

Student Academic Appeal Policy & Procedures

1. Policy Framework:

- a. This policy is informed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education Section 5: Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters - October 2007.
- b. The policy also conforms to the Middlesex University Regulations, Section G 'Appeal Regulation and Procedures' – 2012/2013 and Middlesex University Research Degree Regulations, Section E 'Appeal Procedures for Research Degree Candidates' - Feb 2011

2. Definitions

- a. An 'appeal' is a request for a review of a formal decision by the student relating to formal academic matters such as; progression, assessment, award, accreditation of prior learning, credit transfer or academic misconduct.
- b. A 'Board' is any formal academic decision making group, board, panel or committee within LST.
- c. A 'student' is used to include those accepted to study at, registered for a validated award and those who have recently left LST.
- d. The 'appellant' is the student who is appealing against the decision made by the board.

3. General Principles

- a. LST will seek to be fair, just, effective and timely in the handling students' academic appeals and this will be expressed in the Academic Appeals policy, procedure and process
- b. In recognition of the seriousness with which we regard academic appeals, the academic complaints procedure, policy and process will be approved, facilitated monitored and evaluated at a senior level within LST. The Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team have approved this policy.
- c. This policy ensures that those studying at all levels within LST have the opportunity to raise matters of concern in regard to the formal decisions without risk of disadvantage.
- d. Students will be supported in the academic complaints process by their tutors, the Academic Administrator and the Academic Secretary.
- e. The LST Academic Appeals Policy makes provision in its procedures for those making an appeal to be accompanied at any stage, including formal hearings.

4. Reasons for making an appeal

A Student Academic Appeal may only be made on any of the following grounds:

a. Assessment:

- i. That a student's performance in an assessment suffered through illness or other extenuating circumstances which the student was for valid reasons unable or unwilling to inform the Board through LST's extenuating circumstances procedures before it reached its decision.
- ii. That there has been an administrative error in the management of the assessment.
- iii. That the assessment was not run in accordance with the programme of study regulations.
- iv. That the Board has failed to consider material circumstances, relating to the delivery of a module, which may have adversely affected a student's performance in assessment.
 1. This ground will only be deemed acceptable if the circumstances have been the subject of a Student Academic Complaints procedure,
 2. and the case of the complaint has been upheld,
 3. and steps have not been taken to mitigate the effects of the circumstances.
- v. That some other irregularity has occurred in the implementation of the policy, procedures and process associated with the decisions of the particular board.

b. Award

- i. That a student's performance suffered through illness or other factors which the student was for valid reasons unable or unwilling to inform the Board through LST's extenuating circumstances procedures before it reached its decision.
- ii. That there has been an administrative or factual error in the information leading to the classification of the award.
- iii. That the award was not classified in accordance with the programme of study regulations.
- iv. That the Board has failed to consider material circumstances, relating to the delivery of teaching and learning within the programme of study, which may have adversely affected a student's performance in assessment.
 1. This ground will only be deemed acceptable if the circumstances have been the subject of a Student Academic Complaints procedure,
 2. and the case of the complaint has been upheld,
 3. and steps have not been taken to mitigate the effects of the circumstances.

- v. That a student's overall academic performance suffered through illness or other extenuating circumstances which the student was for valid reasons unable or unwilling to inform the Board through LST's extenuating circumstances procedures before it reached its decision.
 - vi. That some other irregularity has occurred in the implementation of the policy, procedures and process associated with the decisions of the particular board.
- c. Accreditation of Prior Learning & Credit Transfer
- i. That the decision was not made in accordance with LST's Accreditation of Prior Learning & Credit Transfer Policy.
 - ii. That there has been an administrative or factual error in the information leading to the decision of the board, which may have adversely affected the student.
 - iii. That some other irregularity has occurred in the implementation of the policy, procedures and process associated with the decisions of the particular board.
- d. Academic Misconduct:
- i. That there is new and relevant evidence which the student was demonstrably and for the most exceptional reasons unable to present to the Academic Secretary or Academic Misconduct Panel. This may include evidence in mitigation.
 - ii. That the Academic Misconduct policy and procedures were not complied with in such a way that it might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result would have been different had they been complied with.
 - iii. That there is documented evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the Academic Secretary or by one or more members of the Academic Misconduct Panel.
 - iv. That the penalty imposed exceeds the maximum penalties listed in the LST Academic Misconduct Policy Section 4.1.
 - v. That some other irregularity has occurred in the implementation of the policy, procedures and process associated with the decisions of the particular board.

