

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

STUDENTS*
UNION

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX STUDENTS* UNION

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Version: September 2021

Approved by: Audit and Risk Committee

Date: September 2020

Last Reviewed: September 2021

Review date (by): September 2022

Owner: Deputy Director of Student Activities & Support

Author: Deputy Director of Student Activities & Support

The SU works to support all of our members have a great experience.

We do realise that sometimes not everything goes as planned, so we have this Complaints Procedure to make sure we try to resolve problems as soon as possible.

How does this work?

We have lots of different policies and procedures and they should resolve any issues. However, if you think that we haven't dealt with something as we said we would then you can make a complaint.

For example:

If you think we have not properly followed our Barring process by not sending you an email detailing your ban you can make a complaint about that. However, you can't complain about the fact that you are barred. The complaints procedure is here to make sure we follow our processes and procedures properly and if we don't, then it gives us a chance to make sure we do.

How do you tell us something is wrong? (known as the 'Early Stage')

As with everything we want to react as quickly as possible, so dependent on what your complaint is about you can do one of the following:

- You can get a problem solved straight away. For example, your order is wrong, you can speak to a Supervisor or Manager and they will sort it immediately.
- You can make us aware of your complaint by contacting us through su@essex.ac.uk. We will acknowledge your communication and give an indication of when we will get back to you. It may be that there is something we can solve easily and therefore we will provide a resolution straight away or if may be that more information or time is needed so a member of our staff will contact you to advise on what we are going to do next.
- You can explain the issue to our Reception Staff who will direct you to an appropriate Staff Member or Sabbatical Officer who will try to resolve the issue for you

What if this doesn't work?

If you aren't happy with the outcome of this 'early stage' or where due to the complexity or seriousness of the case the 'Early Stage' is not appropriate you can make a formal complaint. Fill in the form on our website (this is next to our

complaints procedure on the webpage), provide as much evidence as possible and let us know what it is you hope to happen next. Please bear in mind that we can't necessarily make everything better but if you let us know what you think would make a difference then we can consider that. Please send your form to su@essex.ac.uk who will pass it to the relevant person.

What do we do?

We will start by acknowledging your formal complaint within 5 working days of receipt. We will then notify you of who has been appointed to investigate it and what their contact details are. We will investigate all formal complaints and try to resolve them as soon as possible. Investigating may include meeting with all the parties involved to find out more information, collecting statements from people involved, looking at our policy or procedure to work out what should have happened and try to correct what may have gone wrong.

We will keep you up to date with what we are doing and aim to get back to you within 90 days. In addition, once we have been through everything we will let you know the outcome and send you a formal response called the 'Completion of Procedures' letter. This tells you what we have done and what our resolutions are. This decision is final. Some examples of resolutions we may be able to suggest are

An apology

Access to further procedures

Actions to rectify the specific causes of the complaint

Anything else you might need to know?

We need you to be a member of the Students' Union to use this process. If you are a student who has opted out of SU Membership then you should use the University's complaints procedure. You need to make your complaint(s) within three calendar months of the issue or incident happening.

If you are making a complaint as a group you need to identify one of the group as a spokesperson who will be our main contact.

We hold our CCTV footage for 28 days, so if you think you need this as part of your evidence then you need to make your complaint within 28 days of an incident happening. If you miss this timescale we will no longer have access to the footage.

The Students' Union, and the University, expects everyone to behave in a reasonable way. We will mirror the University's view on managing unacceptable behaviour.

If you have been through all of our process and you are still not happy then you can make a request to the University for a review of your complaint in line with stage 3 of their procedure. All requests must be made within 10 working days of the date of the completion of procedures letter from the Students' Union, by completing the Request for a Review of a Complaint Form, which should be submitted to the Student Progress Team, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ. The University will review the Students' Union's handling of the case and either uphold the complaint or offer an alternative resolution where deemed necessary.

There are two other important factors which we need to make you aware of with this, The procedure will normally be suspended if the complainant refers it to a court, tribunal or other external organisation until the outcome of the external process is known and that the complaint mechanism created by the Education Act 1994 does not interfere with licensees obligations to the Courts concerning the running of licensed premises. A licensee has the right to exclude persons from the premises in appropriate circumstances. As a Students' Union we reserve this right and the University does not have the power to overturn decisions made regarding exclusion from our venues.