

LSESU Members' Complaint Procedure (non-election)

Policy Name:	LSESU Members' Complaint Procedure (non-election)
Approved By:	LSESU Board of Trustees
Date of Approval:	22 nd June 2026
Date of Next Review:	June 2027 This procedure will be reviewed after the first year of operation and thereafter every three years, unless new operational practices, legislation, regulations or best practice guidelines indicate that an earlier review is required.
Policy Owner:	Governance Manager
Brief Description:	This procedure applies to all LSESU members (students at the London School of Economics and Political Science), including associate members. The Members' complaints procedure ensures that LSESU can listen and respond to complaints from and between members in relation to the Union's activity groups, spaces or events, services or people. All members will be treated fairly and equitably as the Union works to find resolutions to issues or problems raised. The procedure also satisfies the requirements of the Education Act 1994, and the Collaboration Agreement with the London School of Economics ("the School"), to have in place a process for complaints of dissatisfaction by members against the Union.
Version	V3

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We want our members to have a positive relationship with each other and to make sure there is a strong sense of respect and solidarity within the student body. However, sometimes students will want to complain about someone, or something, in the Students' Union.

- 1.2 LSESU has clear procedures for responding to any complaints about our events, spaces, activities, people or student groups. All complaints are treated seriously and dealt with fairly and help us to support our members with potential areas of conflict or concern. The Members' Complaints Procedure is the starting point for any complaint within the scope of the Union's powers. The Members' Disciplinary Procedure may be implemented at any point of a complaint or incident, should an escalation of processes be required.
- 1.3 Most concerns can be informally resolved by talking directly to our Union staff, student group leaders, or to a member where a disagreement has occurred. Often an apology, or acknowledgement of a problem leading to a change in behaviours, is sufficient to resolve a complaint. Sometimes, however, it may not be possible to resolve issues through such direct channels, so the LSESU Complaints Procedure sets out how to make a complaint, and what actions LSESU takes to resolve them.
- 1.4 In cases where a complaint is made in relation to a student group (ie Society, Sports Club, or Campaign Group that is affiliated or supported by LSUSU), the group President or lead officer will be asked to represent the student group, and any required redress will be applied directly to the group and not against individual students. For the purposes of this procedure, all such LSESU student groups will be referred to as "student groups".
- 1.5 Where references in this procedure are made to 'members', this includes associate members.
- 1.6 **Free speech**
In implementing this procedure, LSESU will take reasonably practicable steps as part of its duty working alongside the School, to secure free speech within the law and ensure that any restrictions on free speech are proportionate. LSESU will not tolerate criminal activity, bullying and harassment, public order offences and other unacceptable behaviour outside of the scope of protected speech, and will balance free speech protections against other relevant considerations where this is lawful and appropriate.

2. When to use the LSESU complaints procedure – what is in scope

- 2.1 Wherever possible, members should first attempt to find a direct resolution. For example, contacting a society or club directly for a refund, or to ask for a clarification or help with resolving a minor dispute. However, where this is not possible, or where a member remains unhappy with the result of a direct informal approach, the LSESU Members' Complaints Procedure can be applied as the complaint relates to any of the following:
 - 2.1.1 An LSESU event or activity organised by our members, student groups, officers or Union staff;
 - 2.1.2 Activities or behaviours of one of our student groups, including its members or student leaders;
 - 2.1.3 Member to member issues related to any of the above Union activities or events;
 - 2.1.4 Other Union activities where a remedy falls within our powers to find a resolution or to apply a penalty.
- 2.2 A complaint is an expression of concern, difficulty or dissatisfaction for which a formal response is being requested. Examples to be considered under the Members' Complaints Procedure include:
 - 2.2.1 Dissatisfaction with the response given after trying to resolve an issue or concern informally or directly;
 - 2.2.2 Alleged misconduct of a member as an individual when engaged in LSESU events, activities and spaces (see 2.4 below);
 - 2.2.3 An issue or problem with one of our student groups, (including media outlets (e.g. PuLSE Radio or The Beaver official newspaper of the LSESE), or with their elected student leaders;
 - 2.2.4 A breach of the student activity group agreements or associated Regulations, or codes of conduct;

2.2.5 A complaint about being disadvantaged after opting out of student union membership.

2.3 For the avoidance of doubt, a complaint against a member or student group when engaged in LSESU events or activities made by a member of the public, a member of Union staff, a member of LSE (School) staff, or a third-party supplier, may also be considered under this procedure.