5. Reasons why an Appeal may be rejected

A Student Academic Appeal may be rejected by the Academic Secretary for any of the following reasons, or if it is judged to be vexatious or frivolous, without further recourse to the appeals procedures.

- a. **The appeal is a disagreement with the academic judgment of a Board in assessing the merits of academic work**, or in reaching a decision on progression, or on the final classification of a qualification, or in the granting of Accreditation of Prior Learning / Credit Transfer, or Academic Misconduct, which has been reached in accordance with the appropriate policy, procedures process and regulations.
- b. The student did not understand or was not aware of the published policy, procedures process and regulations, for a module, subject or programme.
- c. The appeal is on grounds that poor teaching, supervision or guidance affected academic performance. In such circumstances a student should submit a complaint in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.
- d. That no contemporaneous, independent, medical or other third party appropriate evidence has been submitted to support an application for extenuating circumstances explicitly indicating that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health.
- e. The student was not aware of the procedures for presenting extenuating circumstances to the Board. These extenuating circumstances include health or other problems, or difficulties with the running of the programme or way in which the assessment was conducted.
- f. No valid reason, i.e., circumstances beyond a student's control, has been submitted as explanation for not submitting extenuating circumstances to the attention of the Assessment Board before it met.
- g. The appeal concerns a long-standing health problem, which the student was aware of at enrolment.
- h. The student was subject to a disturbance or illness during an examination and that there is no valid reason for it not to have been formally brought to the attention of the Assessment Board before it met.
- i. The student has not accessed their official LST email account, through which information relating to assessments is communicated.
- j. The Academic Secretary receives the appeal beyond the time limit specified in section 7 (see below) without good cause. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted to the Academic Secretary on time.
- k. That the appeal is predicated on a lack of agreement with or consent to the London School of Theology's procedures, policies, processes, rules or regulations in academic matters such as Assessment, Awards, Academic Misconduct, or Accreditation of Prior Learning & Credit Transfer

- I. Should an appeal arise following due process of the Academic Misconduct procedure, it may be rejected by the Academic Secretary if it does not conform to the grounds stated in section 4.d above.

6. Appeal Process:

- a. The LST Student Academic Appeals policy has both an 'informal' and 'formal' stage.
- b. Any appellant is required to complete the 'informal' stage prior to the submission of a 'formal' appeal.

7. Time limits and Appeals

- a. Except where [7c] or [7d] (see below) applies, there is a time limit of 28 calendar days from the date of which the student is formally notified of the Board results for submission of a formal appeal to the Academic Secretary.
- b. Except where [7c] or [7d] (see below) applies, during this time the student must make every effort to discuss the problem with the Academic Secretary and any other appropriate member faculty member or the Registrar. This may result in the matter being resolved informally and quickly.
- c. If an appeal arises following due process of the Student Complaints Procedure, the time limit is 10 working days from the date the student receives the written result of this procedure.
- d. If an appeal arises following due process of the Academic Misconduct Procedure, the time limit is 10 working days from the date the student receives the written result of this procedure.

8. Informal Appeals:

- a. The Academic Secretary in consultation with the chair of the appropriate board will consider the informal appeal and may advise the student:
 - i. That the Board will reconsider its decision taking account of this new information;
 - ii. That the Board's decision was based on a fair and accurate evaluation of the evidence and information presented to it and it will therefore not be reconsidered;
 - iii. In any other way deemed appropriate, including that the student should make a formal appeal.

9. Informal Appeals Process:

- i. The student should make contact with the Academic Secretary to discuss the content, context and nature of their appeal. The Academic Secretary may request that the student presents their appeal in written form; letter, email etc.
- ii. The Academic Secretary will respond, in writing, to the student's informal appeal within 5 working days, giving reason for the response given.

