



**Saitsa Consumer and Member Complaint Policy**

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## 1. Policy Statements

- 1.1. In accordance with Board of Directors policy EL-1, Saitsa shall not allow members to be uninformed of the process for registering a complaint or concern.
- 1.2. Saitsa believes it is in the best interest of all parties that complaints are dealt with promptly and resolved as quickly as possible.
- 1.3. Saitsa shall strive to review and respond to all complaints in a manner that is fair, impartial, and respectful of all parties.
- 1.4. Saitsa shall provide complainants with clear and understandable reasons for decisions relating to complaints.
- 1.5. Saitsa values all of its customer and member feedback, and shall use complaints as opportunities to improve its products, services, and procedures.
- 1.6. Saitsa shall conduct any complaint investigations in a manner that is fair and impartial.
- 1.7. Saitsa will not tolerate any complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith.
- 1.8. Saitsa shall not tolerate repetitive complaints intended to irritate or harass Saitsa employees.
- 1.9. This policy does not apply to customer or member suggestions for or about programs and services.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Balance of Probabilities** refers to the standard by which the validity of a complaint shall be assessed; a complaint shall be found valid if the evidence suggests that an infraction was more likely to have occurred than not.
- 2.2. **Complaint** refers to either a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction after a perceived wrongdoing regarding a Saitsa service, a specific employee, or the privileges and responsibilities of Saitsa membership, in accordance with these procedures.
- 2.3. **Complainant** refers to one or more consumers, or members of the SAIT community that have made a formal complaint and brought it to the attention of Saitsa.
- 2.4. **Concern** shall refer to statements made by customers or members about potential issues that may arise from Saitsa's practices.
- 2.5. **Conflict of Interest** shall refer to any situation where an investigator may benefit from, or may be perceived to benefit from
- 2.6. **Employee** shall refer to any Saitsa staff member, whether full-time or part time, or any volunteer for Saitsa.
- 2.7. **Investigator** shall refer to any individual who has been charged with investigating a complaint; this may be the Executive Director, Director of Student Services, department managers, or an third-party investigator.
- 2.8. **Suggestion** shall refer to any consumer or member feedback on a product or services that Saitsa offers, regarding how the program or service may be improved.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- 3.1. All Saitsa staff shall be responsible for complying with the following guidelines when hearing or responding to complaints:
  - 3.1.1. If receiving a complaint, directing it to the relevant individuals who will respond to the complaint within 2 business days, or in accordance with the department's manual. If a complaint is received during a time where Saitsa is closed, it shall be acknowledged within 2 business days of Saitsa reopening.
  - 3.1.2. If a complaint received is regarding a SAIT program or service, Saitsa staff may attempt to direct the complaint to the appropriate departments.
  - 3.1.3. If investigation is required after a complaint is acknowledged, the investigation shall be initiated within 5 business days of the complaint's acknowledgement.
    - 3.1.3.1. If an investigation is required for the complaint, the complainant shall be notified that an investigation has been opened, and that they may be contacted for more information.
    - 3.1.3.2. Any complaint investigation shall be completed within 20 business days of the complaint being acknowledged.
  - 3.1.4. If an investigation is not deemed necessary for a complaint, Saitsa staff may take reasonable steps to resolve the complaint within 5 business days.
- 3.2. Department managers are responsible for:
  - 3.2.1. Establishing a system that manages complaints, concerns, and suggestions effectively and efficiently for their department programs and services;
  - 3.2.2. Ensuring the complaints process is effectively administered;
  - 3.2.3. Ensuring staff are appropriately prepared for complaint management
  - 3.2.4. Maintaining accurate complaint records;
  - 3.2.5. Determining the proper response to complaints, where needed;
  - 3.2.6. Referring complaints to an external organization or agency, where appropriate.
- 3.3. Department staff are responsible for:
  - 3.3.1. Handling complaints in accordance with Saitsa's and the department's procedures;
  - 3.3.2. Directing complaints to their department managers, when necessary.

### **4. Suggestions and Concerns**

- 4.1. Saitsa values all consumer and member feedback, but acknowledges that not all feedback it receives constitutes a complaint.

- 4.2. Any concerns or suggestions received by staff shall be noted and directed to the department manager. Consumer suggestions and concerns may be tracked for future reference when planning or developing Saitsa programs or services.
- 4.3. While Saitsa values the input of its consumers and members, not all suggestions or concerns may be acted upon when modifying Saitsa programming or services.