2.4 **Misconduct**

Examples of types of misconduct include:

- 2.4.1 Actions that are in contravention of the values and behaviours expected by members and/or in breach of the Union's policies, procedures, members' codes of conduct or governing documents;
- 2.4.2 Behaviour that has a negative impact on other people, affecting their enjoyment or use of LSESU spaces, activities and events, examples include anti-social behaviour such as actions that cause, or are likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress;
- 2.4.3 Misuse of LSESU funds or property (including wilful damage/theft);
- 2.4.4 Behaviour likely to damage the reputation of LSESU, relating to LSESU events, activities and spaces.

3. **When should a different procedure be used?**

3.1 This procedure should **not** be used if the concerns raised relate to:

- 3.1.1 LSESU Elections or Referenda (which are dealt with by the Returning Officer);
- 3.1.2 LSESU Sabbatical Officers (which are dealt with through the LSESU staff disciplinary procedures);
- 3.1.3 A member of LSESU staff (which should be referred to their line manager for assessment under the Union's staff procedures);
- 3.1.4 Our trading spaces (the Union's bars, cafés or other commercial outlets (which should be referred to the Venue and Bar Manager or Chief Executive);
- 3.1.5 A Trustee (which should be referred to the Chair of the Board, except for those who are also Sabbatical Officers which should be referred to the Chief Executive).

3.2 To find out more, please read associated policies and procedures on our [website](#).

3.3 **Complaints relating to the LSE – the School (staff, services or academic studies)**

Complaints regarding London School of Economics (the School)'s events or services, or activities that involve staff or academic studies at the School should be referred to the LSE for consideration under the School's complaints procedures.

3.4 **Complaints relating to student to student conduct outside LSESU activities or events**

For complaints relating to allegations of student to student misconduct outside LSESU activities and spaces, including bullying and harassment within the School community, please use the [School's complaint procedures](#). This may apply for example to allegations of misconduct taking place in academic settings, School study spaces, campus spaces, or in student accommodation or off campus.

The Union recognises that some allegations of misconduct may be triggered by, or become apparent, in LSESU events and spaces which repeat or continue beyond the Union's areas of control. When such behaviours continue outside of LSESU activities or student group events, the Union may take a view that a referral to the School's complaint procedures is more appropriate to address alleged misconduct.

3.5 **Serious incidents – potentially criminal activity**

Serious complaints of a potentially criminal nature (assault/rape/theft) should be reported immediately to the Police and to the School. The School has an online [Report & Support](#) system where serious incidents such as harassment, bullying, discrimination, sexual violence or hate crime can be directed to the School anonymously or with contact details. [Advice](#) is provided to students who may wish to speak to specially trained School staff before making a report of a serious incident.

4. **Support and adjustments: equal opportunities**

Any investigation under this procedure will be undertaken with appropriate discretion, care and consideration. All steps in the process will remain fair and in line with LSESU's [Equality & Diversity Policy](#). Reasonable adjustments to the procedure can be made to accommodate members defined as disabled under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

