Adelaide University Scuba Diving Club

c/- AUSF & Fitness, University of Adelaide, SA 5005

# Handling Complaints Policy

## Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide a simple, confidential and trustworthy procedure for resolving complaints based on the principles of natural justice.

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# 1 Revision

This policy is to be maintained and reviewed by the AUSC Committee.

# 2 Application

This policy applies to all members who participate in AUSC activities.

# 3 Definitions

**AUSC** – Adelaide University Scuba Diving Club

**AUSF** – Adelaide University Sport and Fitness

# 4 Reporting a complaint

Any person (a complainant) may report a complaint about a person, or people bound by this policy (respondent) if they feel they have been harassed, bullied or discriminated against or there has been a breach of this policy.

A complaint may be handled informally or formally. The complainant will usually indicate his or her preferred option unless the AUSC President considers that the complaint falls outside this policy and should be handled another way. For example, the law may require that the complaint/allegation be reported to an appropriate authority.

## 4.1 Informal Complaints

An informal complaint is appropriate where the issue is minor, isolated, or capable of being resolved quickly through discussion or clarification. Examples may include misunderstandings, communication issues, minor breaches of club policies, or concerns about member behaviour that do not present an immediate risk to health, safety, or wellbeing. Informal complaints are intended to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity through respectful communication, mediation, or facilitated discussion. Wherever appropriate, members are encouraged to attempt informal resolution before lodging a formal complaint.

## 4.2 Formal Complaints

A formal complaint should be made where the matter is serious, repeated, or cannot be resolved through the informal process. This includes allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, breaches of the Code of Conduct, misconduct by committee members or volunteers, child safety concerns, fraud or other unlawful conduct, serious safety breaches, or any behaviour that may expose the Club or its members to significant risk. Formal complaints must be submitted in writing and will be managed in accordance with this policy, including appropriate investigation, procedural fairness, confidentiality, and, where necessary, disciplinary action. Where the nature or seriousness of the complaint warrants, or where required under the Club's governance arrangements, a formal complaint may be referred or escalated to AUSF for review, investigation, or determination.

# 5 Complaint Handling

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that any person involved in a complaint is treated fairly and is not subjected to victimisation, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation for making a complaint, participating in an investigation, or supporting another person's complaint.

In some circumstances, the nature of a complaint may require information to be disclosed to the respondent to provide them with a fair opportunity to respond; however, AUSC may limit or withhold identifying information about the complainant or other parties where there are legitimate concerns regarding safety, privacy, risk of retaliation, or where disclosure may adversely affect the integrity of the complaint process.

# 6 Vexatious Complaints

The complaints process must not be misused. Complaints that are knowingly false, malicious, or vexatious may result in disciplinary action; however, a complaint made in good faith will not be considered vexatious solely because it is not substantiated.

If, at any stage of the complaint handling process, the AUSC President reasonably believes that a complaint has been made knowingly false, maliciously, or for the purpose of causing harm or distress to the respondent, the matter may be referred to AUSF for independent review and any appropriate action, including possible disciplinary action against the complainant.

# 7 Disciplinary Measures

AUSC may impose disciplinary measures on an individual or organisation for a breach of this policy.

Any disciplinary measure imposed will be:

- fair and reasonable following the principles of natural justice;
- applied consistent with legislative requirements;
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach; and
- be determined in accordance with our Constitution, By-laws, and this policy.

# 8 External Complaints

Nothing in this policy excludes members from having their complaint handled by an external agency under anti-discrimination, child protection, criminal or other relevant legislation.

Should a complaint be about the club itself or the club president, the complainant should escalate their complaint directly to AUSF and refer to their Complaints Handling Procedure referenced below.

# 9 References

AUSF – *Complaints Handling Procedure* , approved by AUSF on 6 March 2026, https://www.adelaideunisport.com.au/clubsupport/essential-club-documents.

# 10 Document control

| Revision (Date) | Person | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 0<br>(13/10/2015) | **Author:** David Warren<br>**Reviewed:** Committee (via Meeting 13/10/2015)<br>**Approved:** David Warren | Document released to club membership. |
| 1<br>02 Apr 2023 | **Author:** Tim Brown | Changed the following:<br>• Amend letterhead and references to AU Sport & Fitness. |
| 2<br>09 Jul 2026 | **Author:** Jade Bruggeling<br>**Reviewed:** Committee (via Meeting 13/08/2026)<br>**Approved:** Committee (via Meeting 13/08/2026) | Changed the following:<br>• Add definitions for AUSF and AUSC.<br>• Update AU Sport to AUSF throughout document.<br>• Add subsections for informal and formal complaints<br>• Improve reasonable steps language<br>• Add opportunity to respond provisions<br>• Add vexatious complaints heading.<br>• Add specific heading for external complaints.<br>• Updated AUSF reference for handling complaints. |