

# Complaint Policy and Procedure

Person responsible for this Policy:	Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing
Who the Policy applies to:	Student Advice Employees
Date issued	May 2021
Date to be reviewed:	May 2022

Unless expressly stated otherwise, this policy does not form part of an employee’s contract of employment and the contents are not contractually binding on the Students’ Union or its employees. However, failure by any employee to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken and, in the most serious cases, may result in dismissal. The Union reserves the right to amend the policy from time to time.

For the purposes of this policy the terms ‘Union’ and ‘Students’ Union’ includes Cardiff University Students’ Union, Cardiff Union Services Limited and any subsidiary of the Company or of its holding company. These terms shall have the meaning given them by the Companies Act 2006.

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## Commitment

1. Student Advice believe that if an individual or organisation wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so. Student Advice welcome complaints and view them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, and improve service



delivery. This policy and procedure are intended to ensure that complaints are investigated in full, in a timely manner and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously.

2. It is important that complaints are handled fairly for everyone involved and all Student Advice staff will respond in a positive and understanding manner to complaints made by service users and clients. Making a complaint will not affect the rights or quality of service.
3. Staff and volunteers wishing to make a complaint should do so using Cardiff University Students' Union's Grievance Policy.

## Definition

4. Student Advice define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with the Student Advice service, or with a member of Student Advice staff, that requires a formal response.

## Our Aims

5. Student Advice aim to ensure that:
  - a. making a complaint is as easy as possible
  - b. complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
  - c. we respond in the right way with an explanation, or an apology where the complaint is upheld
  - d. we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.
6. Resolving any expression of dissatisfaction informally at the earliest opportunity is encouraged. However, if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaint procedure should be followed.

## Formal Complaint Procedure

7. The formal complaint procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
8. Student Advice's responsibility will be to:
  - a. acknowledge the formal complaint in writing within 5 working days.
  - b. respond and, where possible, complete the complaint investigation within 15 working days. If this is not possible, due to the complexity of the complaint or the need to speak to individuals who are not available, we will inform the complainant and give an estimate of how long a response is likely to take.
  - c. deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
  - d. take action where appropriate, e.g. amend procedures, implement training and development.
9. A complainant's responsibility is to:
  - a. bring their complaint, in writing, to Student Advice's attention normally within 6 weeks of the issue arising.



- b. raise concerns promptly and directly with the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing. If the complaint is about the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing, the complaint should be made directly to the Director of Participation and Engagement.
- c. explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.
- d. provide any additional documents/evidence they wish to be considered as part of their complaint.
- e. allow Student Advice a reasonable timeframe to deal with the matter
- f. recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Student Advice's control.

### Responsibility for Action

10. The Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing, or their deputy, is responsible for action taken under the Student Advice Complaint Procedure. If the complaint is about the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing, the responsibility will pass to the Director of Participation and Engagement.

### Confidentiality

11. Every effort will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained in line with our Confidentiality Policy. Importantly, the circumstances surrounding the complaint may be such that complete confidentiality is not possible, for example where a member of staff is entitled to know the details of a complaint in order to exercise their right to respond. Should this be the case, the information contained in the complaint will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

12. Any sharing of the information will be explained to the complainant in writing.

### Monitoring and Reporting

13. All complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction are logged by Student Advice on the central Complaint Register. In addition, Student Advice will include the number and nature of complaints in the Student Advice Annual Quality Review, as detailed in our [Commitment to Quality Policy](#).

14. The Student Advice Annual Quality Review Report is submitted to the Director of Participation and Engagement and the Satisfaction, Engagement and Participation Committee.

### Complaint Stage 1

15. Student Advice expect most issues to be raised informally with the member of staff in the first instance. If you are unable, or feel it inappropriate, to raise and/or resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Head of Student of Advice and Wellbeing (or their appointed proxy), so that they have a chance to put things right.

16. If your complaint concerns the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing, you should submit your stage 1 complaint to the [Director of Engagement and Participation](#).



17. You should set out the details of your complaint and the solution you are seeking. You also include any other documents/evidence you wish to be considered as part of your complaint.
18. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
19. You should get a complaint outcome, where possible, within 15 working days. If a decision within 15 working days is not possible, because your complaint is complex, or involves speaking to people who are not available, the Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing will inform you in writing and give you an estimate of how long a full response is likely to take.

## **Complaint Stage 2**

20. If you are not satisfied with the stage 1 outcome, you can escalate your complaint to stage 2, by sending it to the Director of Participation and Engagement.
21. The Director of Participation and Engagement will acknowledge your Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days of receipt.
22. You should get a complaint outcome, where possible, within 15 working days. If a decision within 15 working days is not possible, because your complaint is complex, or involves speaking to people who are not available, the Director of Participation and Engagement will inform you in writing and give you an estimate of how long a full response is likely to take.
23. If your complaint concerns the Director of Participation and Engagement, or the Director of Participation and Engagement dealt with your complaint at Stage 1, you should write formally to the President of the Students' Union. The President will arrange for another Director, who has not had previous involvement in the matter, to consider your Stage 2 complaint.

## **Complaint Stage 3 - Review**

24. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Stage 2 complaint, you can request a review of the decision within 10 working days of receiving the written Stage 2 complaint outcome.
25. We will only accept review requests submitted outside the 10-working day deadline if you can explain and evidence good reason for not being able to meet it.
26. To request a review, you must write to the President of the Students' Union. The President will arrange for another Director, who has not had previous involvement in the matter, to consider your review request.
27. The President will write to inform you who the review request has been allocated to, within 10 working days of receipt.
28. The appointed Director will, where possible, provide a review outcome within 15 working days of the request being allocated.



29. If a response within 15 working days is not possible, because your complaint is complex, or involves speaking to people who are not available, the appointed Director will inform you in writing and give you an estimate of how long a full response will take.

30. The complaint review outcome decision, made by the appointed Director, will be final.

## Contact Details

- Student Advice – [advice@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:advice@cardiff.ac.uk)
- Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing – [AdviceManager@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:AdviceManager@cardiff.ac.uk)
- Director of Participation and Engagement, Steve Wilford - [WilfordS@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:WilfordS@cardiff.ac.uk)
- Students' Union President – [SUPresident@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:SUPresident@cardiff.ac.uk)