5. **Protection of confidentiality and data sharing with the School**

- 5.1 LSESU is committed to dealing with complaints discretely, protecting the confidentiality of those involved. To retain privacy and confidentiality, the identity of the complainant will be redacted (removed) before contacting the person or student group being complained about unless, by written prior agreement with the complainant, their identity is essential to the resolution of the complaint. All parties to a complaint will be required to keep all details confidential, and any breach of such confidentiality may result in immediate referral for action under the Members' Disciplinary Procedure.
- 5.2 LSESU will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern under our Whistleblowing Policy. Anyone who retaliates against a whistleblower as part of these procedures will be subject to disciplinary action. Please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy regarding revealing confidential information as part of a whistleblowing complaint.
- 5.3 Where some information (including identities) may need to be shared for safeguarding purposes, or to ensure the fairness and effectiveness of an investigation, the Union will inform those affected and provide the necessary support and advice to ensure this is done as sensitively as possible.
- 5.4 No LSESU Student Officer, member of staff or Trustee should comment publicly on any incident that is being dealt with under this procedure, and no formal reports will be published.
- 5.5 Where a complaint, incident or redress could impact on the wider student community, LSESU may choose to issue some form of statement or information. The method of announcement will be explained in advance to the people involved in the complaint and identities of individuals will be kept confidential.
- 5.6 LSESU is required under our Collaboration Agreement with the LSE, to share with the School reports of serious incidents involving students. Reportable incidences are those involving police or emergency services, or potentially criminal activities. In such cases, complainants will be supported to make their complaint direct to the LSE and no referral will be made to the School without the prior knowledge of the complainant.
- 5.7 **Use of social media: confidentiality**
The use of social media posts, or exchanges online with other students, societies, clubs or groups, to draw attention to an individual who may be the subject of a complaint may be considered as harassment or bullying and do not help in the amicable resolution of complaints. Breaches of confidentiality by any party to a complaint (complainant, the group or persons who are the subject of a complaint, or a witness) may result in disciplinary action under our Members' Disciplinary Procedure.

6. Conflict of Interests

- 6.1 To avoid any real, or perceived, bias in the investigation and decision-making processes the LSESU Trustee Board will have the authority to delegate decision-making to any other nominee, and may involve independent, external investigators. All efforts will be made, where possible, to ensure that no person involved with, or closely connected to the complaint, has a decision-making role in this procedure.
- 6.2 Where the LSESU General Secretary is potentially conflicted in the decision-making process, a non-conflicted alternative elected LSESU Sabbatical Officer or other senior LSESU staff member will be appointed the decision-maker. The complainant and the subject of complaint will be informed of the decision-maker.

7. Reporting a complaint

- 7.1 We undertake to resolve complaints within the indicative timeframes specified below, but in some cases complaints may be complex and take additional time to assess, investigate and conclude. Complainants, and any student group or person who is the subject of the complaint, will be kept informed of progress and any adjustments needed for responses and decision-making.
- 7.2 We ask for complaints, where possible, to be submitted within **20 working days** of the incident in question. In some cases, it may not be possible for a complaint to be submitted within this timeframe. All complaints received will be fairly reviewed and any reasons for delays considered.

7.3 Complaint form

To make our complaints process as simple as possible, while making sure we capture all the information we need, LSESU has a simple [online complaint form](#). Not all the fields are compulsory, but we ask for as much information as possible to enable us to understand the issue or concern, and also what resolution the complainant is ideally looking for. The complaints form asks for the following information:

- A summary of the problem, issue or concern (the complaint),
- The date(s) when the complaint occurred,
- Name and contact details for you - the complainant,
- Name and contact details (if known) of the member or student group (the subject of the complaint),
- If any attempt has been made to resolve the complaint directly or informally, and if so what the outcome was,
- If known, what policy, procedure or other regulation might apply to the complaint,
- An indication of the required outcome (what would constitute an acceptable resolution).

If complaints are received by email (ie not using the form), we will contact the complainant to make sure we have all the information required to make an initial assessment.

- 7.4 The form also provides a summary of the complaint details entered, a copy of which is automatically sent to the complainant by email when clicking on the “submit” button, so that details of an incident or event need only to be described once. We appreciate that reporting a complaint may take courage and can cause distress and anxiety, so we are keen to try to keep unnecessary repetitions of the event to a minimum.
- 7.5 If any officer, representative or member of staff receives what appears to be a complaint, they should forward it to the correct destination within the Union for assessment.
- 7.6 When a complaint is received, the complainant will be emailed within **5 working days** with an acknowledgement of receipt, and provided with the complaints procedure.

