

20. Complaints & Grievances

Why is this important?

This section will provide you with guidance with how to deal with any complaints or grievances that your Club receives. A good understanding of this will allow the Executive to have a clear procedure to utilise if a complaint or grievance is raised and increase the chance of a positive outcome.

The Details

Any Club member, Arc member or member of the UNSW community may make complaints about an Arc-affiliated Club.

Those involved are encouraged to work together informally to resolve grievances (see Clubs Handbook Section 20.1 – Resolving Disputes Internally), but where that's just not possible, complaints can be referred to Arc for action. That action may be in the form of mediation, investigation or (in some cases) dismissal of the complaint.

Arc won't get involved in disagreements over the general running of the Club or clashes of personality (i.e. the dispute is between individual Club members, or between a member and an Executive, where the Executive is not acting on behalf of the Club), **but** Arc can intervene where the Club (through its Executive team) is not following Club Procedures.

How do I manage conflicts?

One of the biggest challenges for a Club and its Executives can be facing conflicts, which can be internal or external.

Internal Conflicts

Internal conflicts can be between two (2) Executives or a group of Executives. It can also be between a Club member with a Club Executive or another Club member. A significant amount of conflicts are due to miscommunication.

The best and easiest way to approach a conflict is to talk to the person/people personally and try to figure out and resolve the issue early on. Talking to the individual/s also helps as they may not be aware that there is an issue.

There is more information in Clubs Handbook Section 20.1 (Resolving Disputes Internally) to help Executives resolve disputes internally.

If dispute resolution is unsuccessful, Executives can get in touch with the Arc Clubs team. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the Clubs team may give advice on a mediation process for the parties or another appropriate course of action.

External Conflicts

External conflicts can be between the Club and external parties (sponsors, venues management, UNSW departments, other Clubs). These kinds of conflicts can be due to non-fulfillment of contracts on either side. To avoid such conflicts, it is strongly recommended that Clubs talk to the Arc Clubs team before signing contracts involving large sums of money.

If a conflict occurs with any external parties, Clubs should get in touch with the Clubs team for any advice before taking any action or before the situation escalates.

The Clubs handbook has important information about signing contracts and approaching sponsors, see Clubs Handbook Section 13 (Legal Help) for more info. If you need general advice or help with a particular issue (e.g. there's a section of a contract that you don't understand, or a sponsor is threatening legal action), you can contact the Arc Clubs team about getting legal advice from Arc's Legal & Advocacy team.

FAQs

What outcome may occur after an investigation?

The complaint could be dismissed. If a penalty is required, it may include but not limited to recommendations to the Club, a formal warning, suspension, or in extreme circumstances disaffiliation of the Club

What are some examples of when Arc may intervene if a Club (through its Executive team) is not following Club Procedures?

Some examples include

- Failing to uphold the Club's Constitution
- Breaching members' voting rights
- Misuse of Club funds or resources

- Abuse of Executive privileges
- Criminal or illegal activity
- Failure to comply with Arc's WHS policy
- Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
- Behaviour which harms Arc's reputation

How can a Club member make a complaint or signal a grievance?

Complaints can be made in writing to clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au.

Where can I find out more information?

Not-for-profit Law – Fact Sheet: Dealing with disputes and grievances with members

www.nfplaw.org.au/sites/default/files/Dealing_with_disputes_and_grievances_with_members_0_0.pdf

Mindtools: Conflict Resolution

www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm

Related Documents

Clubs Handbook (www.arc.unsw.edu.au/clubs/clubshandbook)

Section 11 – Being a successful Club Executive

Section 20.1 – Resolving Disputes Internally

Section 21 – Incident Reporting

Help!

Visit Us

Drop in and talk to us. The Clubs Space is located on Level 2, Basser College, just off the Basser steps past the Quadrangle.

Call Us

Call us at 9385 9840

Email Us

clubs@arc.unsw.edu.au

Office Hours

During Term: 8:30am-6pm Mon-Fri

Outside Term: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri (access to the Clubs Space by appointment only)