



University of Limerick Postgraduate Students' Union Complaints Policy

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1 Complaints against PSU

- 1.1 A complaint may be made against any behaviour, or perceived misconduct, as outlined by UL's 'Policy and Procedures for Dignity and Respect' but where the University do not have jurisdiction. See also 1.4 below.
- 1.2 In the first instance any member should attempt to resolve a complaint informally, in the spirit of cooperation. Should this fail, one may move to the following steps as appropriate.
- 1.3 Any complaint against a PSU Policy or Practice should be brought to PSU Council, in line with article 7.15. For ease of bringing such a complaint, a complaint may be raised during AOB.
- 1.4 Any complaint against an ordinary member of the PSU would be subject to UL's Code of Conduct and associated disciplinary procedures.
- 1.5 Any complaint against a PSU Officer should be directed to the Secretary General.

2 Procedure

- 2.1 Upon receipt of the complaint, the Secretary-General must assemble a Complaint Review Committee (CRC). This committee must consist of:
 - a. The Returning Officer, who will chair
 - b. Two Council members

The Secretary General may not sit on this committee.

- 2.2 The CRC must meet within two weeks of the complaint.
- 2.3 In this initial meeting, the members will examine the complaint and decide whether to investigate further. The assumption should be that all complaints will be investigated unless there is a compelling reason not to proceed.
- 2.4 The Returning Officer will make the complainant aware of the decision to investigate.
- 2.5 The Returning Officer will notify the person under investigation that their actions are being investigated.
- 2.6 The accused has the right to resign at any point in the process.
- 2.7 The accused has the right to be accompanied at any point should they wish to be.

3 Investigation

- 3.1 The CRC can, but are not obliged to, immediately suspend the accused until the conclusion of the investigation, which should last no more than two weeks.
- 3.2 The CRC shall gather factual information. The CRC may appoint an external person to do this, for example a HR Consultant or a member of University Staff.
- 3.3 Before an outcome is decided all evidence must be presented to the accused in order for them to offer a defence.

4 The Outcome

- 4.1 Depending on the severity of the complaint in light of the evidence, the CRC will choose between the options of:
1. Dismissing the complaint due to lack of evidence.
 2. A written reprimand, which must be accepted by the accused in the form of a written apology.
 3. An Officer Development Plan, trainings and other awareness and mentoring workshops.
 4. Motion to remove an area of responsibility be removed from an officer 's role for the remainder of their term.
 5. Motion of no confidence to PSU Council. Such a Motion must:
 - a) Contain a report of findings of fact, collated by the CRC in abstract form the evidence from the investigation taking care to protect the privacy of complainants and witnesses.
 - b) Any representations from the Elected Officer
 - c) The Returning Officer will present the motion and the report to PSU Council and will answer any questions.
 - d) Students' Union Council will then discuss and vote accordingly upon the matter. A two thirds majority is required to dismiss an officer.
 - e) The dismissed officer may appeal the decision by way of referendum.
 - f) All evidence including the confidential report produced by the investigating team, minutes and other records pertaining to the investigation will be kept on file by the General Office for a period of at least 18 months.
- 4.2 The following is a guideline that will help CRC decide which course of action is appropriate:
1. If the Committee finds an officer may be negligent, they will recommend to Council that the Officer meet and agree on an Officer Development Plan.
 2. If the Committee finds an officer may have committed misconduct, they will a written reprimand.
 3. If the Committee finds an officer may have committed sustained misconduct, they will Motion for the removal of duties.
 4. If the Committee finds an officer may have committed severe misconduct which prejudices their ability to remain in their position, or brings the Union into disrepute they will submit a Motion of no confidence to Council.
- 4.3 After the outcome the CRC may recommend to Executive and Council that an existing practice or policy should be changed.
- 4.4 This policy does not negate or supersede Article 17 of the PSU Constitution, Removal of an Executive Officer or Council Rep, which may still be triggered should the criteria be met.