

# Complaints Policy and Procedure

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## Section 1 - Policy Outline

This policy contains the policy and procedures on how to make a complaint to and about your Students' Association. This policy is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, appropriately and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. The Students' Association encourages and welcomes complaints and they are viewed as a tool to assist us in improving our services.

You should use this policy to make a complaint about the Students' Association, one of our staff, officers, trustees, volunteers, consultants, contractors or services that we provide.

Informal complaints can be raised at any time by speaking to the line manager of the service or staff member that you are dissatisfied with.

Please note that this policy should not be used for complaints regarding the Students' Association elections. Complaints of this nature should be sent in writing to the Depute Returning Officer at [membership@sauws.org.uk](mailto:membership@sauws.org.uk) as outlined in the Elections bye-law.

This policy should also not be used by students wishing to make a complaint about their dealings with the University. The University has its own complaints process<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.1 Students' Association Complaints Policy and Procedure

The Students' Association is committed to providing an excellent service to its members and other stakeholders, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We have developed a Complaints Policy and Procedure that explains our approach to receipt and handling of complaints.

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- We deal with it promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially.
- We will respond in the appropriate way – for example with an explanation or apology or information on any action taken.
- We will learn from complaints both upheld and not upheld and use them to improve the services that we offer.
- We will regularly review our complaints policy and procedures.

The Students' Association recognises that some concerns raised may be informal in nature, and we aim to deal with these quickly. Where possible a complaint should be raised directly with the individual, or manager concerned. But if concerns cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of both sides: or where you do not consider the informal route to be appropriate, then the formal complaints procedure will be followed.

### 1.2 Definition

The Students' Association defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with our services, staff,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uws.ac.uk/about-uws/compliance/concerns-complaints/>

elected officers, volunteers, trustees, consultants or contractors.

### 1.3 Responsibilities

The Students' Association's responsibilities are to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- Make every effort to deal with the matter within a stated period of time.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Take appropriate action where required.

The complainants' responsibility is to:

- Raise their complaint promptly and directly with the person concerned, if this is appropriate and where their complaint cannot be resolved satisfactorily informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.
- Explain the complaint in writing as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action they have taken to date.

### 1.4 Monitoring and Reporting

The Board of Trustees of the Students' Association will receive an annual anonymised report of complaints made and their outcomes and recommendations.

### 1.5 Confidentiality

Throughout the process, every attempt will be made to ensure confidentiality. However, the circumstance giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant. Only those managers and other employees of the Students' Association who are required to be part of any investigation will be made aware of any complaint. A copy of all reports, transcripts of interviews and other relevant information will be stored confidentially by the Association.

### 1.6 Scope of the Complaints Policy

- The Complaints Policy will apply to all services, staff, elected officers, Trustees, contractors and consultants that the Students' Association employs or provides, with the exception of our elections process.

If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise that warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings, or through a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly the complaints procedure should be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.

- When appealing against a complaint outcome, the complainant will be asked to state why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled and/or the outcome.

### 1.7 Approval and Review

<b>Approving Body</b>	Student Council/Board of Trustees
<b>Date of approval:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
<b>Review date:</b>	May 2022

## Section 2 - Formal Complaints Procedure

The Students' Association operates a two-stage complaints procedure. The process for each stage is outlined as follows.

### 1. Stage 1

- 1.1 If you have an issue with your experience of the Students' Association, whether this is with one of our staff members, officers, trustees, volunteers, consultants, contractors or services that we provide and are unable to resolve the issue informally and wish to make a formal complaint, this procedure explains how you go about getting a resolution.
- 1.2 You should first send a formal complaint in writing to the contact details below.
- 1.3 Your complaint should set out the details of your issue, how it has affected you, and the remedy you are seeking. You can use the form in the appendix if you wish.
- 1.4 You can expect the complaint to be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- 1.5 The Students' Association will investigate the complaint and aim to respond with an outcome within 10 working days. You may be asked to give more information about the issue to help the investigation. If we are unable to resolve the complaint in this timescale, you will be kept fully informed of the complaints progress until it is resolved.
- 1.5 All complaints should be sent to the Students' Association Senior Administrator. If your complaint is regarding the Senior Administrator then your complaint should be addressed to the Chief Executive. If your complaint is regarding the Chief Executive it should be addressed to the Chair of the Trustee Board (the President).
- 1.6 The relevant addresses are:  
[admin@sauws.org.uk](mailto:admin@sauws.org.uk) for the Senior Administrator  
[chief.executive@sauws.org.uk](mailto:chief.executive@sauws.org.uk) for the Chief Executive  
[president@sauws.org.uk](mailto:president@sauws.org.uk) for the President

Or by post:

Senior Administrator (or Chief Executive or President as appropriate)  
SAUWS  
The Students Union  
Storie Street  
Paisley  
PA1 2HB  
Telephone Number: 0141 849 4151

- 1.7 If you are content with the response from the Students' Association to your complaint, this is the end of the process. If you are not content, the complaint passes to Stage 2 as below.