7.7 Duplicated or coordinated complaints

Where multiple complaints are received that are in the same format, or with the same wording, on the same subject, or as part of an orchestrated group complaint, these may be treated as duplicates. In such cases, the numbers of individual complaints received will be recorded in the LSESU complaint log but with only one assessment taking place unless the complaints raise additional substantive, new or separate points of complaint. LSESU reserves the right to engage only with the originator of the coordinated complaint and advise the additional complaints that they are duplicates of a complaint under consideration.

8. Initial assessment (Stage 1)

8.1 A complaint assessor (staff member at the LSESU) will make an initial assessment and determine whether the matter is within the Student Union's control or remit and where a remedy or resolution can be applied. The assessor will determine the initial outcome and next steps, which will include one of the following:

- 8.1.1 The complaint should be dismissed as there is no merit, or it is outside the scope of the Students' Union, or the information is factually incorrect – no further action (Stage 1);
- 8.1.2 The complaint could be resolved informally, with a resolution offered (Stage 1);
- 8.1.3 A formal investigation is required before a potential outcome could be offered (Stage 2);
- 8.1.4 Disciplinary action should be taken and the matter should be referred to the Members' Disciplinary Procedure;
- 8.1.5 The matter is of a potentially criminal or serious nature where the School and/or law enforcement authorities need to be contacted (See 3.5 Serious incidents – potentially criminal activity).

8.2 Outcome of initial assessment

The complainant will be informed of the initial outcome, in writing (by email), within **15 working days** of the Union's acknowledgement of the complaint. This communication will include:

- details of the assessment
- the reasons for any decisions made, and
- what will happen next, including further advice or support as required.

8.3 Informal resolution

If an informal resolution is proposed, the complainant will be provided with an outline of how this will be progressed. Subject to any conflicts of interest, to achieve a satisfactory outcome, the approach or mediation may include the assistance of: a member of Union staff with relevant expertise; a Sabbatical Officer; a relevant Part-Time Officer (PTO); or student leader of a relevant society or club. Where informal resolution is not possible, or not accepted by the complainant, the Stage 2 Investigation process will be followed (see below).

9. Stage 2: Investigation

9.1 Where an investigation is required to determine the full facts of the case before a ruling can be made, a Complaints Investigator will be appointed by the complaint assessor. The Investigator may be an LSESU manager not previously involved in the case and the complainant will be provided with their name and contact details. Depending on any specialist expertise required and/or availability of LSESU staff resources, the complaint investigator could potentially be an external investigator.

9.2 The complainant, and any person who may be subject to a complaint will be informed of the requirement for an investigation, confirming:

- The details of the complaint

- Any applicable policy, procedures, codes of conduct, regulations or agreements that might apply for the investigation
 - The name and contact details of the complaint investigator.
- 9.3 The member, or the leader of any student group, who has been complained about will be given a written outline (by email) of the complaint and will be asked to respond in writing (by email) to the allegations. They will be provided with any policies, procedures, code of conduct, regulations or agreements that may apply to the allegations.
- 9.4 In line with confidentiality, the identity of the complainant will be redacted unless required for the effective resolution of the complaint (see 5.1 above).
- 9.5 The investigation may include obtaining written or verbal evidence from the complainant, any witnesses, or any other relevant person. In-person or online meetings may be held with the complainant and/or other parties to the complaint.
- 9.6 Any person involved in a complaint meeting (complainant, witnesses or the subject of the complaint) will be permitted to invite a fellow member or friend to accompany them to meetings as an observer or to provide any other support (not in any legal capacity). A minimum of **five working days'** notice will be given for any meetings.
- 9.7 At no time will the parties to a complaint be put into direct contact with each other without express prior agreement and consent, and any such contact will be facilitated by the complaint investigator (or other appropriate and non-conflicted LSESU staff).
- 9.8 The complaint investigator will aim to complete their investigation within **20 working days** of the date of the initial assessment outcome. Where more time is needed by the investigator, the parties to the complaint will be informed of a realistic new timeframe in a timely manner. After discussion with both the complainant and the subject of the complaint, the complaint investigator will draft a recommended outcome and course of action.
- 9.9 **Complaints Deciding Officer**
On completion of the investigation, the investigator will present their findings to a Complaints Deciding Officer, who will be one of the Sabbatical Officers (excluding the General Secretary) or an elected Student Trustee. The original complaint assessor will assist the Complaints Deciding Officer. The Complaints Deciding Officer will then decide one of the following outcomes:
- 9.9.1 The complaint should be dismissed as there is no merit or the information is factually incorrect;
 - 9.9.2 The complaint should be upheld (in full or part of the complaint) and what penalties or remedy should be applied;
 - 9.9.3 The matter should be referred to the Members' Disciplinary Procedure for further action.
- 9.10 The complainant, and the person or group complained about, will be separately informed of the decision in writing (by email) within **10 working days**. The outcome of the complaint, reasons for decision made, and any resolution or penalty to be applied will be provided in a formal Outcome letter to the parties to the complaint.

