



## Strathclyde Students' Union Complaints Procedure

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Strathclyde Students' Union seeks to ensure that students get the most out of their time at Strathclyde and everything we do is informed by our core values: representation, innovation, fun, inclusivity, and engagement.
- 1.2. If you feel we have not offered these values in our dealings with you, we understand that you may wish to complain about this.
- 1.3. Although we will always seek to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible on an informal basis, we recognise that this will not always be possible. The procedure detailed below outlines our procedures in handling a complaint received by any person or organisation concerning their interaction with Strath Union.
- 1.4. Strath Union is committed to treating all persons, including complainants, fairly and in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.5. We draw particular attention to Strath Union's Code of Conduct<sup>2</sup> which lays out what we expect of all student participants, volunteers, Executive Officers, and staff members in their behaviours when representing Strath Union in any capacity.

### 2. Informal Resolution

- 2.1. Where someone experiences a problem with a Union service, facility, or member of staff, they are encouraged to approach any member of staff to raise this informally.
- 2.2. We anticipate that the majority of concerns can be resolved informally and that in most cases this approach will provide a quick solution.
- 2.3. Upon being made aware of an issue, the staff member taking the report will consider the following:
  - a. Is the concern straightforward and likely to be resolved with little or no investigation?
  - b. Can it be resolved on the spot by providing, where appropriate, an explanation, alternative solution, or an apology?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/policy/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.strathunion.com/union/governance/codeofconduct/>



- c. What outcome is the complainant looking for?

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2.4. We will make every effort to resolve the matter in consultation with you. Where it is clear that this will not be possible, we will recommend that you raise the matter formally through a Stage 1 or 2 Complaint as detailed below.

### **3. Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution**

- 3.1. Where informal resolution is not possible or you feel that a matter requires a formal approach, you can raise your concerns through a Stage 1 complaint.
- 3.2. Strath Union aims to ensure that any complaints or issues are resolved as quickly as possible following having been made aware of the matter.
- 3.3. In the first instance the complainant should raise any issues with the person whom they have been dealing with or with any non-student member of Strath Union staff.
- 3.4. This can be done in person, by phone, or in writing via email or letter. All outcomes and decisions will be issued to the complainant in writing via email, unless the complainant requests an alternative method.
- 3.5. The complaint shall be reported immediately to the appropriate Head of Department or manager.
- 3.6. The staff Head of Department or manager which has received the complaint shall respond to the complainant in writing within five working days of receiving the complaint. A short extension of up to five further working days is permitted if it is not possible for the complaint to be responded to in that timescale due to, for example but not exclusively, annual leave. The complainant will be kept informed of any delay in the process.
- 3.7. If the complaint is complex or requires a full investigation or more detailed consideration then it shall be progressed to the Stage 2 procedure outlined below. Likewise, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they may proceed to Stage 2.

### **4. Stage 2 - Investigation**



- 4.1. A Stage 2 complaint should be set out in writing, detailing the reasons for the complaint, any action already taken to try and resolve the matter by the complainant, and the suggested outcome. Complainants are also encouraged to provide any relevant evidence in support of the complaint. We encourage complainants to use the Strath Union Complaints Form<sup>3</sup> for this.

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- 4.2. On receipt of a Stage 2 complaint, a decision will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Head of Department as to whether Strath Union has jurisdiction over the contents of the complaint. Complaints relating to the University of Strathclyde and its academic or professional services departments will be referred to them. Complaints relating to an alleged breach of criminal law will generally be referred directly to the appropriate authorities.
  - 4.2.1. Where the Union receives a complaint that is referred to another body, where the complaint concerns a member of the Union it reserves the right to suspend that member pending the outcome of any other investigation.
  - 4.2.2. The member may be asked to share the outcome of any other investigation in order to make a decision regarding reinstatement of their membership. Failure to do so may result in Union disciplinary proceedings being activated.
- 4.3. The CEO or Head of Department will acknowledge receipt of the complaint with three working days and at this point advise the complainant if the complaint will be handled by Strath Union or will be passed to the University of Strathclyde or other relevant authority.
- 4.4. Where the CEO or Head of Department considers themselves to be subject to a conflict of interest or wishes to recuse themselves for any other reason, they will notify the complainant. The CEO or Deputy CEO may nominate a Strath Union Executive Officer or another member of the Strath Union Senior Management Team who has not already been involved in an issue at an earlier stage to investigate a complaint on their behalf.
- 4.5. The CEO or Head of Department or their appointed nominee shall investigate the complaint and aim to provide a response within 20 working days. Where a delay is unavoidable, the CEO or Head of Department or

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<sup>3</sup> Available at <https://www.strathunion.com/union/complaints/>



nominee will notify the complainant and a revised timescale will be provided.

