

The complaint

Mr S complains that American Express Services Europe Limited (AESEL) closed his account.

What happened

In November 2024 AESEL wrote to Mr S telling him they'd decided to close his credit card account in two months' time. They suspended the account with immediate effect and explained that any membership reward points earned up until the date of termination could be redeemed until 30 days after the termination date.

Mr S thought that was unfair. He was upset he'd received no notice of the suspension, and he thought his membership points had been invalidated as the suspension meant he'd lost all access to his reward management tools.

AESEL thought they'd done nothing wrong and when Mr S referred his complaint to this service, neither did our investigator. Mr S's complaint has, therefore, been referred to me, an ombudsman for a final decision.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

I know it will disappoint Mr S, but I'm not upholding this complaint. I'll explain why.

Where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear, or contradictory, as some of it is here, I have to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point, it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

AESEL didn't have to provide an account for Mr S, and they were free to close the account. However, we wouldn't usually expect them to do so without reasonable notice and we'd expect the closure to be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the account.

The terms and conditions of Mr S's account explained:

"This agreement is open ended and has no fixed duration. You and we can end it without giving any reason. [...] We can do this by giving you at least two months written notice".

AESEL did provide two months' notice of their intention to close the account, so I think that was reasonable.

Mr S says it was unreasonable to suspend the account in the meantime. The terms explain:

We may suspend your account or any feature on your account (including a supplementary card) if:

- *“you tell us to close your account or we tell you we are closing your account [...]*

We'll normally notify you beforehand or immediately afterwards [...]”

So, I think AESEL were entitled to close the account and to suspend the account when they did. While AESEL didn't have to disclose the reason for the closure I have reviewed that, and I think in those circumstances suspension was fair. I can also understand that AESEL wouldn't want to give notice of the suspension. Lenders are often understandably averse to doing so for security reasons.

While Mr S says the suspension prevented him from accessing the reward management tools AESEL explained in their closure letter, and subsequently to this service, that Mr S would have been able to use the points if he'd contacted him. Whilst I can see that was more inconvenient, I don't find it unreasonable.

Mr S has suggested that the decision to close his account was discriminatory. While AESEL don't have to provide Mr S with the actual reasoning, I have been privy to that, and I can reassure him that the decision was supported by evidence and was not discriminatory.

Ultimately, I don't think AESEL have done anything wrong here and I'm not asking them to take any action.

My final decision

For the reasons I've given above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 15 May 2025.

Phillip McMahon
Ombudsman