

**PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

1. **Introduction**

LSTM is committed to ensuring that students are provided with a high quality educational experience, supported by appropriate academic, administrative and welfare services and facilities. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when students, or prospective students, feel that they have cause for complaint. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction either about the programmes, facilities or services provided by LSTM or about actions or lack of actions by LSTM or its staff.

1. **Scope of the complaints procedure**

The complaints procedure can be used by applicants or by currently registered students, within one month of the actions (or lack of actions) which prompted the complaint. Former students may submit a complaint within three months of leaving LSTM provided that the event(s) or issue(s) raised took place while they were registered students and that they were prevented by exceptional circumstances from raising the matter while registered.

The procedure does not cover issues regarding dissatisfaction with assessment marks or grades - this is covered by the *Procedure for Dealing with Academic Appeals* *(taught programmes)*, and the *Procedure for Dealing with Academic Appeals (research programmes).*

1. **Establishing valid grounds for complaint**

Applicants who believe they have grounds for complaint should refer in the first instance to the Code of Practice on Admissions to ensure that they have valid grounds on which to base their complaint, such as the admissions procedures not being followed or some other material irregularity having occurred.

Registered students who believe they have grounds for complaint should refer in the first instance to the LSTM Student Charter to clarify what is a reasonable expectation of LSTM and whether the corresponding responsibilities of a student have been met.

* 1. An applicant or student **may not** bring a complaint under the following circumstances:
	+ Immediately bringing the same complaint after completion of the complaints procedures, except where actions have not been implemented.
	+ A complaint in connection with a matter for which LSTM has initiated disciplinary proceedings against a student or member of staff until an appropriate stage has been reached in such proceedings.
	+ A complaint about a matter over which LSTM has no control.

It is expected that most complaints will be handled on an informal basis and only if the applicant or student is dissatisfied with the response will a formal complaint be submitted in writing.

1. **General principles**
	1. LSTM will treat all complaints from applicants or students seriously and will deal with complaints promptly, constructively, fairly and consistently
	2. The outcome of a complaint will be communicated promptly to the applicant or student with clear reasons given for the decision
	3. Neither applicants or students will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of making a complaint. However, if a complaint is judged to have been made frivolously, vexatiously or with malicious intent, disciplinary action may be taken against the applicant or student who made the complaint.
	4. All complaints will be dealt with confidentially except where it is necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint. In these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.
	5. In any meetings held to resolve complaints, both parties will be entitled to be accompanied by a friend or colleague, but not by a legal representative.
2. **Submitting a formal complaint**

5.1 An applicant or student who wishes to make a formal complaint should complete the Formal Complaint form and return it, together with any relevant supporting evidence, to the Student Support Desk, or email it either to the Admissions and Recruitment Manager at mylstm@lstmed.ac.uk (applicants) or to the Academic Registrar at studentsupport@lstmed.ac.uk (registered or former students).

5.2 The Admissions and Recruitment Manager or Academic Registrar will make appropriate investigations based on the written statement and evidence and will invite the complainant(s) to a meeting (where practicable) to discuss the issues. If it is not possible for the complainant to attend in person, a SKYPE or telephone call will be arranged. If it is deemed necessary to involve other parties in the investigations, permission will be sought from the complainant(s) to do so.

5.3 After considering all information, the Admissions and Recruitment Manager or Academic Registrar will report to the Dean of Education, who will either make a decision based on the investigations, or will conduct further investigations if necessary.

5.4 The outcome of the complaint and any action to be taken will be communicated in writing to the applicant or student(s) by the Admissions and Recruitment Manager or Academic Registrar respectively.

5.5 Wherever possible formal complaints submitted in writing should receive a response, including action to be taken, within 10 working days but if this is not possible, the likely timescale for producing an outcome will be communicated to the student within 10 working days.

1. **Appeals against the outcome of a complaint**
	1. An applicant or student who is not satisfied that a complaint has been handled properly or fairly in accordance with the *Procedure for Dealing with Student Complaints* may submit a letter of appeal to the Director of LSTM. (email: director@lstmed.ac.uk )
	2. The outcome of the appeal and any action to be taken will be communicated to the applicant or student(s) by the Admissions and Recruitment Manager or Academic Registrar, which will include notification that the applicant or student(s) has completed the internal procedures of LSTM with respect to the complaint.

6.3 An applicant or student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the *Student Complaints* *Procedu*r*e* may make further appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Further details and advice on how to do this are available from the OIA website at the following address: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

**STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM**

This form should be used by applicants or students who wish to pursue a formal complaint through LSTM’s Procedure for Dealing with Student Complaints.

|  |
| --- |
| **Name (in capital letters):** |
| **Student ID Number (if applicable):**  |
| **Male/Female** |  |
| **Contact Address:** | **Proposed Programme of Study/ Programme of Study:** |
| **Email Address:** |
| **Contact Telephone Number:** |
| **Please outline below the substance of your complaint:****(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)** |
| **Please describe how you have pursued your complaint to date and how you envisage your complaint might be resolved:** |

Signature: ..................................................... Date: .............................

*Applicants should email completed forms to* *myLSTM@lstmed.ac.uk* *for the attention of the Admissions and Recruitment Manager.*

*Registered Students should email completed forms to* *studentsupport@lstmed.ac.uk* *for the attention of the Academic Registrar.*