



Lincoln Bishop University

Document Administration

Document Title:	Admissions Complaints Procedure	
Document Category:	Procedure	
Version Number:	1.4	
Status:	APPROVED	
Reason for Development:	To outline the University's approach to the management of complaints issued by an individual via the Admissions Team and processes.	
Scope:	Applies directly to staff and to all persons in relation to the Admissions Team and processes.	
Author/Developer:	Admissions Manager	
Owner:	Quality and Admissions Team	
Assessment: (where relevant)	<u>Assessment Type:</u> Equality Assessment Legal Information Governance Academic Governance	<u>Assessment Status:</u> NOT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED
Consultation: (where relevant)	<u>Consultation Type:</u> Staff Trade Unions via HR Students via Students' Union Any External Statutory Bodies	<u>Consultation Status:</u> NOT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED
Authorising Board:	Senate	
Date First Authorised:	October 2017	
Reviewed & Effective From:	September 2024	
Next Review Due*:	August 2027	
Document Location:	University Website	
Document Control:	All printed versions of this document are classified as uncontrolled. A controlled version is available from the University Website.	
Alternative Format:	If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact policy@lincolnbishop.ac.uk	

***Please Note:** This document remains valid until formally revoked or replaced by the University.



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

VERSION CONTROL TABLE

<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Authorised</u>	<u>Summary of Key Changes</u>
1.0	October 2017	Policy first issued and approved by Senate.
1.1 – 1.3	18 October 2023	Minor amendments made to nomenclature.
1.4	12 September 2024	Changes made to nomenclature only following University staffing restructure and aligning with the new University complaint procedure.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. We are committed to providing fair, transparent and consistent admissions procedures for all of our applicants. We recognise that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to ask why their applications have been rejected or will feel dissatisfied with the conduct of the admissions process. This procedure sets out the steps that should be followed should an applicant consider there has been a failure to maintain those standards of a kind rendering it appropriate for the applicant to make a complaint. The procedure also sets out the steps that should be followed in order to investigate complaints.
- 1.2. The Admissions Complaint Procedure is restricted to complaints about:
 - 1.2.1. Interview conduct;
 - 1.2.2. The handling of an application, including processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Health & Physical Capacity to Teach and where required, Occupational Health procedures;
 - 1.2.3. The admissions process; and/or
 - 1.2.4. Where it is alleged that an action or decision was inconsistent with the University position on equal opportunity, particularly with regard to the University's Diversity and Equality Policy
- 1.3. The Admissions Complaints Procedure may be followed by all applicants, whether submitting their application via UCAS, DfE Apply, or directly to the University via the online Student Gateway.
- 1.4. A complaint should be distinguished from an appeal against a decision by the University. An applicant has no right to complain about the University's decision not to offer them a place at the University, nor regarding matters of academic judgement about an applicant's suitability to study on a programme. Complaints will also not be considered regarding an applicant's failure to meet the non-academic requirements of study specified by particular agencies (e.g., DBS, Health & Physical Capacity to Teach Occupational Health checks).
- 1.5. The Procedure should be read in conjunction with Lincoln Bishop University's Code of Practice for the Admission of Students which outlines the University's processes for assessing applications.



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

2. PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS

- 2.1. In dealing with admissions complaints, the following principles and procedures will be followed:
 - 2.1.1. We will ensure that the investigation of complaints under the terms of these procedures is conducted transparently and promptly in a way which is fair to all parties concerned
 - 2.1.2. Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in so far as that is compatible with the effective investigation of the complaint. The complainant will be informed in advance if any disclosure to a third party (outside of the University) is required in order to progress the investigation of a complaint.
 - 2.1.3. Any person named as the subject of the complaint will be informed of the substance of the complaint and will be offered the right to reply.
 - 2.1.4. Anonymous complaints will not be investigated, nor will complaints submitted by a third party.
 - 2.1.5. No applicant bringing a complaint under this procedure, regardless of the outcome, will be treated less favourably than if they had not brought the complaint.
 - 2.1.6. Complaints must be processed in a timely way; we will refuse to investigate a complaint if this has not been initiated within one calendar month of the incident which is the subject of the complaint.
 - 2.1.7. All complaints will be considered on their merits and in accordance with our values and ethos and relevant policies.
- 2.2. The Admissions Manager will be responsible for implementing changes to systems or procedures by recommending these to the appropriate authorities/committees. Suggestions will be made based on the nature and pattern of the complaints received within the period of policy review.

3. ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 3.1. The procedure for dealing with complaints by applicants is split into three stages. The first (early resolution) is to attempt to deal with complaints quickly and effectively, closest to the point at which the complaint arose. The second stage (formal resolution) will involve the conducting of an investigation by an Independent Officer. The third stage (review) is to review the action taken to resolve the complaint.

4. CONCERNS

- 4.1. Any individual hoping to raise a concern regarding any aspect of the Admissions Team or process can log a concern either via email or via the concerns register.



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 4.2. When contacted, if the complainant does not state that they wish to “make a complaint” or complete the complaints form, then the communication will be considered a concern and treated as such under guidance within the student complaint procedure.