10. Penalties or resolutions to be applied under the Members' Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Deciding Officer may determine one or more (a combination) of the following remedies to be applied:

- 10.1 An apology – acceptance of potential harm and an opportunity to put the matter right.
- 10.2 Learning or training opportunities to be undertaken to address behaviours or to learn from mistakes made.
- 10.3 A written warning and advice that if the offence is repeated, further action will be taken (for example referral to the Members' Disciplinary Procedure).

11. Other penalties to be applied

11.1 In cases where the outcome of the initial assessment, the process of an investigation, or escalation of procedures indicates that the Members' Disciplinary Procedure should be applied, the following penalties, as well as any of the above in paragraph 10, may be considered under the Members' Disciplinary Procedure:

- Suspension or exclusion from our licensed bars,
- Suspension or exclusion from membership of the Union, restricting access to Union spaces, events, activities, student groups, societies and clubs on a temporary or permanent basis,
- Student group to be put into "special measures" under the Student Group Regulations, or to be subject to disaffiliation from the Union.

11.2 The Members' Disciplinary Procedure may be applied at any stage of a complaint assessment or investigation should an escalation of processes be required. The subject of the disciplinary action will be advised in writing of any requirement for escalation.

12. Stage 3: Appeals

12.1 Any appeal against a ruling under the Members' Complaints Procedure should be made to the LSESU General Secretary (or Chief Executive in the event of any conflicts of interest) within **10 working days** of notification of the decision.

12.2 In the event that there is a perceived, or real, conflict of interests involving both the General Secretary and the CEO, an alternative non-conflicted member of the LSESU Senior Leadership Team, or alternative non-conflicted person such as a Lay Trustee or independent third party, will consider the appeal.

12.3 Grounds for an appeal are:

- 12.3.1 There is evidence of a significant procedural error in the investigation of the complaint, which significantly contributed to the outcome;
- 12.3.2 Significant new evidence, which throws doubt on the outcome, has come to light which could not have been made available during the initial investigation;
- 12.3.3 The decision made is otherwise flawed, or could be considered wholly unreasonable (outside the range of decisions that might be considered reasonable).

12.4 The General Secretary, Chief Executive, or their nominee, will determine whether any of the above grounds for appeal is justified, and the most appropriate method of conducting any review required. This will be communicated to the appellant within **10 working days** of receipt of the appeal.

12.5 Review

If a review of the complaint decision is required due to one of the appeal grounds being met, a panel will be convened of the following:

- The General Secretary (Chief Executive or nominee subject to any conflicts of interest)
- One further member of the Executive Committee
- An elected [Union Academic Rep](#), or other official Union student representative.
- The original complaint assessor will assist the panel with taking meeting notes and communicating the decision of the panel to the appellant.

12.6 The members of the panel will not include the complaint investigator, except for them to answer any questions relating to their assessment and initial outcome.