10. Formal Appeals

- a. Students should only make a formal appeal if:
 - i. They have completed the informal appeal process and are dissatisfied with the outcome.
 - ii. or they have been advised to do so by the Academic Secretary
 - iii. or they have been unable to contact the Academic Secretary and any other appropriate faculty member or the Registrar.

11. Formal Appeals Process:

Students should;

- a. Download from the Schools Intranet an 'Academic Appeal Form'
- b. Complete clearly the 'Academic Appeal Form' including a statement of reasons for making the appeal.
- c. Collect corroborative evidence (for example, a medical certificate, Written third party statements etc.)
- d. Send the form, and copies of the evidence to the Academic Secretary within the time limit specified in section 7 above. If it is received later than this, it is likely to be rejected unless a statement is attached of the circumstances which prevented the deadline from being met, and this is accepted as valid by the Academic Secretary.
- e. In exceptional circumstances, if the student is unable because of severe illness or other valid reason to submit the appeal, another person may complete and submit the appeal on the student's behalf, normally with the student's written consent.
- f. The appeal, once submitted, is considered as the definitive statement of the appellant's case and may not be added to unless the Academic Secretary seeks clarification from the appellant.
- g. The Academic Secretary will send an acknowledgement of receipt to the appellant within seven days. If this is not received, the appellant should contact the Academic Secretary or the Academic Administrator without delay.

12. Progression of an Appellant while an appeal is being considered

- a. The decision of the Exam Board remains in force until formal notification by the Academic Secretary to have been rescinded. Therefore the student remains responsible for:
 - i. Conforming to the requirements for re-assessment pending the outcome of the appeal;
 - ii. The consequence of not complying with these requirements should the subsequent decision of the appeal process not be in the student's favour.
- b. While the appeal is being processed, the appellant:
 - i. Shall normally be permitted by the Exam Board to continue to the next stage of their studies, unless there are circumstances preventing it other than the decision in question of the Exam Board. This will not prejudice the outcome of the appeal.

If the appeal concerns expulsion following an investigation into academic misconduct, the appellant is suspended and written permission is required from the Vice-Principle Academic or nominee for the appellant to continue to the next stage of their studies. The Vice-Principle Academic or nominee has discretion not to permit the appellant to continue pending the outcome of the appeal.

This right is designed solely to ensure that a student whose appeal is upheld is not academically disadvantaged and it shall not be interpreted as acceptance of a failed student whose appeal is subsequently dismissed on a later stage of the programme, nor shall satisfactory progress during such attendance be admissible as evidence at any stage in the appeal procedure.

During any such interim period of attendance, no fees would be demanded. In the event of the appeal ultimately being resolved in the student's favour and the student being formally reinstated onto the programme, the appropriate fee would be payable.

- ii. If a final qualification has been made, the student may inform prospective employers of the qualification but that the decision may be reviewed following the appeal.
 - iii. If a finalist, may attend the Graduation Ceremony.
- c. The entitlement of the appellant to proceed on the programme of study will continue until the date of the letter formally notifying the appellant of the final outcome of their appeal (i.e., dismissal of the appeal or Board's reviewed decision). This letter will inform the appellant whether they are entitled to continue on the programme.

13. Confidentiality

- a. The appeal is kept as confidential as possible and within the University.
- b. Appellants who notify the Academic Secretary that information has been included of a highly confidential and personal nature will, if requested, be informed in advance of the names of persons to whom the information will be disclosed.
- c. Papers will be kept on confidential file for up to six years. After that, apart from a copy of the notification to a student of the final decision, they may be destroyed.

14. Procedure for considering an appeal

- a. If the Academic Secretary considers that there may be grounds for appeal, the Chair of the Board or any other appropriate person will be requested to submit a written statement to the Academic Secretary providing the required information. These written statements should be in a form suitable for use as evidence at an Appeal Panel.
- b. The Academic Secretary decides whether, at first sight, there are grounds for the appeal to proceed by considering the following documents, where appropriate:
 - i. The appeal submitted by the appellant;
 - ii. The relevant record of the Board including the decision relating to the appellant's appeal
 - iii. Written statements made to the Academic Secretary concerning the appeal;
 - iv. For an appeal against a penalty imposed for academic misconduct: the academic misconduct file

15. The grounds for an appeal are not established

- a. In every case where the Academic Secretary considers that there is no ground for appeal on the evidence available they shall consult a Faculty member of the Senior Leadership Team neutral to the appellant.
- b. The Academic Secretary may dismiss the appeal provided that the Faculty member of the Senior Leadership Team agrees.
- c. A decision on an appeal by the Academic Secretary, with the agreement of a Faculty member of the Senior Leadership Team, is final and no further appeal is possible against it.
- d. The academic appeal procedures of the London School of Theology are now complete. Should the appellant wish to take the matter further, they must make a formal appeal to Middlesex University within 28 days. [See Section 28 'Middlesex University' below]

16. The grounds for an appeal are established

- a. Where the Academic Secretary or a Faculty member of the Senior Leadership Team considers that there may be grounds for an appeal;
 - i. If appropriate they may offer the appellant an informal settlement of their appeal.
 - ii. An informal settlement means that the Chair of the Board has agreed, on the recommendation of the Academic Secretary, that the Board will review its decision but will not necessarily alter it. Where an appeal is against the penalty awarded following academic misconduct, an informal settlement means that the Academic Secretary and the Chair of Board have agreed, on the recommendation of the Faculty member of the Senior Leadership Team, that the Board will review its decision but will not necessarily alter it.
 - iii. Where appropriate, the Chair of a Board may take Chair's Action in the Student's favour provided that they obtain in due course the agreement of the Board to confirm the decision.
 - iv. The Board review shall involve full consideration of the appellant's case.
 - v. The Board shall send a full written report of its consideration to the Academic Secretary.
 - vi. If the Academic Secretary considers that the reconvened Board has not taken due and proper account of the appellant's case they shall prepare a brief account of the circumstances for report to Academic Board.
 - vii. The appellant may choose not to accept an informal settlement, but should note that an Appeal Panel may also only request a Board to review its decision. A letter from the appellant stating the decision not to accept this offer must be received by the Academic Secretary within 10 working days of the date on the letter offering the informal settlement.
 - viii. An appellant's failure to reply in writing within 10 working days of the date on the letter offering an informal settlement shall be taken as acceptance of the offer.
 - ix. A decision on an appeal by a Board is final and no further appeal is possible against it.
 - x. The academic appeal procedures of the London School of Theology are now complete. Should the appellant wish to take the matter further, they must make a formal appeal to Middlesex University within 28 days. [See Section 28 'Middlesex University' below]
- b. They may convene a meeting of an Appeal Panel. The appellant should note that an Appeal Panel shall not necessarily require an Board to review its decision.

17. Preparation for an Appeal Panel

- a. Constitution of Appeal Panel
 - i. An Appeal Panel will normally consist of two Faculty members together with one student.
 - ii. The Chair of the Appeal Panel will be nominated by the Academic Secretary
 - iii. No faculty member who has been involved in the decision of the board against which the appeal is being made is eligible.
 - iv. The Academic Secretary, who is not a member of the Appeal Panel, shall be the Secretary and shall attend the meeting.

18. Notification to appellant

- a. The Academic Secretary shall arrange with all those involved in the hearing, including the Chair of the Board, a suitable date and shall give the appellant in writing:
 - i. At least 10 working days notice, wherever possible, of the date, time and place of the hearing, and the names of expected Appeal Panel members;
 - ii. A requirement that the appellant acknowledges receipt of the notification of the Appeal Panel meeting;
 - iii. A statement that the appellant is entitled to be accompanied by a companion at the hearing and to call witnesses. (The companion may not be legal representative and should not also be a witness)
 - iv. A warning that any information given to them whether or not in writing, is strictly confidential, and must not be disclosed to others unless they are directly assisting the appellant in preparing for the hearing, nor discussed in any way with any member of the Appeal Panel;
 - v. A statement that the appellant may object to the appointment of any member of the Appeal Panel and to the date but that any change to the arrangements is solely at the discretion of the Academic Secretary;
 - vi. A warning that if the appellant fails to attend the Appeal Panel meeting, the Panel will normally proceed in their absence.