## **5. Initiating a Complaint**

- 5.1. Individuals may make a complaint either verbally or in writing.
  - 5.1.1. When hearing complaints verbally, employees should listen and seek to understand the complaint, and may attempt to resolve it within reason.
  - 5.1.2. Complaints that cannot be immediately resolved shall be directed to the Saitsa website to submit the complaint to the department manager.
  - 5.1.3. Complaint records shall include the following:
    - 5.1.3.1. The name of the complainant(s);
    - 5.1.3.2. The complainant's contact information, if the complaint cannot be resolved immediately;
    - 5.1.3.3. The date, time, and location of the incident;
    - 5.1.3.4. The name of the intended respondent(s), if any;
    - 5.1.3.5. The reason for the complaint;
    - 5.1.3.6. An explanation of the complaint;
    - 5.1.3.7. Any other information deemed relevant by staff member receiving the complaint or their direct manager;
- 5.2. Written complaints should include the following:
  - 5.2.1. The name of the complainant(s);
  - 5.2.2. The name of the intended respondent(s), if any;
  - 5.2.3. The reason for the complaint;
  - 5.2.4. An explanation of the complaint;
  - 5.2.5. Evidence of the basis for the complaint;
  - 5.2.6. Documentation of any prior attempts to resolve the complaint, if applicable.

## **6. Investigating a Complaint**

- 6.1. Saitsa shall take reasonable steps to investigate complaints from consumers or members to ensure the manner is resolved in a fair and impartial manner.
- 6.2. To ensure that all parties to a complaint are treated fairly, Saitsa shall not disclose any of the complainant's personal information to any external parties or other staff.

- 6.3. To ensure complainants are treated fairly, Saitsa shall require investigators to declare any real or perceived conflict of interest before proceeding with investigation.
- 6.4. Saitsa may refer a complaint to an external investigator for any of the following reasons:
  - 6.4.1. Conflict of Interest;
  - 6.4.2. Allegations of severe misconduct (e.g., assault);
  - 6.4.3. Other reasons as determined by the Executive Director
- 6.5. If an investigation is deemed necessary for a complaint, the relevant department managers shall be responsible for investigating the complaint.
  - 6.5.1. If the complaint is regarding the conduct of a department manager, the Director of Student Services or Executive Director shall investigate the complaint.
- 6.6. Investigators shall comply with the following procedures when investigating complaints from consumers or members:
  - 6.6.1. The investigator shall meet separately with the complainant and respondent to gather additional information regarding the nature of the complaint;
  - 6.6.2. The investigator shall gather additional information through interviews with witnesses, and shall consider any evidence brought to them by witnesses to the complaint;
  - 6.6.3. Investigators shall assess evidence to determine:
    - 6.6.3.1. If the evidence has reliability to demonstrate substance to the complaint;
    - 6.6.3.2. The circumstances and context of the complaint;
    - 6.6.3.3. Credibility of parties involved
    - 6.6.3.4. Consistency in evidence;
    - 6.6.3.5. Absence of evidence, where it should logically exist.
  - 6.6.4. Investigators shall determine if a complaint is substantive on a balance of probabilities.
- 6.7. Upon concluding their investigation, investigators shall notify all parties separately to the complaint of the outcome of their investigation, and how the complaint shall be resolved.
- 6.8. If an investigation finds that a complaint was unfounded, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith, it shall be dismissed. The complainant shall be notified of the reasons for dismissal, and Saitsa shall retain a record of the decision.
- 6.9. If an investigation requires the involvement of a third-party (e.g., Campus Security), Saitsa shall notify the relevant parties and may provide them with information about the nature of the complaint, if requested.

## **7. Resolving a Complaint**

- 7.1. Saitsa shall make reasonable efforts to resolve complaints in a timely fashion.

- 7.2. Any employee or volunteer who receives a complaint may make reasonable efforts to resolve the complaint immediately. This can include, but is not limited to:
- 7.2.1. Offering an apology to the customer(s);
  - 7.2.2. Offering to replace the faulty product(s);
  - 7.2.3. Providing a refund for a product or service, when applicable or deemed appropriate by the department manager;
- 7.3. If an employee is unable to resolve the complaint, they should bring the complaint to the attention of their direct supervisor, who shall be responsible for investigating and/or resolving the complaint.
- 7.3.1. If the complaint involves the conduct of the employee's direct supervisor, the complaint should be brought to the Executive Director or their designate who shall decide how the complaint will be resolved.

## **8. Dismissing a Complaint**

- 8.1. Complaints that are unfounded, frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith may be dismissed.
- 8.1.1. Students who submit unfounded, frivolous, vexatious, or bad faith complaints may be reported to the Office of Community Conduct and subject to Non-Academic Misconduct.
  - 8.1.2. Community members, including faculty and SAIT staff, who submit unfounded, frivolous, vexatious, or bad faith complaints may have their access to Saitsa services or other privileges restricted at the discretion of the department manager.
- 8.2. If a complaint is dismissed by an investigator, department manager, or the Executive Director, they shall notify the complainant(s) of the reasons for doing so in writing.

## **9. Complaint Documentation**

- 9.1. Saitsa shall maintain records of complaints it receives to ensure responses to complaints are consistent and fair.
- 9.1.1. Complaints for issues that were immediately resolved by staff do not need to be logged in Saitsa's records.
  - 9.1.2. Departments shall be responsible for maintaining complaint records and providing regular updates to the Executive Director of any complaints received for reporting purposes.