



**London  
South Bank  
University**

EST 1892

# Applicant Complaints and Appeals of Admission Decision Procedure

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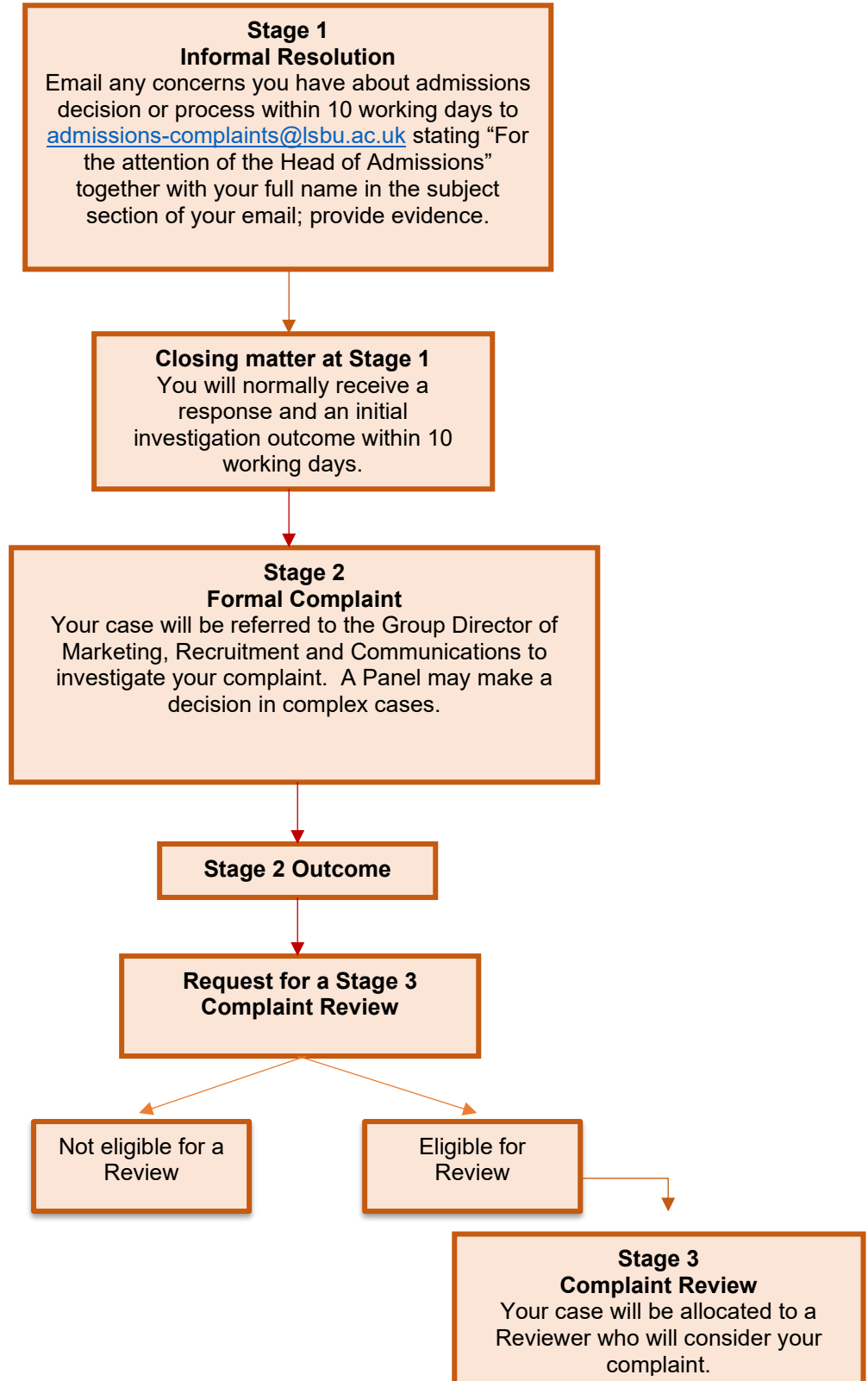
**This Procedure is available in accessible formats on request from Admissions team. Please contact: [admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk)**

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## Applicant Complaints and Appeals of Admission Decision Procedure Flowchart

Please note that this chart provides a brief overview only; please read the full procedure for the details of each stage



# Applicant Complaints and Appeals of Admission Decision Procedure

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. London South Bank University considers applicants to courses 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 set out in the Admissions and Enrolment Procedure, 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 – who is covered by this procedure?