19. Breach of confidentiality

- a. The publication of appeal papers by the appellant in any form may result in the appeal being ruled closed by the Academic Secretary.
- b. Such a breach of confidentiality will be the subject of a preliminary issue of the Appeal Panel who will have the power to dismiss the appeal if such a breach is substantiated.
- c. An appellant who has published appeal papers in the course of a previous appeal and who submits a new appeal against a later Assessment Board decision shall not receive papers until a maximum of one hour before any hearing that may be called. This shall be under supervision and the appellant shall be required to hand papers in immediately after the hearing.

20. Witnesses

- a. Witnesses, if appropriate may be called by:
 - i. The appellant;
 - ii. The Chair of the Board;
 - iii. The Chair of the Appeal Panel;
 - iv. Members of the Appeal Panel;
 - v. The Academic Secretary.
- b. Names of proposed witnesses must be notified to the Academic Secretary writing at least five working days in advance of the date of the meeting.

21. Documentation

- a. The Academic Secretary shall send agenda papers including all the appeal documents, if relevant, to the appellant (together with a copy for their companion), members of the Appeal Panel, the Chair of the Assessment Board, those in attendance and witnesses.

22. The appeal panel in session

- a. The Chair of the Appeal Panel, in consultation with the Academic Secretary has discretion to organise the meeting as they see fit in order to achieve the principal aims of a hearing:
 - i. To clarify evidence as necessary by questioning those who have submitted it. (There should be no need for repetition of statements already submitted in writing and any invited comment about these should be brief);
 - ii. To enable the Appeal Panel to reach a just decision.
- b. The proceedings and papers of the Appeal Panel will be strictly confidential to all the participants.
- c. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Chair of the Appeal Panel, the appellant's provisional assessment grades may be made available to Appeal Panel members at the hearing.
- d. Mechanical recording by tape, camera or other means, is prohibited

- e. Legal representation is not allowed at a Panel Meeting
- f. The quorum for a meeting of an Appeal Panel will be three members, including the Chair.
 - i. In the absence of the nominated Chair members of the Appeal Panel present will elect an acting Chair.
 - ii. At the Chair's discretion, and with the appellant's agreement, the meeting may, in exceptional circumstances, be held in the absence of a quorum.
 - iii. It may not be held in the absence of the Academic Secretary or their appropriate nominated representative.

23. The appellant is entitled:

- a. To be present during the hearing of evidence unless the Chair of the Appeal Panel requests them to withdraw temporarily when matters confidential to the Assessment Board are being discussed, or when the Panel wishes to have a private discussion. Their companion is similarly entitled;
- b. To comment on the evidence and to question witnesses, the Chair of the Assessment Board, and in appeals concerning academic misconduct, the Academic Secretary. Their companion is similarly entitled;
- c. To be represented in their absence by a proxy at the discretion of the Chair.
- d. The Appeal Panel may agree to proceed in the absence of the appellant provided that there is evidence that notification of the Appeal Panel meeting has been received by the appellant and warning has been given regarding failure to attend.
- e. The Chair of the Assessment Board and Academic Secretary, where an appeal concerns academic misconduct, are expected to be present throughout the hearing of evidence and are entitled to comment on the evidence and to question the appellant or witnesses.
- f. Normally no witness (other than the appellant and Chair of the Board) will be present while any other witness is giving evidence. The hearing may proceed in the absence of witnesses.
- g. At any time during its meeting the Appeal Panel may decide to adjourn.
- h. The Appeal Panel will consider its decision in private after the evidence has been heard and shall reach a decision by simple majority vote. The Academic Secretary is not entitled to vote. If the votes cast are equal, the Chair of the Appeal Panel shall have a second or casting vote.
- i. The appellant, their companion and the Chair of the Board will normally be recalled for the Chair of the Appeal Panel to inform them of its decision, which will in due course also be given in writing to the appellant and all those previously notified.