5. STAGE 1: EARLY RESOLUTION

- 5.1. Most complaints can be resolved at an early stage with the member of staff most directly concerned. If an applicant has a complaint, they should raise this informally in the first instance with the Admissions Manager. If the complaint is about the Admissions Manager, this should be clearly stated in the title of the email to ensure that this is passed to an appropriate senior colleague.
- 5.2. If this initial attempt at resolution is unsuccessful, then the applicant may escalate their complaint to the Formal Stage of this procedure.

6. STAGE 2: FORMAL RESOLUTION

- 6.1. Formal Complaints should be made in writing to the University, to the Contention, Quality & Engagement Officer, or via regulatorycompliance@bishopg.ac.uk , using the form provided (Appendix 1). Copies of all previous correspondence related to the complaint should also be included along with an outline of the complaint and desired outcome.
- 6.2. The Quality Team will write to the applicant, normally within 5 working days to acknowledge receipt.
- 6.3. The Quality Team will appoint an Investigating Officer to conduct an investigation into the matters raised; this may include requesting additional evidence from the applicant or department and meeting with any staff concerned with the complaint. A response of the applicant will normally be provided within a calendar month. If, because of the nature of the investigation required, the timescale needs to be extended, the Quality Team will write to the applicant informing them of the reason for the delay and proposing a new deadline.
- 6.4. The response provided by the Quality Team to the applicant will outline whether the complaint is justified, not justified or partially justified. The response will include details of the implementation of any proposed remedies arising from the finding. It will also include details of how, in the event the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, to request a review of the decision.



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

7. STAGE 3: REQUEST FOR REVIEW

- 7.1. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation at the formal resolution stage, then they may write to the Executive Dean of Teaching, Learning & Student Success using the form (Appendix 2) provided to request a review, within one calendar month of receiving the outcome from the formal stage.
- 7.2. An application may be appealed on any of the following grounds:
 - 7.2.1. There has been a procedural irregularity in the investigation of the complaint;
 - 7.2.2. New evidence is now available which was not available upon reasonable enquiry at the time of the investigation; and/or
 - 7.2.3. The decision taken by the Investigating Officer was of such nature that no reasonable person could have reached it on the available evidence
- 7.3. The Executive Dean: Teaching, Learning & Student Success will write to the applicant, normally within 5 working days, to confirm receipt of the request for review.
- 7.4. If the Executive Dean: Teaching, Learning & Student Success believes there to be grounds for review, they will assign a reviewer to conduct a review of the investigation.
- 7.5. Once the review has been completed, the reviewer will write to the applicant, normally within 10 working days of receiving the appeal to communicate the outcome of the review. If the timescale needs to be extended, then the reviewer will write to the applicant, informing them of the reason for the delay and proposing a new deadline. The applicant will be informed of any actions, if necessary, which will be taken in light of the finding and how these will be implemented. The Review Stage should normally be completed within 21 working days. Though in the state circumstance that the review panel is convened, it is expected that this will exceed the normal timings. Where there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the time scale at the Review Stage, then the applicant should be notified in writing of the reason for the delay and the revised timescale for bringing the review to a conclusion.
- 7.6. The decision reached by the Executive Dean: Teaching, Learning & Student Success, or nominee, is considered final and once the applicant has received their response, they have exhausted all procedures for handling complaints by applicants. The applicant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter by the Contention, Quality and Engagement Officer within 28 days of the conclusion of the matter through



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

the procedures of the Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Details may be found on the OIA website: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk> or from:

OIA
Second Floor
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB



APPLICANT FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Applicant's Name:	
Programme Applied for:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
Preferred Method of Contact: <i>Specify email, post, or phone</i>	

Grounds for complaint:

- ☐ Interview conduct
- ☐ The handling of an application, including processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Occupational Health procedures
- ☐ The admissions process
- ☐ An action or decision which was inconsistent with the University's position on equal opportunity, particularly with regard to the University's Diversity and Equality Policy.

Have you attempted to resolve your complaint with a member of the Admissions Team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Member of staff you have initially communicated with in an attempt to resolve your complaint informally:

--



Outline of Complaint:

Initial Attempt at Resolution and why this was Unsatisfactory:



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Additional Information:

Please list any evidence which you have submitted along with this form in order to support your complaint.

Desired Outcome of Investigation:

Signed:

Dated:



APPLICANT FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Applicant's Name:	
Programme Applied for:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	
Preferred Method of Contact: <i>Specify email, post, or phone</i>	

Grounds for appeal:

- ☐ Procedural irregularity
- ☐ New evidence
- ☐ Unreasonable decision

Grounds for complaint:

- ☐ Interview conduct
- ☐ The handling of an application, including processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Occupational Health procedures
- ☐ The admissions process
- ☐ An action or decision which was inconsistent with the University's position on equal opportunity, particularly with regard to the University's Diversity and Equality Policy.



Brief Outline of Complaint:

Outline of Investigation:



Why the Outcome is Unsatisfactory:

Grounds to Request a Review:



ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Desired Outcome:

Additional Evidence:

Please list any additional evidence attached to this form which was not considered during the investigation, and outline the reason why this was not considered.

Signed:

Dated: