

Applicant Complaints and Appeals

Introduction

This Procedure is in place for those circumstances in which an applicant is dissatisfied with the conduct of the School's student selection process, or with its outcome. It describes the basis on which the School will consider complaints about its admissions procedures, and clarifies what applicants may do if they wish to request a review of an admissions decision. It has been developed in line with published guidance from the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) (OIA), [Supporting Professionalism in Admissions](#) (SPA) (*Good Practice on Applicant Complaints and Appeals*), the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#) (QAA) and the [Competition and Markets Authority](#) (CMA).

Separate and distinct complaints and appeals procedures exist for students who are studying or have studied at the School (the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#) and [Student Complaints Procedure](#)).

Principles

The School welcomes applications from all candidates who have the potential to succeed on its programme and who will make a positive contribution to the life of the School. The School is committed to operating fair, efficient, consistent and transparent admissions procedures in line with its [Admissions Procedures and Regulations for Students](#), and is committed to equality and diversity in this as in all of its activities.

Information relating to the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure will be clear, intelligible, and made available to applicants at research, application and offer stage.

The School will ensure that all applicant complaints and appeals are investigated thoroughly, promptly and with due regard to the confidentiality and privacy of all parties. It may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint or appeal; in these circumstances, the parties concerned will be informed.

Any applicant may use this Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure, whether they have applied via UCAS or direct to the School.

No applicant will be disadvantaged because they have exercised their rights under the procedure.

The School will ensure that staff working in recruitment, selection and admissions roles are familiar with this Procedure and their responsibilities under them.

Policies

Applicants may choose to challenge the School's admissions processes and decisions on the following grounds:

- An applicant may raise a **complaint** regarding a specific procedural error, irregularity, or maladministration in LIS's admissions process.
- An applicant may **appeal** an admissions decision, or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer, or a pre-entry fee status decision, on the grounds that the decision/offer was not made fairly on the basis of the evidence originally submitted.

Applicants may not appeal against admissions decisions based on the academic judgment of the School staff about their suitability for entry to a particular programme.

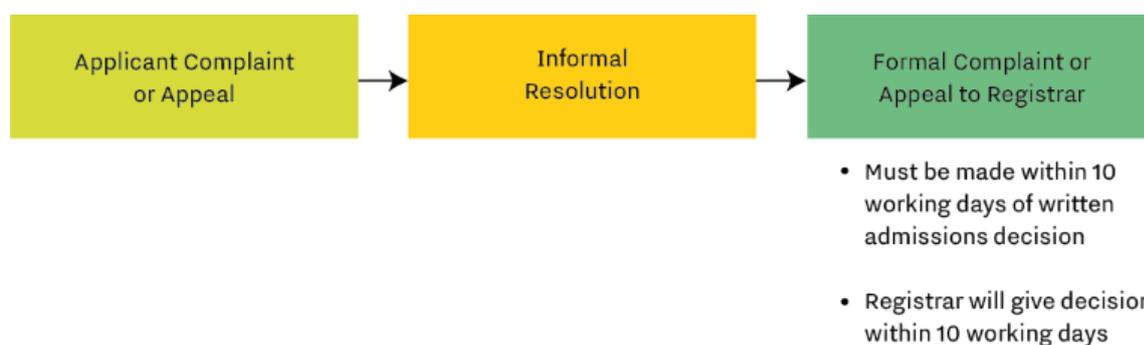
An admissions appeal shall not be considered where the applicant does not meet any criteria specified for entry to the programme of study as set out in the School's [Admissions Regulations and Procedures for Students](#). Further, the School will not review an admissions decision simply because an applicant disagrees with or wishes to challenge the admissions criteria set by the School.

An applicant may submit an appeal or complaint only on their own behalf; a complaint or appeal submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation by the applicant. Given that all investigations must be evidence-based, the School cannot accept anonymous complaints or appeals under this procedure.

Applicants are expected to respond promptly to requests for additional information or documentation. In the case of appeals, delays in applicant responses to such requests may result in a place no longer being available for them in the current year of entry, should the appeal be upheld.

There is no right of appeal against the School's decisions on student eligibility for financial support. However, an applicant may make a complaint if they believe that there has been a procedural problem with LIS's financial support allocation and awarding system.

Overview of Procedure



Procedure Step-by-Step

The School's Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure follows a two-stage approach. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from the Director of Admissions and Student Support via the informal process in the first instance. Where an issue cannot be resolved informally, it may be escalated to formal investigation and determination.

Before submitting an application for an appeal or complaint, applicants are encouraged to review the School's general, programme-specific and discretionary criteria applying to admission for the programme for which they have applied. This information is available in the School's [Admissions Regulations and Procedures for Students](#), which is published on the School's website.