12.7 Possible outcomes of an appeal are:

- 12.7.1 The appeal is not upheld (rejected) and the original decision stands, ie remains unchanged;
- 12.7.2 The appeal is upheld (accepted) and the complaint penalty is modified;
- 12.7.3 To re-open the investigation as more information is required (see below).

12.8 Re-open the investigation

During the appeal stage, LSESU reserves the right to re-open the investigation if more information is required, subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive. The complaint parties will be advised in writing of any decision to re-open the investigation, and the reasons for any such decision. The panel may then reconvene to consider any additional information, and to determine the outcome of the appeal.

12.9 Completion of procedures

The General Secretary (Chief Executive, or nominee subject to any conflicts of interest) will determine the final decision on the appeal based on consultation with any review panel convened. The outcome will be given in writing and should be considered a completion of LSESU complaint procedures. The final decision on any appeal should be notified to the appellant within **28 working days**.

13. Complaints to the LSE (the School) about LSESU (the Union)

13.1 Under the Education Act 1994 and the Collaboration Agreement between LSESU and the School, students who are dissatisfied with LSESU may take their complaint to the School. LSESU will cooperate with the School's processes regarding any complaints made about the Union.

13.2 Any complaint to the School about dissatisfaction with LSESU should be made to the Deputy Chief Operating Officer. The School will normally act to consider complaints against the Union only after any existing applicable LSESU procedures have been completed.

13.3 In the event of a complaint to the School regarding the Students' Union, the School Deputy Chief Operating Officer will agree with the LSESU Chief Executive or the General Secretary (depending on any conflicts of interest) a suitable panel to review the complaint made. The School procedures will take account of the regulations in place governing complaints against student unions.

14. Recording complaints: record keeping

14.1 All complaints will be recorded in the Union's complaints log, detailing:

- The description of the complaint
- Any incident report, or referral to the Members' Disciplinary Procedure
- Any penalties imposed and the reasons for it
- Whether an appeal was lodged and its outcome

- The number of complaints received on the same subject (where duplicates are received)

14.2 These records are kept confidential and retained in line with data protection legislation, General Data Protection Regulations and our Student [Privacy Policy](#).

Appendix One: Tables & Charts

STAGE	WHO & WHAT	OUTCOME	
1) REPORT STAGE	Case reviewed by Complaint assessor	A] Complaint Dismissed/Informally Resolved. Process Complete. (to be taken as a Completion of Procedures).	
		Initial resolution offered	Complainant doesn't accept resolution. Refer to 2) Investigation Stage
			Complainant accepts offer. Complaint closed.
		Incident referred to Members' Disciplinary Procedure	
		Investigation warranted. Refer to 2) Investigation Stage	
2) INVESTIGATION STAGE	Incident investigated by Complaints Investigator	Complaint Deciding Officer determines: Complaint found not justified. Complainant informed of 3) Appeal Stage.	
		Complaint found partly or fully justified. Resolution offered.	Complainant doesn't accept resolution. Refer to 3) Appeal Stage
			Complainant accepts resolution. Complaint closed.
			Complainant accepts ruling. Complaint closed.
3) APPEAL STAGE	Case reviewed by General Secretary or Chief Executive (or other nominee in event of any conflicts of interest) Appeals panel may be convened if grounds for appeal are met.	Appeal upheld (accepted). Resolution offered/penalties modified. Complaint closed.	
		Appeal rejected. Complaint closed.	Member informed of right to complain to London School of Economics (the School) if dissatisfied with the LSESU processes after completion of procedures.

Appendix two: related policies and procedures

Related Policies: The following list is not exhaustive. Please check with the policies and procedures sections of the LSEU or LSE websites.

1. Members' Disciplinary Procedure 2026
2. Members' Code of Conduct
3. Equity & Diversity Policy
4. Elections Regulations
5. Whistleblowing Policy
6. Student Activities Code of Conduct and related Agreement and Regulations
7. External Speaker Policy and Procedures
8. LSE Code of Practice on Free Speech