

Complaint Management

PURPOSE	1
POLICY STATEMENT	1
WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY	2
DEFINITIONS	2
REGULATIONS	2
1.0 ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS INFORMALLY	2
2.0 REPORTING COMPLAINTS.....	3
3.0 COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION.....	3
4.0 APPEAL OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION.....	4
4.1 <i>Judicial Appeal</i>	4
5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY.....	5
6.0 COMMUNICATION	5
FORMS.....	5

Purpose

The ASI Policy on Complaint Management is intended to ensure a consistent approach to the resolution of complaints from students, faculty, staff, and other customers of ASI programs and services. The objectives of the policy are to maintain a high level of public confidence and trust in the Associated Students, Incorporated while working to continuously improve the programs and services we provide.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Associated Students, incorporated that all complaints shall be investigated and responded to as quickly and thoroughly as possible and resolved at the lowest possible level of the organization. This policy shall be followed for all complaints lodged against the Associated Students, Incorporated. All complaints concerning ASI or any of its employees shall be investigated and a response provided to the complainant as expeditiously as possible under the circumstances.

Effective handling of complaints shall be demonstrated at all levels of the organization, from the Executive Director to service delivery staff. Each department of ASI shall handle complaints as described in this policy.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as prohibiting or discouraging a complainant from pursuing other campus avenues for complaint resolution (i.e. Office of the Dean, Judicial Affairs, University

Police, etc.). In those cases where it is appropriate and necessary, ASI shall defer to the authority of the university.

This policy shall not apply to any complaint alleging discrimination, harassment, ethical violations, or fraud, or the handling of complaints by ASI employees or volunteers unless they are doing so as a customer of ASI.

The handling of all such complaints is covered under separate policy statements.

Who Should Know This Policy

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Area Administrators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elected/Appointed Officers | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Recipients |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management Personnel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Advisors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supervisors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteers | |

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms used are defined as follows:

Term	Definition
Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of the programs or services of ASI to which the complainant requests a formal response. This includes the policies, procedures, charges, employees, or quality of services provided
Complainant	One who makes a complaint
Customer	A recipient of ASI goods or services or a participant in any program or activity sponsored by ASI

Regulations

1.0 Addressing Complaints Informally

In an effort to resolve complaints at the lowest possible level of the organization, all service delivery staff must be empowered to offer an appropriate remedy or otherwise deal with a complaint on the spot, as far as possible. Department supervisors, in conjunction with their respective Division Director, shall provide a documented framework to enable and empower staff to use their judgment in dealing with complaints. This framework should provide clear guidelines for staff, including:

- The kinds of remedies that can be offered;
- When these remedies might be applicable; and
- Who has the authority to offer particular remedies

All staff involved directly in service delivery shall be provided training in complaint handling, including interpersonal skills and communication skills.

2.0 Reporting Complaints

Any ASI employee or volunteer receiving a complaint, whether in writing, by phone call, or in person shall gather and forward the information to the Office of the Executive Director within three (3) business days. The initial report may be by phone, but all complaints must be documented on a Complaint Report form. At a minimum, the following information shall be obtained from the person making the complaint:

- Nature/Description of the complaint
- Date, time, and location of incident
- Name(s) of the employee(s) or department(s) involved
- Name of complainant and any witnesses
- Complainant's contact phone number and e-mail or mailing address
- The outcome the complainant desires

This Customer Complaint form should be completed by the employee or volunteer initially receiving the complaint. The staff member must interview the customer and record his or her responses on the form. The form should NEVER be given to a customer to complete, unless the customer requests it. Upon completion, the form should be signed by both the customer and the staff member and then forwarded to the Office of the Executive Director for follow-up action, if necessary. Customers should be advised that anonymous complaints may be accepted and investigated, but no response will be provided to the customer.

The Office of the Executive Director will enter the complaint into the Complaint Tracking Log. If the complaint has not been resolved already, a letter will be sent to the complainant from the Executive Director acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five (5) calendar days of notification of the complaint.

Persons complaining anonymously must be advised that ASI cannot respond to anonymous complaints. However, ASI may at its discretion investigate any complaint regardless of source.

