

The University of Stirling Complaints Procedure – a guide for students

We are committed to providing an excellent education and high quality services to our students from enrolment to graduation. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This guide describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. A copy of the full complaint policy can be accessed at www.stir.ac.uk/complaints.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- the quality and standard of any service we provide or fail to provide
- the quality of our facilities and learning resources
- the quality and standards of academic services and personal support services available to you
- failure of the University to follow an appropriate administrative processes
- unfair treatment or inappropriate behaviour by a student or staff member.

Your complaint may involve more than one of the above services/departments or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service
- a request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- a request under freedom of information or data protection legislation
- requests for compensation from the University
- things that are covered by academic appeals, such as academic judgements on assessments
- an issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
- an attempt to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following an investigation.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by the services of the University can make a complaint to us. If you are not able to complain in person you may nominate someone to act on your behalf. You must provide us with your written consent to liaise with your representative. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person, by phone, in writing, email using our complaints form which can be found at www.stir.ac.uk/complaints.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff within the department you are complaining about so that they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the issue arising, or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. Where possible, your concerns should be raised with the relevant staff member. This can be done face-to-face, by phone, in writing or by email.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. You may choose to do this immediately or shortly after you get our initial decision.

Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. We have a complaint form, which will help you to state your complaint clearly to us. Although we will also accept complaints that are made in person or on the phone, we encourage you to complete the complaint form in the interests of clarity and in order to best assist the investigation process. The complaint form and any supporting documents will be seen by the person investigating your complaints, by anyone named in the complaint and by relevant staff in the department(s) being complained about.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days and tell you who is dealing with your complaint
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

Stage 2 complaints should be submitted to complaints@stir.ac.uk or in writing to:

The Complaints Investigations Co-ordinator
Academic Registry & Governance Services
University of Stirling
Cottrell Building
Stirling
FK9 4LA

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person:

SPSO

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh

EH3 7NS

By Post

SPSO

Freepost EH641

Edinburgh

EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Getting help to make your complaint

We encourage any student considering making a complaint to consult the Students' Union, who have sabbaticals and staff with experience of supporting students with complaints. They can:

- help you decide whether making a complaint is the best course of action, or whether another procedure may be more appropriate
- explain how the complaint procedure works, and what the potential outcomes may be
- read drafts of any correspondence you write to the University (including complaint forms), to help you make your case as clearly as possible
- support you at any meetings you attend with University staff in relation to your complaint if requested.

You should contact either the **Vice President Education and Students** or the **Academic Representation and Development Coordinator** at the Students' Union at:

University of Stirling Students' Union
The Robbins Centre
The University of Stirling
FK9 4LA

Click [here](#) to find out who is the current **Vice President Education & Engagement**.

Contact them at education.union@stir.ac.uk or on 01786 467177

Click [here](#) to find out who is the current **Academic Representation and Development Coordinator**

Contact them on theunion@stir.ac.uk or 01786 467180

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all students. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another format, such as large font, or Braille, please contact us either by e-mail at complaints@stir.ac.uk or in writing to:

The Complaints Investigations Co-ordinator
Academic Registry & Governance Services
University of Stirling
Cottrell Building
Stirling
FK9 4LA

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