- 4.6. The CEO or Head of Department or their nominee will notify their findings to the complainant in writing.
- 4.7. The decision at Stage 2 is the final stage within Strath Union's internal procedures. If someone wishes to raise the matter further as they believe that the Union has not properly investigated or responded to their complaint, they shall be directed to the University of Strathclyde's Complaints Handling Procedure.

## **Strath Union Complaints FAQ**

### **What can I complain about?**

A complaint may relate to the following:

1. The quality and standard of a service provided by or in conjunction with Strath Union or failure to provide a service;
2. The quality of facilities or equipment provided by Strath Union;
3. Unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff including Executive Officers.

### **What can I not complain about?**

There are some things which we are unable to deal with through this complaints procedure. In any situation where we are unable to handle your complaint we will explain to you the reasons for this and direct your complaint to an appropriate alternative. Your consent for the complaint to be referred will be sought with the exception of matters regarding an alleged breach of criminal law where the complaint will be directed to the relevant authorities.

Issues which we are unable to deal with through this procedure include:

1. Routine, first time requests for a service;



2. Complaints about the University of Strathclyde. The University has a Complaints Handling Procedure<sup>4</sup> which can address these issues. You can discuss this confidentially with an adviser at the Advice Hub<sup>5</sup>;
3. Complaints about the conduct of individual students which are not related to Strath Union's activities or venues - the University's Complaints Handling Procedure is the appropriate channel for these complaints. You can discuss this confidentially with an adviser at the Advice Hub;
4. Complaints about Strath Union elections or referenda; there is a separate procedure<sup>6</sup> that governs complaints about these activities;
5. Any issue which has already been dealt with through this complaints procedure;
6. Complaints submitted more than 6 months after the last related incident where no compelling reason exists for the delay.

### Who can complain?

Anyone who has come into contact with any of Strath Union's services or venues, publications, staff, or volunteers can complain.

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### How can I make a complaint?

If you feel able to do so, we encourage complainants to raise their complaint at the earliest opportunity with a member of Strath Union staff or elected Strath Union representative. If you are unsure who to raise your complaint with, you can reach us at [strathunion.info@strath.ac.uk](mailto:strathunion.info@strath.ac.uk) to discuss.

Stage 1 complaints can be raised in person, in writing by email to as per below or letter c/o Strath Union, 51 Richmond Street, Glasgow, G1 1XU, or via telephone on 0141 444 8670. We encourage complainants raising complaints through the Stage 2 process to do this via the Strath Union Complaints Form, but complaints will also be accepted in any other written format. Contact details are below:

#### For complaints regarding:

Executive Officers of Heads of Departments or the Union	<a href="mailto:morna.simpkins@strath.ac.uk">morna.simpkins@strath.ac.uk</a>
Chief Executive Officer	<a href="mailto:strathunion.president@strath.ac.uk">strathunion.president@strath.ac.uk</a>
Bar and Events	<a href="mailto:phil.reavey@strath.ac.uk">phil.reavey@strath.ac.uk</a>
Food and Hospitality	
Marketing and Communications	<a href="mailto:karen.rae@strath.ac.uk">karen.rae@strath.ac.uk</a>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.strath.ac.uk/contactus/complaintsprocedure/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.strathunion.com/support/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.strathunion.com/elections/info/>



Finance and Facilities	<a href="mailto:emma.barclay@strath.ac.uk">emma.barclay@strath.ac.uk</a>
Student Engagement	<a href="mailto:leo.howes@strath.ac.uk">leo.howes@strath.ac.uk</a>

Strath Union will deal with anonymous complaints, but only if sufficient information is given that a reasonable and fair investigation can be carried out. The decision on whether to take action on an anonymous complaint is at the discretion of the CEO or President. Those that decide to complain anonymously accept that they will not receive an outcome from any resulting investigation.

Please note that the Advice Hub at Strath Union cannot offer advice or support with complaints being raised against the Union or any member of Union staff as this would be a clear conflict of interest. If you require support with raising a complaint, you are advised to seek advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

### **How will my complaint be handled?**

Complaints about members of Strath Union staff or elected Executive Officers will be investigated by the relevant Head of Department or their line manager, or in the case of a complaint regarding the CEO, the Student President or their nominee. No complaint outcome will make a recommendation regarding disciplinary action against a staff member including Executive Officers; should the requirement for such action be identified during the investigation of a complaint this shall be addressed through Strath Union's separate and confidential staff disciplinary procedures.

Complaints about any of Strath Union's activities or operation will be investigated by the relevant Head of Department or department manager.

We will provide you with a written response to your complaint within 20 working days. If we are unable to issue a response in this time, we will contact you to let you know why and tell you when you can expect to receive a response.

Strath Union will keep confidential records of all complaints for six years.

### **What if I am not satisfied with the outcome from these procedures?**

If you have exhausted Strath Union's Complaints Procedure, then you can raise your complaint through the University's Complaints Handling Procedure. They will review the investigation and action taken by Strath Union in order to determine whether the correct procedures were followed.