Informal Stage

Where applicants meet the admissions requirements stated for a programme of study but have not received an offer of a place, or are dissatisfied with the way in which the admissions process has been conducted, they are entitled to ask for feedback from the School by contacting the Director of Admissions and Student Support at admissions@t-lis.org (specifying Admissions Appeal/Complaint in the title) before submitting an appeal or complaint.

The Director of Admissions and Student Support will then make every reasonable effort to explain procedures, clarify decision-making processes, and provide assurance as to the robustness of the admissions process, allay concerns or otherwise respond to the issue raised. In cases where an applicant is concerned about the reason for an unsuccessful application, the Director of Admissions and Student Support, with input from the Admissions Decisions Committee, will provide feedback to the applicant about reasons for the admissions decision.

Formal investigation and determination

Where an applicant is not satisfied that their complaint has been resolved informally; or where the applicant believes the admissions decision contained any element of unfairness or error, the applicant can submit a formal complaint or appeal. Applicants making a formal complaint or appeal are required to do so by email, to the School's Registrar (registrar@t-lis.org).

The email must include specific details of the applicant's complaint/appeal, supporting evidence, and a statement of the action or remedy sought if the complaint/appeal is upheld.

Formal complaints and appeals must be made within 10 working days of receipt of the admissions decision letter. Upon receipt of an admissions complaint or appeal, the Registrar will issue the applicant with an acknowledgement of receipt within five working days, which the applicant must retain as proof that a complaint or appeal has been submitted.

Formal investigation and determination of a complaint or appeal is conducted by the Registrar. S/he will review the complaint/appeal to ensure that the appropriate admissions procedures were followed and that the decision was reasonable; where necessary and appropriate, s/he will liaise with other members of the staff involved in the admissions process.

The School will not usually consider new information about an applicant's qualifications or circumstances if this should have been made available as part of the original application. New information may be accepted in cases such as where a third party has made an error affecting the School's judgement of the applicant's suitability, where there has been a misinterpretation of the information/data contained within the original application, or where medical or other mitigating circumstances can be shown to have affected the quality of the original application. The School reserves the right to decide whether new evidence can be considered on these grounds.

The applicant is then provided with a written outcome from the Registrar, including reasons for the decision, within 10 working days from the receipt of the appeal or complaint.

If a complaint is upheld, the School will take appropriate action or provide an appropriate remedy (this could, for example, include an apology or an undertaking to revise admissions procedures).

If an appeal is successful, the School will look again at its original admissions or fee status decision. These decisions may change as a result; however this is not guaranteed. If a selection decision is changed as a result of an appeal, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that the relevant application can proceed for the academic year in question. If this is not possible, deferred entry, or an application for this, may be facilitated.

Once a decision has been made by the reviewers on an applicant complaint or appeal, the applicant has exhausted the School's internal Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

Monitoring and Review

The Registrar will maintain a record of each applicant complaint and appeal detailing: the grounds for the application; whether the process was completed in accordance with procedure and the specified timescales; the outcome of the complaint/appeal; and the profile by protected characteristics of the applicants. A report on admissions appeals and complaints shall be made annually by the Registrar to the Academic Council, including:

- Comments on any identifiable patterns in the admissions appeals and complaints applications;
- Feedback from applicants on their experience of the admissions complaints and appeals process;
- The efficiency with which the processes were administered;
- Responses from the Admissions Decision Committee;
- Recommendations for changes to the procedures based upon internal experience and external changes in legislation or best practice guidelines
- A comparison of the results of the analysis with those from previous years.

The Academic Council will review this report and authorise any appropriate changes to either the school's [Admissions Regulations and Procedures](#) or this Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

Name of policy/procedure:	Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure
Document owner:	Hannah Kohler, Director of Admissions and Student Support
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Last reviewed:	02/2020
Reviewed by:	Jasper Joyce (Director of Finance and Operations)
Audited by:	Academic Council
Date of Audit:	12/2019
Date of next review: (annually unless otherwise agreed)	03/2020
Related documents: (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	Admissions Regulations and Procedures for Students Admissions Regulations and Procedures for Administrative Staff

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	13/01/2019	Original draft
2	Jasper Joyce (Director of Finance and Operations)	13/03/2019	Amendments to wording

3	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	04/06/2019	Clarified monitoring approach; changed who applicants should approach informally about a complaint or appeal in the first instance; added visual diagram of overall procedure; revised timelines for submission of formal complaint/appeal to LIS Registrar and timeframe for Registrar's determination of the complaint/appeal
4	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	01/08/2019	Changed responsibility for answering applicant initial clarification requests to Dir. Admissions and Student Support
5	Academic Council	18/12/2019	Requires update in light of decision to delay opening and pursue NDAPs
6	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	25/02/2020	Removal of validating partner

7	Academic Council	16/03/2020	Approved
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