### 2 Stage 2

- 2.1 If you are not satisfied with the response from stage 1, you have the option of asking for an appeal
- Bye Law 7 – Complaints Procedure – Approved May 2019

to be heard. If you wish for an appeal of the outcome of your initial complaint, you should state this in writing (by email or post) to the Chief Executive, stating the reason you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint. If your original complaint was against the Chief Executive you should address your appeal letter to the President. You should do this within 10 working days of receiving the written response from stage 1.

- 2.2 The Chief Executive/President will respond, normally within five working days to inform you of the action which will be taken in regards to the appeal, and the expected timescale of the investigation.
- 2.3 The relevant history of the complaint will be made available to the Chief Executive, and/or the President. Additional investigations may be undertaken and may include interviews with you, any staff involved, and any witnesses and will also include documentary evidence where appropriate.
- 2.4 The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to you in writing with details of any action taken and time-scale for implementation (if applicable).
- 2.5 If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage 2 complaint, you have the right to seek further redress as below:
  - a. If the initial complaint is regarding how the Students' Association, as a charity is run, you can seek further redress from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Their contact details are outlined in section 2.7 and the website includes a section on how to raise such concerns<sup>2</sup>
  - b. If the initial complaint is about any other matter relating to your dealings with the Students' Association, you can write to the University, as the responsible body under the 1994 Education Act, who will in turn appoint an independent person to investigate and report on your complaint. The contact details are outlined in section 2.7

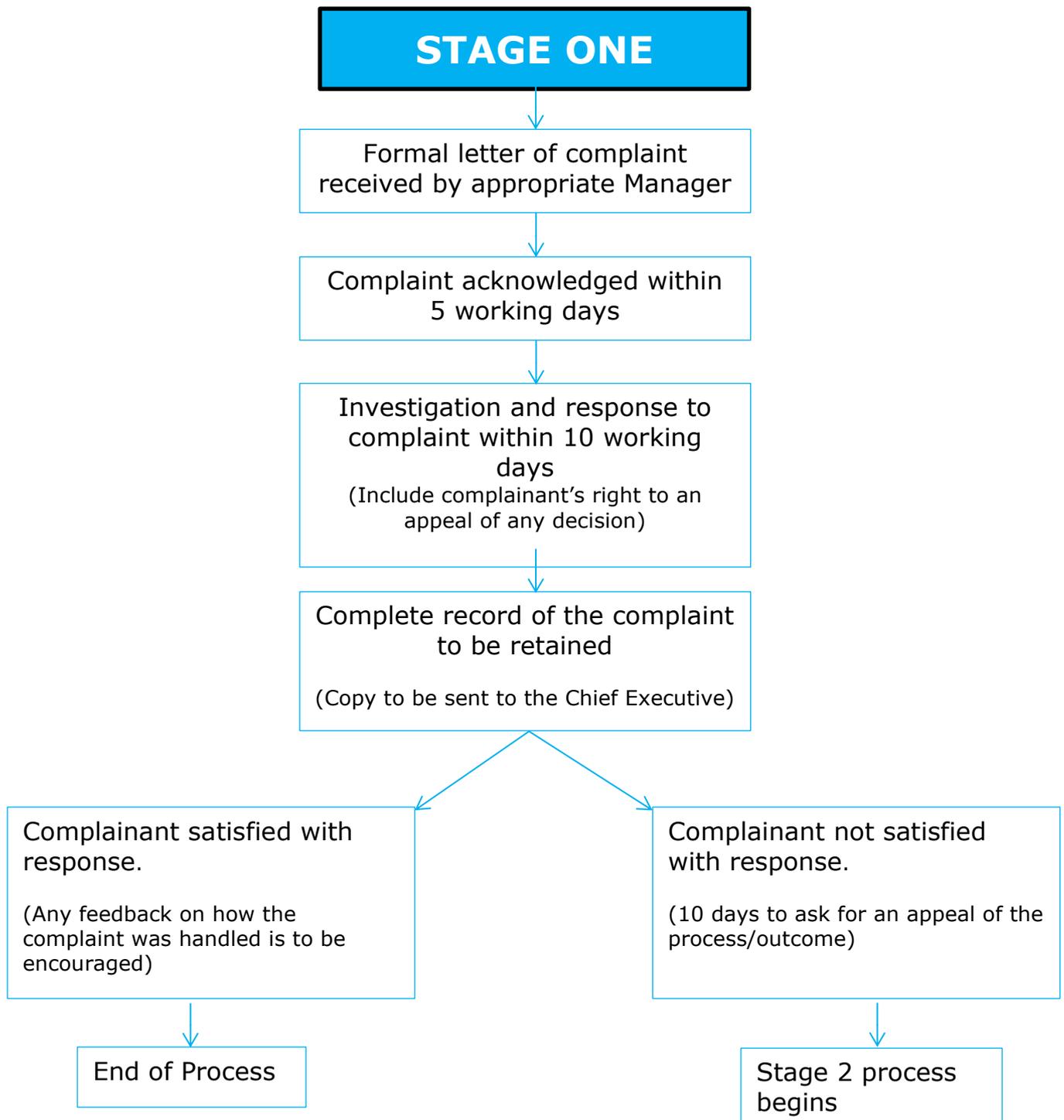
2.7 Contact details for further redress:

