

Applicant Complaints and Appeals of Admission Decision Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 London South Bank University considers applicants to courses solely on the basis of merit, ability and potential. According to the availability of places, we aim to admit all applicants who have, based on the admissions criteria, a reasonable expectation of completing the course and achieving the standard required for the academic award.
- 1.2 We aim to achieve a standard of overall administrative performance by providing a good quality of service and by operating efficiently, which complements and reinforces the standard of our teaching and research. However, we accept that you may consider that you have grounds for a complaint/appeal of admission decision.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to complaints about recruitment, selection, admissions and appeals of admission decisions for all undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes.
- 2.2 A complaint is the expression of a concern about a procedure or administrative process. It can be lodged at any stage of recruitment, selection and admission.
- 2.3 An appeal is a request for a review of a decision concerning selection or admission. It can be lodged only after such a decision has been made.
- 2.4 The following are not normally dealt with as a complaint/appeal under this procedure:
 - a) a concern about the academic opinion or professional judgment of those evaluating or making a decision on an application;
 - b) a concern about a decision made under other specific external/internal regulations or any contract with external organisation, such as DBS or UCAS;
and/or
 - c) matters relating to an application for a previous academic year.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience has overall responsibility for the procedure, but all relevant staff have been made aware of it and have received appropriate training.

4. Grounds for complaints/appeal of admission decision

- 4.1 The permitted grounds for complaint/appeal of admission decision are:
- a) an administrative error or failure of process on the part of the University;
 - b) allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or fairly, resulting in a formal request for a review of the admission decision; **and/or**
 - c) new evidence not known to the University at the time the admissions decision was made. In such cases you must also provide details of why the new information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to you at the time of application but not included for whatever reason, this may not be considered.

5. How to use this procedure

- 5.1 This procedure consists of three stages described below. Normally a complaint should be raised during or immediately following the admissions cycle to which the complaint/appeal refers. We will exercise discretion where there is good reason, supported by evidence, for complaints/appeals made outside of this period. Such good reasons may be: a serious illness, a disability (provided the disability affected your ability to submit a complaint/appeal within the prescribed time), bereavement or childbirth.

6. First Stage: Informal Resolution

- 6.1 Complaints or appeals about admissions should be made in writing to the Head of Admissions (Head of Admissions, London South Bank University, 90 London Road, London, SE1 6LN, email Admissions-Complaints@lsbu.ac.uk within 10 working days from the specific event concerned. The Head of Admissions will carry out an initial investigation of the circumstances leading to the complaint or appeal and a written response will normally be sent within 10 working days. The response will mark the completion of the informal stage of the procedure.

7. Second Stage: Formal Stage

- 7.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at the first stage, you should put your concerns in writing to the Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions (DMRA) (for home/EU applicants) or the Director of Internationalisation (DI) (for international applicants) within 10 working days of the date of the first stage response. Details of the relevant member of staff will be provided within the first stage outcome. You should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction, including the response from the Head of Admissions and any other correspondence relating to the issue. You should also indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting as a result of the complaint/appeal.

- 7.2 The DMRA or DI will investigate the case, as s/he considers appropriate to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint/appeal and will undertake such further enquires as are deemed necessary. A response letter will be sent normally within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint/appeal and this letter will provide an explanation for the decision made. Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, recommendations may be made to the Dean of School or Head of Department. If the original deadline for response is not deliverable, we will contact you to explain the delay and set a new deadline for our second stage response.
- 7.3 When a complaint relates to a specific member of staff, those staff shall have the right to see copies of relevant documentation in order to present evidence to the DMRA or DI, and to be informed of the outcome of the complaint/appeal. We reserve the right to maintain confidentiality in relation to staff disciplinary matters.
- 7.4 If the nature of your complaint/appeal of admissions decision is complex, the DMRA or DI may refer it to be considered at a panel of senior members of staff who have had no previous involvement with your complaint.
- 7.5 If specific academic input is required, the DMRA or DI will forward the complaint/appeal to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience.

8. Third Stage: Review

- 8.1 If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome at the second stage you have the right to request a review in writing and provide all correspondence and supporting documentation to the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience within 10 working days of the date of the second stage outcome. If the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience had involvement at Stage 2, then you may make request to the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 8.2 Requests for a complaint/appeal review will be granted on the following grounds:
 - a) a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage;
 - b) consideration of whether the second stage outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances; **or**
 - c) new material evidence which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- 8.3 On receipt of the request, the reviewer will determine whether grounds exist for the complaint/appeal review and will notify you in writing if the request has been accepted. If the complaint/appeal is eligible, the reviewer will review the case and communicate the decision in writing, normally within 10 workings days of receipt of the complaint/appeal. Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, the reviewer may make recommendations to the Dean of School or to the Head of Department. If a complaint/appeal is not upheld, you will be informed in writing with reasons for its rejection.

9. Independent external review

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

- 9.1 The QAA is an independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK Higher Education. The QAA can investigate a concern that relates to at least one of the following:
- The standards and quality of higher education provision at a University.
 - The information that universities produce about their higher education programmes.
 - The lack of fair, accessible and timely procedures for handling student complaint.
- 9.2 The QAA can look at individual complaints for evidence of broader failings in the management of academic quality and standards. Where it considers that these indicate serious systemic or procedural problems, the QAA may investigate them under its Concerns procedure.