- 2.1. This procedure applies to applicant complaints and appeals of admission decisions, as described below, for all undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes.
- 2.2. For the purposes of this procedure, an applicant complaint is:
  - a) an expression of concern about a procedural or administrative aspect of the recruitment, selection and admissions process; or
  - b) a complaint about an education agent.
- 2.3. Concerns about the recruitment, selection and admissions
- 2.4. An “education agent” (or “representative”) is an individual or organisation that is in the business of recruiting and introducing international students to university, including to LSBU. LSBU is committed to ensuring that all such agents act in accordance with best practice and with professionalism, and as such any student who experiences anything less is encouraged to submit a complaint using this procedure.
- 2.5. An appeal is a request for a review of a decision concerning an outcome of a decision for admission to LSBU. It can be lodged only after such a decision has been made.
- 2.6. 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 the Disclosure and Barring Service or the University and Colleges Admissions Service; and/or
- c) matters relating to an application for a previous academic year.

### **3. Who is responsible for this procedure?**

- 3.1. The Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications (“DMR”) has overall responsibility for the procedure, but all relevant staff have been made aware of it and have received appropriate training.
- 3.2. This procedure will be reviewed from time to time (and at least every two years) by the Admissions, Marketing and Recruitment teams together with the University Solicitor to ensure that its provisions continue to meet our legal obligations and reflect best practice.

### **4. Grounds for complaints/appeal of admission decision**

- 4.1. The permitted grounds for complaint/appeal of an admissions 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 in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 below.
- 5.2. A complaint/appeal should normally be lodged during or within three (3) months of 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.

- 5.3. An applicant complaint can be lodged irrespective of the outcome of the application.

## **6. First Stage: Informal Resolution**

- 6.1. Applicant complaints and/or appeals about admissions decisions need to be made in writing within 10 working days from the event giving rise to the complaint/appeal and sent to [admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk). In the subject section of your email you should state "For the attention of the Head of Admissions" together with your full name and provide any evidence to support your complaint or appeal. This will then be sent to the relevant member of staff who 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, in some circumstances - such as peak periods of the admissions cycle or if the complaint/appeal requires further/detailed investigation – the response may take longer than 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 and send this to [admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-complaints@lsbu.ac.uk). In the subject section of your email, you should state "For the attention of the Group Director of Marketing, Recruitment and Communications". You should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction, including the response you received from the first stage 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 DMR will investigate the case as they consider 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 providing a decision and explanation will normally be sent within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint/appeal, except where special circumstances warrant a longer response period. Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, recommendations may be made to the Executive Dean, Head of the relevant Professional Service Group or the education agent. 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 DMR, 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 DMR may refer it to be considered at a panel of senior members of staff (e.g. the Deputy Vice Chancellor Education, Executive Dean, a Director of Education and Student Experience, or a School Executive Administrator) who have had no previous involvement in your complaint. Another member of University staff may also be present to take notes of the meeting.
- 7.5. If specific academic input is required, the DMR will forward the complaint/appeal to the Pro Vice Chancellor (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 DMR within 10 working days of the date of the second stage outcome.
- 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 DMR or nominee (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 normally communicate the decision in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint/appeal, except where special circumstances warrant a longer response period. Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, the Reviewer may make recommendations to the Executive Dean or Head of the relevant Professional Service Group. 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:

- a) The standards and quality of higher education provision at a university.
- b) 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.