24. Decision of the Appeal Panel

- a. If the Appeal Panel finds that injustice appears to have been caused to the appellant it will:
 - i. Require the Assessment Board to review its decision;
 - ii. Appoint a representative (normally the Chair) to attend the reconvened Board together with the Academic Secretary
- b. If the Appeal Panel finds that an injustice has not been caused to the appellant:
 - i. This decision is final and no further appeal is possible against it.
 - ii. The academic appeal procedures of the LST are now complete. Should the appellant wish to take the matter further, they must make a formal appeal to Middlesex University within 28 days. [See Section 28 'Middlesex University' below]
- c. The Appeal Panel has power to make any recommendations to the Academic Board, SLT, or Board, but the Appeal Panel may not dispute the academic judgment of a Board.

25. Procedure following an appeal panel

- a. The Academic Secretary will, in consultation with the Chair, prepare a report of the Appeal Panel's meeting and findings. The findings of the Appeal Panel shall be reported to the appellant and to members of the Board, whether or not it is asked to reconsider its decision.
- b. Relevant documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) will be forwarded to any Assessment Board reconvened to reconsider its decision.
- c. The Boards shall make special arrangements (which must involve External Examination Assessors and Auditors if appropriate) for reviewing an decision if required to do so by an Appeal Panel, as soon as possible after the Appeal Panel meeting and at the latest during the next scheduled meeting.
- d. The Academic Secretary shall notify the appellant of the decision of the reconvened Assessment Board as soon as possible.
- e. This decision is final and no further appeal is possible against it.
- f. The academic appeal procedures of the London School of Theology are now complete. Should the appellant wish to take the matter further, they must make a formal appeal to Middlesex University within 28 days. [See Section 28 'Middlesex University' below]
- g. If the Chair of the Appeal Panel and the Academic Secretary consider that the reconvened Assessment Board has not taken due and proper account of the recommendations of the Appeal Panel they will prepare a brief account of the circumstances for report to Academic Board.

26. Powers of Academic Board

- a. After receiving a report as set out in 16.a.vi or 25.g or in other, exceptional, circumstances, the Academic Board may:
 - i. Annul the decision of an Board;
 - ii. Annul the whole assessment or any part of it;
 - iii. Establish a new Assessment Board to carry out whatever actions are appropriate in order to make award recommendations;
 - iv. Take no action.
- b. The decision of Academic Board is final and no further appeal is possible against it.
- c. The academic appeal procedures of the London School of Theology are now complete. Should the appellant wish to take the matter further, they must make a formal appeal to Middlesex University within 28 days. [See Section 28 'Middlesex University' below]

27. General

- a. The Academic Secretary may exceptionally modify any of the foregoing procedures to secure a just decision and shall inform Academic Board of such action at their next meeting.
- b. Any change of decision by the Board due to the appeal process shall not be to the student's disadvantage.
- c. The Academic Secretary has discretion not to consider an appeal from a student who has, without good reason, not complied with any given London School of Theology or Middlesex University requirement made of students in general.
- d. Students who knowingly submit false or forged evidence at any stage of the appeal process forfeit their right to consideration of the case and render themselves liable to disciplinary proceedings.
- e. If an appellant formally withdraws their appeal at any stage in the procedure no further action will be taken.
- f. The consideration of an appeal is an internal London School of Theology matter and the papers are confidential to the London School of University, except that papers will be shared with Middlesex University should a student seek to formally appeal to them after completion of the internal London School of Theology Student Appeal Process
- g. The appellant may seek advice from any source. Should an appellant instruct solicitors at any stage of the appeal process the Academic Secretary may consult the London School of Theology solicitors. The London School of Theology Student Academic Appeal Policy does not allow legal representation

at an Appeal Panel hearing. Papers shall be kept on file for six years following an Appeal Panel hearing. After that, apart from a copy of the notification to a student of the final decision, they may be destroyed.

