Complaints Procedure

The Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) is committed to providing a quality service, and to improving this service by listening and responding to the views of our members and stakeholders. We commit to responding positively to complaints, and to putting mistakes right.

Therefore we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

Informal Concerns/Complaints

An informal concern or complaint is a matter raised that the individual hopes can be resolved through discussion or clarification. We encourage concerns to be raised informally in the first instance wherever possible, so that issues can be resolved quickly, fairly, and without the need for a formal complaints investigation.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Formal Complaints

Definition and Scope: SRHE defines a formal complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with SRHE, with a member of staff, or with an SRHE Trustee) that relates to SRHE and that requires a formal response'. Please note that this does not include complaints relating to SRHE publications made by authors or prospective authors – these must be addressed under the publishers' complaints procedures.

Purpose: The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

SRHE's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time (normally 21 working days);
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint and engage with the complainant in a respectful and professional manner;
- take action where appropriate.

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Registered office as above

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to SRHE's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff in SRHE;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow SRHE a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond SRHE's control;
- engage in a respectful and professional manner throughout the complaints process – failure to do so may lead to consideration of the complaint being terminated.

Responsibility for Action: All Staff, and Trustees of SRHE.

Confidentiality: Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and SRHE maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting: Trustees of SRHE will receive annually an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1
In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Manager: Operations and Finance, about SRHE-related issues or SRHE staff, so that they have a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns the Manager: Operations and Finance, you should write to the CEO.

If your complaint concerns the CEO or a Trustee of SRHE, you should write formally to one of the Vice-Chairs of Governing Council.

In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking. Complaints should include the following elements:

- The complainant's name, organisation (if relevant) address, telephone number, and email contact details.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is you felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What you believe should be done to address your concern.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt. You should normally expect a response and an explanation within 21 working days.

Our contact details can be found on the Contact SRHE section of the SRHE Website.

Stage 2
If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can appeal to SRHE's CEO in writing, and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. If your original complaint was about the CEO or was considered by the CEO, you can appeal to the Chair of Council. You can expect your

request to be acknowledged within 7 working days of receipt and normally a response should be expected within 21 working days.

This decision will be final.

Timeframes

SRHE's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently the timescales given above for handling and responding to complaints are *indicative*. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Anonymous Complaints
Anonymous complaints will be recorded and any facts available looked into. However, in doing so we will be mindful that anonymous complaints can sometimes be malicious. Everyone involved in our work, even incidentally, has a right to complain and we will hold anyone accountable but, equally, individuals have a right to be protected from unsubstantiated and, potentially, malicious allegations.

Consequently, anyone wishing to complain is strongly encouraged to provide the information requested above and his or her contact details. This will also allow us to advise him or her of the outcome.

References

Cause for complaint? (RS11) - GOV.UK
Complaints procedure | NCVO
Complaints Policy and Procedure | Association for Learning Technology
Charity Excellence Complaints Policy

CL-C
Version 1: approved 21 May 2026 (G&A)
Version 2: approved 5 November 2026 (Council)