



**Complaints Policy for the University of Lincoln Students' Union (ULSU),
Lincoln Students' Union Trading Ltd (LSUT)
and Students' Union Management System Ltd (SUMS)**

1. Interpretation

- a) Words and phrases used in this Policy have the same meaning as are given to them in the ULSU's Articles of Association (available at <http://lincolnsu.com/about-us/governance>) unless the context otherwise requires.
- b) In this policy the following definitions apply:
- i. A 'clear day' does not include a Saturday, Sunday, Bank Holiday or Official University holiday (Concessionary Day).
 - ii. 'Complainant' means the person making a complaint. Where applicable the term is to be read as being in the plural.
 - iii. 'Complainees' means the Student Member or the ULSU itself (as the case may be) against whom a complaint is made. Where applicable the term is to be read as being in the plural.
 - iv. 'Members' are Student Members of the ULSU.

2. Written Complaints against the ULSU Group (ULSU, LSUT or SUMS)

- a) The term ULSU Group encapsulates ULSU, LSUT and SUMS; the Group aims to ensure that there is a fair and systematic approach in the enforcement of policy and procedure adopted by its officers, staff, contractors and constituent bodies. To further this aim, any registered student of the University of Lincoln or member of the public who believes they have been affected by the activities of ULSU, LSUT (Engine Shed, Tower Bar, The Barge or The Swan) or SUMS who wishes to complain about:
- i. any matter related to the activities or operation of ULSU, LSUT or SUMS, or
 - ii. unfair disadvantage arising from non-membership of ULSU, other than for matters of a disciplinary nature;

Individuals may submit a complaint by forwarding a written complaint to the following email address: complaints@lincolnsu.com.

Excluding any complaint that falls under Paragraph 3,4 or 5, receipt of complaints submitted to this email address will be acknowledged within five clear days of their being sent.

All complaints will be logged and reviewed by the Executive Assistant, with support from the Chief Executive and Senior Managers within the Group, and responded to or escalated accordingly save where the complaint is frivolous or vexatious.

Depending on the nature and subject of a complaint, the Executive Assistant may direct complaints the following Senior Managers for investigation:

Complaints against ULSU:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Chief Executive • Head of Student Voice & Insight • Head of Finance
Complaints against LSUT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Commercial Operations
Complaints against SUMS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Student Voice & Insight

If a complaint is considered as frivolous or vexatious then the complaint will be logged as normal and the Complainant informed of the reason for this determination, and their right to appeal.

If a complaint is against the Chief Executive, this will be directed to the Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees.

- b) A formal complaint cannot be made about the outcome of a disciplinary process or the way in which a disciplinary process has been undertaken; the appeals process in the disciplinary procedure must be followed in this regard.
- c) Upon completion of any investigation the Senior Manager who led the investigation will write a written report in summary and respond to the complainant directly, copying in the Executive Assistant for administrative purposes. The investigation should take no longer than 28 days from the initial complaint being made. If the investigation exceeds this time the Executive Assistant will write to the Complainant to inform them of the delay and the reasons for this. The Complainant will be informed of their right to appeal the decision by writing to the Chief Executive as detailed in Paragraph 6.

3. Written Complaints against a Member

- a) Upon receipt of a written complaint from any person against a Students' Union member, the Executive Assistant will escalate this to the Chief Executive; it is within the Chief Executive's remit to decide whether the complaint should be upheld or denied. If the Chief Executive believes that the complaint does not necessitate further action, then the complaint shall be dismissed as either frivolous or vexatious.
- b) If a complaint is upheld, then the Chief Executive will appropriately refer the matter to either the Informal or Formal Disciplinary procedure which will be enacted as per the Student disciplinary procedures for member(s), Committees, Societies and Sports Clubs forming part of the Code of Conduct of the Students' Union.
- c) Following receipt of further information, the Chief Executive may re-visit the decision taken under Paragraph 3(a) as to whether to refer a complaint to the Student disciplinary procedures for member(s), Committees, Societies and Sports Clubs forming part of the Code of Conduct of the Students' Union.

4. Complaints about ULSU Group Employees

- a) If a complaint relates to an individual ULSU Group employee, other than a Student Trustee or a Sabbatical Trustee (Student Leader), the Executive Assistant will escalate this to the Chief Executive and this policy shall not apply; the Chief Executive will deal with such a complaint under the ULSU Group's internal disciplinary procedures as appropriate. In this event the Complainant will be informed, and the Chief Executive will resolve the complaint using any

means at their disposal and at their discretion. The Complainant will not be informed of the outcome of the disciplinary process unless sanctioned by the Chief Executive. The decision of the Chief Executive on this matter is final.

5. Complaints about Sabbatical Trustees

- a) If a complaint relates to a Sabbatical Trustee (Student Leader), the Executive Assistant will escalate this to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive, depending the nature of the complaint (i.e. it does not breach the Code of Conduct of Office or the Terms and Condition of Office), the Chief Executive may dismiss the complaint and advise the Complainant to use the democratic accountability processes as outlined in the Bye-Laws to seek redress. In all cases the Complainant will be informed of their right to appeal under Paragraph 6 of this Policy.
- b) If the Chief Executive accepts the complaint against the Sabbatical Trustee, then this Policy shall not apply, and the Chief Executive will deal with such complaint under the Sabbatical Trustee Terms of Office document. In this event the Complainant will be informed and the Supervising Trustee, advised by the Chief Executive, will resolve the complaint using any means at their disposal. The Complainant will not be informed of the outcome of the disciplinary process unless sanctioned by the Supervising Trustee. The decision of the Supervising Trustee on this matter is final.

6. Appeal

- a) If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Senior Manager to not progress a complaint or with the outcome of a complaint, they may request that the issue is referred to the Chief Executive in writing, clearly stating the grounds for appeal, within five clear days of the date of the correspondence resolving the complaint being sent. If the Chief Executive believes that the grounds outlined are legitimate, they shall investigate the matter and inform the Complainant of the outcome of this investigation. If the Chief Executive finds that the grounds are frivolous or vexatious, and no new evidence has come to light, then they may refuse the appeal; their decision on this matter is final.
- b) The Chief Executive may take the any of the following actions:
 - i. make any decision, or order any remedial action in respect of the complaint; and/or
 - ii. make changes to policies and procedures; and/or
 - iii. instigate disciplinary action against any Student Members or Trustees.

The Chief Executive will write to the Complainant within five works days to inform them of the outcome of appeal.

7. University Appeal

- a) If, and only if, the Complainant or the Complainee believes that the procedure set out in this Complaints Policy has not been followed correctly, they may request that the issue is referred to the University in accordance with the Code of Practice. Such a request is to be made to the University Registrar by the Complainant or Complainee (as applicable) within five clear days of the date of the letter sent by the Chair under Paragraph 6. The Registrar or their nominated Deputy shall review the documentation about the complaint and the consideration of it by the Complaints Panel and/or Appeal Panel and will determine whether the procedures of this Complaints Policy have been properly followed in all the circumstances. Exceptionally, the Registrar or their nominated Deputy may convene a meeting(s) with relevant individuals before reaching a determination.