

London School of Theology (LST)

Non-Academic Complaint Policy and Procedure **Applicants, Students and Graduates (all programmes and all levels)**

Group responsible for policy and process review:	Executive Team
Executive Team member responsible:	Director of Finance & Administration
Date last approved:	18 th October 2016
Date of this approval:	September 2022
Ongoing review:	Every 36 months
Review consultation:	Executive Team and Academic Board
Date of next review:	September 2025

Preamble

1. LST is an evangelical Christian academic learning community that seeks to achieve excellence in the delivery of its services to current students, graduates and applicants, and to live according to the teaching of the Bible. Inevitably, on occasions, LST does not deliver the excellence it endeavours to provide. This document sets out the procedure to be followed when a student, graduate or applicant has a complaint concerning a non-academic matter.
2. Following the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 LST's belief is that the student, graduate or applicant should first try to resolve the matter face-to-face with those involved. Only when this process has been exhausted and not resolved to their satisfaction should they subsequently move through the successive stages of this policy and procedure.
3. This procedure should be followed stage by stage by complainants. If any stages are by-passed the complainant will be asked to return to follow this agreed procedure.
4. In the absence of the person holding a named post in this policy and procedure, the person deputising for them during the time of their absence shall substitute. A person holding a named post herein may delegate a nominee to act in their stead.
5. Meetings in respect of this policy and procedure shall normally take place at London School of Theology although they may take place on Skype, Zoom or other appropriate means.

Definitions

6. A non-academic complaint relates to any specific concern about the provision of non-teaching support services such as administration, finance, maintenance, catering, housekeeping, library, registry etc.
7. Reference to a student is taken to mean an individual student or group of students. It includes undergraduate, postgraduate and research students registered on London School of Theology programmes and those studying, typically by distance learning, for private benefit, with or without certification of any sort.
8. Reference to a graduate is taken to mean an individual graduate or group of graduates. It includes graduates of all levels (Certificate, Diploma, BA, MA, research degrees). Complaints from those who graduated more than twelve months prior to the complaint being made will not be considered.
9. Reference to an applicant is taken to mean an individual applicant or group of applicants.
10. Reference to a complainant refers to the current student, graduate or applicant making the complaint.

Procedure - Informal stage

11. Students with a complaint about any non-academic matter, after having followed the process as outlined in 2 above, should consult the relevant Student Committee representative. Student representatives meet regularly with senior staff and they may be able to resolve issues from their knowledge of the service. If this does not produce a resolution, students should bring the matter to the attention of the Head of Department concerned.
12. Applicants or Graduates with a complaint about any non-academic matter should bring the matter to the attention of the Director of Finance & Administration.

Procedure - Formal stage

Investigation

13. If following the informal stage of this policy and process does not produce satisfaction, complainants should make the details of the complaint known in writing to the Director of Finance & Administration (or, if the complaint is against the Director of Finance & Administration, to the Principal). Please use the template that can be found at the end of this document.
14. Written complaints will be investigated by the Director of Finance & Administration (or if the complaint is against the Director of Finance & Administration, the Principal) and complainants will either receive a reply in writing with the results of that investigation or be invited to a meeting to discuss their complaint further within one calendar month of the complaint submission.

Meeting

15. If a meeting is held to investigate the complaint further, complainants will be invited to attend to present their complaint to a Non-Academic Complaint Panel comprising the Director of Finance & Administration (or if the complaint is against the Director of Finance & Administration, the Principal) and two members of LST staff. In any formal 'face to face' meeting with School staff, complainants may be accompanied by a friend but not a legal professional or legal representative.
16. The relevant Head of Department, and/or any other staff member/s concerned, complained against or affected, will also be invited to attend separately to present their response to the complaint.
17. The Non-Academic Complaint Panel will adjudicate on the issue and give their decision on the outcome to the complainant in person and later in writing within 10 working days of the hearing.
18. If the complainant is satisfied with the outcome no further action will be taken. A copy of the complaint form and a report of the meeting and its outcome will be retained on the complainant's file but will not jeopardise academic progress (relevant to applicants and current students only).

Right of appeal

19. If unsatisfied with the outcome, complainants may appeal in writing to the Principal within 10 working days of receiving notice of the outcome of the complaint. The Principal will review all evidence and actions taken to date, and will meet with the complainant and/or establish a new Non-Academic Complaint Panel if that is deemed necessary. The process will follow that outlined above for the formal complaint stage. A decision will be made within one calendar month of receiving the appeal. This decision will be final and no further right of appeal will be offered.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

20. Complaints relating to non-academic matters do not fall under the jurisdiction of LST's validating partner. Therefore, when the above process has been completed, a student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter by LST. Following this, any student who is dissatisfied with the final decision may be able to apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education. Information and eligibility rules are available at www.oiahe.org.uk.

Non-Academic Complaints Action Form

Name of complainant:	
Student status:	Applicant / Current Student / Graduate (please delete as appropriate)
Nature and details of the complaint (please be specific):	
How would you like your complaint to be resolved?	
Student signature:	Sign here
Date:	Date here