- h. The Academic Secretary reserves the right to dismiss an appeal because of breach of confidentiality by the appellant or where delay in reaching a decision is (in their opinion) caused by the appellant's failure to provide information upon request. In the latter case the appellant shall be warned in writing that the appeal shall be dismissed unless such information is received within ten working days of the date of the written warning.
- i. Where gross irregularity is alleged to have occurred, the Academic Secretary may request special consideration by the London School of Theology's Academic Board.
- j. The Academic Secretary shall report annually to Academic Board on the number, distribution, grounds and outcome of appeals, and the Board shall undertake any necessary review of appeals work.
- k. References to the Academic Secretary include references to an Acting Academic Secretary should the Academic Secretary be unavailable.
- l. The term 'Board' is used in these regulations to include 'Exam Boards' where a decision is made concerning progression, module grade or degree classification.
- m. Any changes to the London School of Theology Student Appeal Policy are required to be approved by the Academic Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

28. Middlesex University

This section of the London School of Theology's Student Academic Appeals Policy relates to the involvement of Middlesex University within the student academic complaint process, and is taken from the Middlesex University Regulations 2011-2012 '*Complaints in relation to collaborative partner institutions*' page 63. The London School of Theology is a collaborative partner of Middlesex University.

- a. This procedure relates to complaints received by the University relating in whole or in part to collaborative partner institutions of the University. By collaborative partner institutions is meant Associate Colleges and institutions offering programmes jointly with the University, or franchised or validated by the University. Where complaints relate to partner institutions based in the UK, they shall be referred to the Deputy Vice- Chancellor, Academic.
- b. Such complaints must always be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who shall at once inform the collaborative partner institution of the nature and substance of the complaint. The Deputy Vice- Chancellor shall decide whether a complaint has substance, prima facie. In so deciding, they shall have regard to the following considerations:
- c. Where the University receives a complaint or complaints against a collaborative partner institution, it shall at the outset determine which complaints, if any, are within its jurisdiction.

- d. The University shall decline absolutely to deal with any complaint against a collaborative partner institution unless the internal procedures of that institution have been fully exhausted and the procedures of any professional accrediting body have likewise been fully exhausted.
- e. The University shall decline absolutely to deal with any complaint against a collaborative partner institution if legal proceedings have been commenced in relation to that complaint, and shall continue to so decline until legal proceedings have been fully ended.
- f. Anonymous complaints or grievances will not normally be considered.
- g. Where a complaint is deemed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor to have substance prima facie, the complaint shall be referred to a panel chaired by the Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement and whose other members shall be an internal expert (preferably of professorial status) and an external expert, the panel aided by a secretary and, if deemed necessary by the chair, a legal assessor.
- h. The panel shall report its findings as quickly as practicable to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, copies of its report being sent simultaneously to the complainant and the collaborative partner institution.
- i. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor shall consider the report, and any representations made to him/ her by either the complainant or the collaborative partner institution, and shall forward his/her conclusions to the Vice-Chancellor, together with a summary of the complaints in respect of which the panel was established.
- j. The Vice-Chancellor shall reach a determination in relation to the matters which formed the substance of the complaint, and shall inform either the Board of Governors or the Academic Board, as they deem appropriate; the Vice-Chancellor shall at the same time inform the complainant and the partner institution of the outcome.
- k. There shall be no grounds of appeal against the determination of the Vice-Chancellor.
- l. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of the Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement shall have the joint discretion to require a complainant to lodge with the University a sum of money which is liable to forfeit in whole or in part should the complaint, once investigated, be deemed to be frivolous, vexatious, malicious and/or without substance.
- m. Where the internal procedures of the partner institution and the University have been completed, and where the complaint relates to provision which is under the control of the University, or where the partner institution is a UK Higher Education establishment, the student may refer the complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, within 3 months of the date of the "completion of procedures letter" issued to the student by the University. The student should write to the OIA, Third floor, Kings Reach, 38-50 Kings Road, Reading, RG1

3AA, United Kingdom. They should enclose a copy of the final decision of the University and state the reasons for seeking redress from the Higher Education Independent Adjudicator. Email enquiries may be sent to enquiries@oiahe.org.uk.