3.0 Complaint Investigation

All complaints, whether written or oral, will be considered with equal regard and investigated accordingly. Upon acknowledging that a complaint has been received, the Executive Director will assign the appropriate Division Director to conduct an investigation of the complaint, unless the complaint involves the particular Director. In such cases, the Executive Director will conduct the investigation. Within three working days of receiving the assignment, the Director shall advise the complainant of the required timeframe for the investigation of the complaint and the reporting of the results. Every attempt shall be made to complete an investigation and report within 30 calendar days.

While conducting an investigation, the investigating Director shall be provided:

- Free and unrestricted access to all necessary records and premises, whether owned or rented; and

- Authority to examine, copy, and/or remove all or any portion of the contents of files, desks, cabinets, and other storage facilities on the premises without prior knowledge or consent of any individual who may use or have custody of any such items or facilities when it is within the scope of the investigation.

The Director's investigation shall result in a recommendation for appropriate action, even if the recommended action is no action. The Executive Director will review the facts and recommendation(s), and make a final decision on follow-up actions. This decision will be communicated in writing to all parties involved in the complaint. This communication shall clearly articulate the reasons for the decision(s) made.

4.0 Appeal of Complaint Resolution

If a complainant feels that the investigation or final action was inadequate or not appropriate, they may appeal to the following:

- Complaints involving the programs, services, or operations of the Isabel Patterson Child Development Center may be appealed to the Isabel Patterson Child Development Center Board of Trustees.
- Complaints involving the programs, services, or operations of the University Student Union, may be appealed to the University Student Union Board of Trustees.
- Complaints involving the programs, services, or operations of the Recreational Sports program may be appealed to the Recreational Sports Advisory Board.
- Complaints involving the programs, services, or operations of ASI funded student media (e.g., Gold Mine Yearbook, K-Beach radio, Long Beach Union newspaper) may be appealed to the Student Media Board. In exercising its authority to hear such appeals, the Student Media Board shall take no action that violates the respective media's constitutionally protected freedom of expression.
- All other complaints, including those involving the programs, services, or operations of ASI's administrative or government offices (e.g., Business Office, Government Operations, Office of the Executive Director, etc.) may be appealed to the Board of Control.

Members of the respective boards shall be provided with copies of all correspondence and documentation related to the original complaint under review. The board will take the appeal under consideration and will render a decision no later than one regular meeting after the meeting at which the appeal was received. The board shall uphold the original decision, render an alternative decision, or refer the matter back to management for further investigation. All alternative decisions rendered by a subsidiary board shall be subject to the final approval of the ASI Board of Directors, which shall ensure that the alternative resolution complies with ASI and campus-wide policy.

4.1 Judicial Appeal

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, a final appeal may be filed with the Associated Students Judiciary. Pursuant to California Education Code, Section 89926, decisions rendered by the judiciary shall be considered final for the Associated Students, Incorporated.

5.0 Confidentiality

Complaints and all related documents shall be maintained with strict confidentiality. Only those people who are directly concerned with the resolution of a complaint may have access to such information. Disclosure to other persons of information regarding a complaint shall only be done if deemed necessary to the resolution of the complaint, and only with the consent of the complainant.

6.0 Communication

In an effort to promote access to and utilization of the complaint management system, ASI shall annually develop and distribute information materials to publicize the complaint management system. These materials shall provide ASI clients and customers with adequate information about:

- Their rights and responsibilities
- How to make a complaint
- The complaint process and possible outcomes
- Standard timelines for resolving complaints

Furthermore, to promote accountability, ASI shall regularly publish as part of its annual reporting details of the following:

- Numbers and types of complaints received
- Actual response time versus timeliness standards
- Number and types of remedies offered
- Actions taken as a result of complaint to improve programs and services

Forms

The following forms and procedures are to be used in the execution of this policy.

Form Name	Purpose	Responsible Office	Approved By	Timeline for Submission
Customer Complaint Report	To record a customer's complaint regarding an ASI product, service, or program. The form should be completed by the staff member receiving the complaint	Office of the Executive Director	No approval is necessary, but form should be signed by both the staff member taking the report and the customer making the complaint	Within three (3) business days of receiving the complaint