint to the Vice President or the following where appropriate;

- (a) The Chief Executive will normally be asked to investigate complaints about permanent staff
- (b) The Departmental Manager will normally be asked to investigate complaints about services/student staff within their responsibility
- (d) The site specific Experience Officer will normally be asked to investigate complaints about a student volunteer
- (e) The site specific Experience Officer will normally be asked to investigate complaints about a Club or Society, or an individual/groups within that club or society
- (f) The Vice President will normally be expected to investigate complaints about the President.

4.1 Guidelines for Investigations of Complaints

- (a) Investigations shall be conducted by the President or by that person chosen by the President (see above) and not more than 2 other people designated by that person.
- (b) No person involved in the investigation of any complaint shall have a direct or vested interest in the outcome of the same.
- (c) All parties being complained about will receive a record of the complaint made about them.
- (d) All parties to the complaint shall be given an opportunity to submit written and oral statements and present appropriate evidence, including evidence of mitigating circumstances.
- (e) All parties to the complaint may be assisted by a representative or friend, without charge or cost to the Union.
- (f) An employee (including student staff) may be suspended from work on full pay, normally for no more than 20 working days, if the Union considers that the individual's continued presence at work will jeopardise the proceedings.

4.2 Outcome of an Investigation

The outcome of an investigation shall be determined after all parties to the complaint have presented their case and any supporting evidence.

The person investigating the complaint (if not the President) will inform the President of the outcome of the investigation. The President will confirm in writing the outcome of the investigation to all parties to the complaint within 10 working days (where possible) of the receipt of the original complaint form.

The person(s) conducting the investigation shall determine:

- (a) All findings of fact, and
- (b) Any mitigating circumstances, and
- (c) Any appropriate further action

4.3 Justified Complaints against a Service or Facility

In the event of a justified complaint against a service or facility, the following procedure shall apply:

- (a) The person(s) conducting the investigation shall consider how to prevent any future instances of the event or occurrence which gave rise to the complaint and propose remedial action to the President.

4.4 Justified Complaints against a Person or Group

In the event of a justified complaint against a person or group, the following procedure shall apply:

- (a) If the person(s) conducting the investigation consider that there has been a breach of the Articles of Association, Bye Laws, Staff Protocol, Equal Opportunities Policy or Anglia Ruskin University's Codes of Conduct then the appropriate Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked.
- (b) The complainant shall not have a right to demand that the Disciplinary Procedure is invoked, or that sanctions should be imposed.

4.5 Complaints which are not Upheld

Where complaints are not upheld, they shall be deemed unsubstantiated complaints and the following procedure shall apply:

- (a) The complainant will be informed of the decision by the President and of their right to appeal to the Secretary of the University, as outlined in 'Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students'.
- (b) We know there is a possibility that complaints can be made maliciously, or for reasons which are not genuine. If this happens we may take disciplinary action against the Complainant.



COMPLAINTS FORM

You should read the Student Complaints Procedure preceding this form before completing and submitting your complaint

The Anglia Ruskin Students' Union Complaints Procedure is the *formal* procedure for dealing with disputes with the Students' Union, in particular complaints arising from disputes between a student/other member of the University and elected officers, staff and/or the Union itself.

The procedure allows any student, group of students or other member of Anglia Ruskin University to make a formal complaint against the Students' Union relating to their treatment by the Union, or anyone acting on the Union's behalf or that they feel they have been unfairly disadvantaged by reason of their having exercised the right to opt out of membership of the Union.

This Complaints Procedure shall be interpreted to comply with the terms of the Education Act (1994) and Anglia Ruskin University's Code of Practice Relating to Student Unions (outlined in 'Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students').

Throughout this procedure, the "Students' Union" and "SU" will be used to denote the Union of Anglia Ruskin University Students and its trading company.

All complaints and appeals will be dealt with in confidence and as promptly as possible.

Efforts should be made in every case to resolve the complaint(s) **informally** before submitting a formal complaint

1. DETAILS OF COMPLAINANT

Name of complainant:.....

Date complaint made:

.....

(This must be within 28 days of the event/occurrence giving rise to the complaint)

Course/Year:.....

Term-time address:..... **Home address:**.....

..... (if different).....

.....

.....

Telephone no:..... **Telephone no:**.....

E-mail:.....

2. DETAILS OF THE COMPLAINT

Please give details of time, place, venue, witnesses and other relevant details.
You may attach another sheet of paper if there is insufficient space below.

3. What would you like as an outcome?

4. Please provide details of your attempt(s) to resolve your complaint informally

Who did you discuss the complaint with?

Date discussed

What was the outcome and why are you still dissatisfied?

Signature of Complainant:.....

Date:.....

Please send completed form to:

The **President**, Anglia Ruskin Students' Union, East Road, Cambridge,
CB1 1PT

or

Anglia Ruskin Students' Union, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 1SQ

If the complaint is against the President then it should be addressed to

The Vice President, c/o either of the Union addresses above.

The President/Vice President will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing normally within 5 working days.