<b>Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)</b> 9 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY	<b>Office of the University Secretary</b> University of the West of Scotland High Street, Paisley PA1 2BE
<a href="http://www.oscr.org.uk">www.oscr.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.uws.ac.uk">www.uws.ac.uk</a>

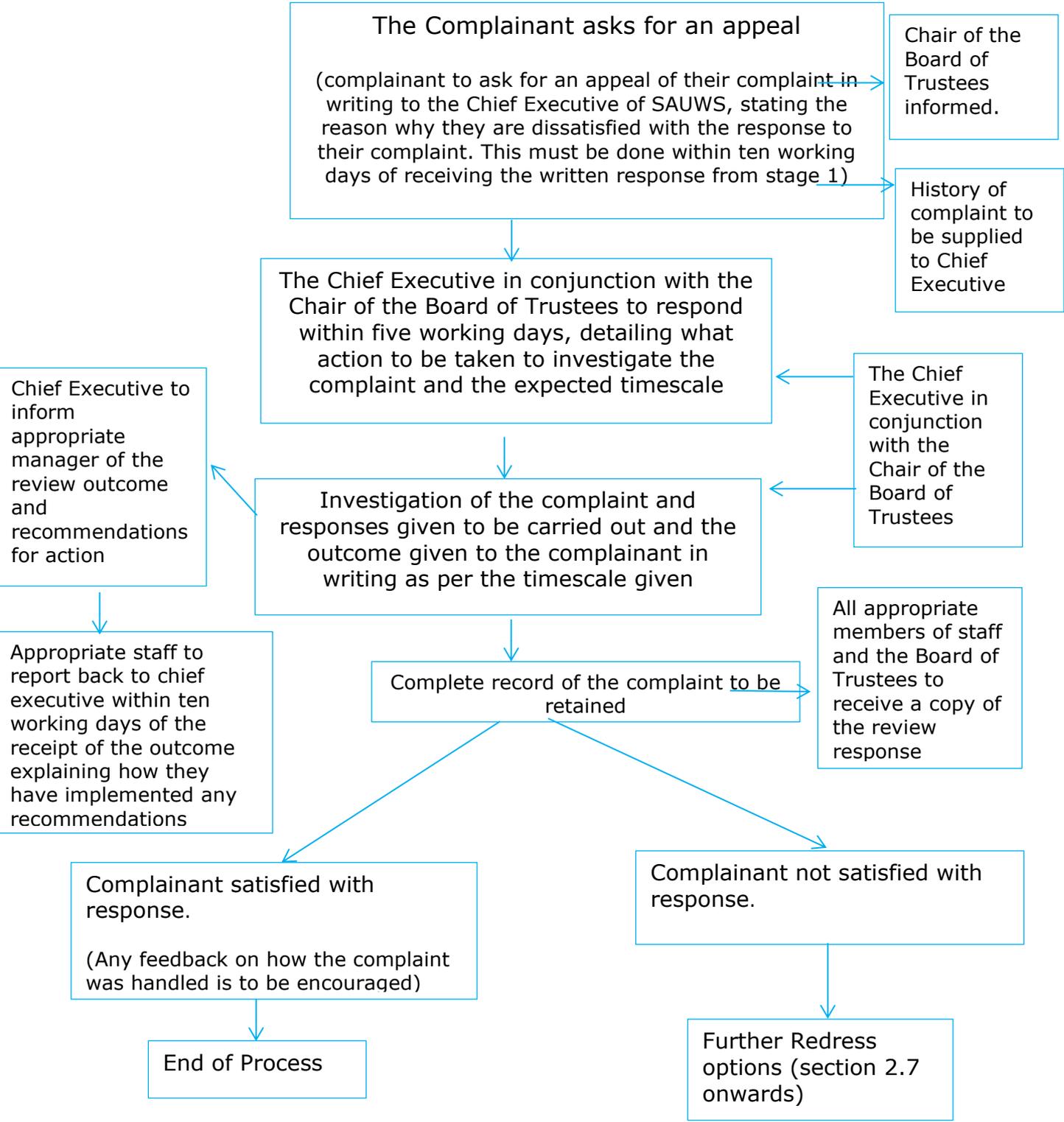
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/raise-a-concern>

### Section 3 Complaints flow chart

The formal complaints procedure should only be followed if the complaint cannot be resolved informally.



# STAGE TWO



## Appendix – Complaint Template

This form has been included to help you structure your complaint. You do not have to use this, but it may help you include all of the relevant details.

### Section 1 – Details of your complaint

*You should include a description of what the complaint is, detailing where it happened and if possible what date and time. You should also include any names of anyone involved in the complaint. The boxes below will automatically expand if being typed on a computer.*

### Section 2 – How this has affected you

*Please let us know how the matter has affected you in as much detail as you wish to provide.*

### Section 3 – Outcome

*Please let us what you want to happen as a result of your complaint.*

### Section 4 - Contact Details

*You must include your name and one method of contacting you if you wish to have a response to your complaint. By giving us your contact details you are giving us consent to contact you on the matter of your complaint.*

Your Name:		Your Address:	
Your Email:			
Tel No:			