

Regulation A6: Complaints

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1. Complaints Process

- 1.1 Any individual, whether a member of the Robert Gordon University Student Association (the “Union”) or not, has the right to register a complaint, and shall be entitled to have their concerns reviewed and addressed in a prompt and fair manner.
- 1.2 Complaints may be submitted around one or more of the following areas:
- 1.2.1 dissatisfaction about the standard of service provided;
 - 1.2.2 failure to act or inappropriate actions concerning Union activities;
 - 1.2.3 treatment by or attitude by a staff member, Elected Officer or Trustee;
 - 1.2.4 inappropriate behaviour by a staff member, Elected Officer or Trustee;
 - 1.2.5 treatment by or attitude of an Ordinary Member while participating in Union activities;
 - 1.2.6 inappropriate behaviour by an Ordinary Member while participating in Union activities;
 - 1.2.7 the Union’s election and referenda processes;
 - 1.2.8 activities or behaviour which breach Union regulations and rules, including conduct in elections and referenda.
- 1.3 The process for dealing with complaints shall be as follows:
- 1.3.1 **Stage One Complaint:** Individuals may register a Stage One Complaint by addressing concerns in person, by e-mail, phone, writing or social media to an Elected Officer, a member of the Trustee Board, a member of staff at the Union or the Returning Officer in an election of referendum.
 - 1.3.1.1 The Union shall seek to provide a response and to resolve a Stage One Complaint promptly, usually within five working days of receipt of the Stage One Complaint.
 - 1.3.2 **Stage Two Complaint:** The Union shall review a Stage Two complaint through the Sabbatical Executive Committee, who may appoint an appropriate individual to investigate the matter, before determining an outcome and providing a response, usually within twenty working days of receipt of the Stage Two Complaint.
 - 1.3.2.1 A Stage One Complaint may be escalated to a Stage Two Complaint in the instance the matter is considered either of a serious or a complex nature;
 - 1.3.2.2 A Stage One Complaint may be escalated to a Stage Two Complaint in the instance a complainant is unsatisfied with the response or outcome of Stage One, by addressing the issue in writing to the President (Communication and Democracy).
 - 1.3.2 **External Review:** Individuals may register a complaint for an External Review if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of a Stage Two Complaint, by addressing the matter to the University as part of the Code of Practice with the Union.

2. Stage One Complaint

- 2.3 Any individual who has a complaint is encouraged to raise it initially at the point of becoming aware of the issue, and to address the matter to an Elected Officer, a member of the Trustee Board, a member of staff at the Union or the Returning Officer in an election or referendum. A Stage One Complaint may be made in person, in writing, by e-mail, by phone, or on an official Union social media account.
- 2.4 The purpose of a Stage One Complaint is to attempt to resolve complaints which are considered straightforward and are likely to require little investigation. Stage One Complaints may be shared with appropriate persons who might be able to provide context or explanation for an issue unless the content of any such complaint is deemed personal and/or confidential, in which case the complaint shall be escalated to a Stage Two Complaint.
- 2.5 The Union shall aim to resolve a Stage One Complaint and to issue notification of an outcome to the complainant within five working day of receipt of the Stage One Complaint. An outcome at Stage One may include an explanation, an apology, a solution, or in certain cases, an escalation to a Stage Two Complaint.
- 2.6 In the instance a complaint is submitted to the Returning Officer in an election or referendum, the Returning Officer reserves the right to investigate any alleged inappropriate behaviour and may make any immediate rulings which are fair and reasonable in the circumstances. Should the Returning Officer believe there is sufficient grounds or evidence, they shall decide on action to be taken, which may include, but is not limited to:
- 2.6.1 formal warning;
 - 2.6.2 disqualification of a candidate;
 - 2.6.3 suspension of a student's right to vote in the current election or referendum;
 - 2.6.4 annulment of the relevant election or referendum;
 - 2.6.5 escalation to a Stage Two Complaint.
- 2.7 The complainant shall be informed of the outcome of a Stage One Complaint. This may be in person, in writing, by e-mail, by phone, or by an official Union social media account. The response shall aim to address all areas of the complaint and explain the reasons for the decision, and inform the complainant of their right to enter into a Stage Two Complaint should they remain dissatisfied.
- 2.8 The Union's record of complaints shall be updated once the outcome of a Stage One Complaint has been issued

3. Stage Two Complaint

- 3.1 Complaints considered at Stage Two may already have been considered at Stage One or may be complaints identified upon receipt at Stage One as appropriate for Stage Two.
- 3.1.1 A complaint shall proceed to Stage Two when an individual is dissatisfied with the response and/or outcome issued at Stage One and the complainant lodges a Stage Two Complaint in writing to the President (Communication and Democracy) with details of the issue, the desired outcome and any supporting evidence.
 - 3.1.2 A complaint shall proceed to Stage Two when a matter is of a serious nature or the matter requires further investigation than is possible at

- Stage One. The complaint shall be lodged as a Stage Two Complaint with the President (Communication and Democracy).
- 3.1.3 The Union shall issue an acknowledgement of the complaint's escalation to a Stage Two Complaint in writing once all necessary information has been submitted to the President (Communication and Democracy).
- 3.2 The President (Communication and Democracy) shall schedule a meeting of the Sabbatical Executive Committee to discuss any Stage Two Complaints that have been lodged with the Union. The Sabbatical Executive Committee shall review the information, call on any appropriate person(s) and decide upon a suitable outcome.
- 3.3 In the instance a member of the Sabbatical Executive Committee is subject of a Stage Two Complaint or has a conflict of interest, then the member shall take no part in the Sabbatical Executive Committee meeting where the complaint is discussed. Should the President (Communication and Democracy) be subject to a Stage Two Complaint, another member of the Sabbatical Executive Committee shall undertake their responsibility in managing the complaints process.
- 3.4 The Sabbatical Executive Committee shall have the opportunity to appoint an appropriate individual to undertake any necessary enquires to investigate a complaint and provide guidance to the Committee.
- 3.5 The Union, through the Sabbatical Executive Committee shall decide an outcome which may include an explanation, an apology, solution, referral to a Discipline Committee, or otherwise and shall aim to provide a written response to the complainant usually within twenty working days of receipt of the Stage Two Complaint.
- 3.6 In the event that a complaint cannot be resolved within twenty working days, where there is justifiable reason, the investigation may be extended so long as the complainant is notified of the situation.
- 3.7 The Union's record of complaints shall be updated once the outcome of a Stage Two Complaint has been issued.

4. External Review

- 4.1 Should a complainant remain dissatisfied, then they shall be entitled for the matter to be referred to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University as outlined in the University's Code of Practice with the Union.
- 4.2 The Principal, on behalf of the Board of Governors, shall appoint an independent person (who may, or may not, be a member of university staff depending upon the nature of the complaint) to undertake an investigation into the complaint and make a report within twenty working days of the request for an external review of the complaint. Where applicable, the Union shall act upon any recommendations or findings within that report.