

**PROCEDURE:**       **Complaints**  
**CATEGORY:**       **Operations**  
**EFFECTIVE:**       **February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014**  
**LAST REVISED:**   **April 2017**

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## **1. INTENT**

The Students' Association of Mount Royal University views complaints as a way to learn and improve as an organization. The intent of this policy and its related procedures is to ensure that complaints are handled in an efficient, professional manner, and complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders involved.

A complaint is defined as any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction received about the SAMRU's activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

## **2. SCOPE**

This procedure applies to complaints received by The Students' Association of Mount Royal University about our activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

## **3. DEFINITION**

Complaint: Any verbal or written expression of dissatisfaction received about the SAMRU's activities, programs, services, staff or volunteers.

## **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 It is in the interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- 4.2 Review of complaints is fair, impartial and respectful to all parties.
- 4.3 All complaints are thoroughly investigated and resolved in a timely manner.
- 4.4 That complainants will be kept updated through the process, and are informed of their options in escalating the complaint in the event they are unsatisfied with the outcome.
- 4.5 Complaints are used to assist SAMRU in improving services, policies and procedures.

## **5. RECEIVING COMPLAINTS**

- 5.1 A complaint may be received verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing (by mail, fax, email, social media).
- 5.2 An employee or volunteer who receives a complaint is responsible for the following:
  - 5.2.1 To either resolve the complaint or transfer it to someone who can. This will generally be the person who has the primary relationship with the complainant or has the specific knowledge that is needed to resolve the problem.
  - 5.2.2 To acknowledge to the complainant that the complaint has been received and will be acted on by either him/herself or another employee
  - 5.2.3 To provide an estimated timeline to the complainant if one can be determined.
  - 5.2.4 Basic contact information from the complainant including name, phone number and email address should immediately be recorded.
- 5.3 If the complaint is transferred, the recipient must acknowledge to the transferor that he/she has received it and will act on it.

## **6. RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

- 6.1 Every effort should be made to resolve complaints received in a timely fashion. Written complaints should be acknowledged within two business days of their receipt. Staff should strive to resolve the complaint in a prompt manner and within ten working days. Where complaints are escalated to higher organizational levels, every attempt should be made to resolve them within an additional ten business days. This timeline allows for the resolution of complaints within a month of their receipt.
- 6.2 When receiving a verbal complaint, staff should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it immediately.
- 6.3 Where a complaint cannot be easily resolved, it should be escalated to the Executive Director. If the complaint is about the Executive Director, it will be handled by the Chair of the Executive Committee.
- 6.4 When a complaint cannot be resolved, staff will use every effort to explain the situation to the complainant so that they understand the reasons and limitations surrounding the issue.
- 6.4 Where complaints take more than one day to understand and/or resolve, staff will provide complainants with a timeline on when they can expect a resolution or an update and keep the complainant informed of the status of their complaint.

## **7. DOCUMENTING COMPLAINTS**

- 7.1 It is necessary to keep a record of any complaint that involves money, legal issues or personnel issues as well as any complaint that cannot be resolved immediately (on the same day it is received). Information about such complaints must be recorded on the complaints tracking worksheet (see attached).
- 7.2 Information recorded on the worksheet includes a description of the complaint, who handled it, what was done to resolve the complaint, timeframe, and a description of the resolution.
- 7.3 Complaints that require policy or procedural modifications or interpretations will be brought to the attention of the Executive Director immediately.
- 7.3 The Executive Director will report semi-annually to the SAMRU Board a summary of complaints received including number and type.

## **8. APPROVAL AND INTERPRETATION**

- 8.1 All substantial policy changes require board approval. Insubstantial changes that do not alter the intent of the policy may be approved by the Executive Director.
- 8.2 All procedure changes require the Executive Director's approval.
- 8.3 This document and all matters related to organizational policy and procedure are interpreted by the Executive Director of the SAMRU.