

## **Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy**

<b>Responsibility for Policy:</b>	Registrar and Chief Operating Officer
<b>Relevant to:</b>	All LJMU staff involved in admissions and Academic Partnerships
<b>Approved by:</b>	Recruitment Policy Panel on 24 June 2014
<b>Responsibility for Document Review:</b>	Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions.
<b>Date introduced:</b>	30 June 2014
<b>Date(s) modified:</b>	November 2016, November 2019
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	October 2021

### **RELEVANT DOCUMENTS**

- Competition and Markets Authority: Higher education: consumer law advice for providers
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B2 Recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education)
- Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Applicant complaints and appeals

### **RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS**

- Admissions Policy
- Admissions Code of Practice

# Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy

## 1. General Principles

- 1.1. Liverpool John Moores University is committed to the provision of consistent, fair and professional practice in order to safeguard applicants' interests.
- 1.2. Whilst LJMU is unable to offer a place to every applicant that applies, feedback will be provided to all unsuccessful applicants
- 1.3. The submission of a complaint or appeal will not prejudice the applicant, or be used to adversely affect any current or future applications.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. The Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy applies to all modes of study (full-time, part-time and distance learning) and at all levels (foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate and research) for both home and international applicants.

## 3. Definition

LJMU utilises the following definitions to distinguish between an appeal and a complaint.

- 3.1. An **appeal** is a request for a review of an admissions decision or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer.
- 3.2. A **complaint** is a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policy.

## 4. Grounds for consideration

- 4.1. Disagreement with pre-determined entry requirements or matters of academic judgement do not constitute grounds for appeal; for example the academic decision made at an interview or audition.
- 4.2. No appeal or complaint can be made using new information presented post application. This includes new qualifications or other entry requirements on the course factfile.

- 4.3. An applicant wishing to make an appeal or complaint must complete the online form (<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/forms/appeals>) within 10 working days of being notified of the decision.
- 4.4. For undergraduate full-time programmes an appeal or complaint will not be accepted once an applicant has chosen their Firm UCAS or UCAS Teacher Training place.
- 4.5. This policy is applicable to new applicants and applicants progressing from one LJMU programme to another where a formal application process has taken place.

## **5. Representation**

- 5.1. In line with the 1998 Data Protection Act, complaints and appeals must be made by the applicant rather than a parent, teacher or other advisor. Unless the applicant has formally nominated a third party via UCAS or directly to LJMU, details will only be discussed with the applicant concerned.
- 5.2. Applicants can nominate individuals to discuss their concerns or to attend a meeting with the applicant and LJMU but this must be done formally via UCAS or by email to the LJMU member of staff looking after the complaint or appeal.
- 5.3. Anonymous complaints or appeals will not be accepted.

## **6. Procedure**

- 6.1. Using the Applicant Complaints and Appeals web form (<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/forms/appeals>) the applicant must first determine if they wish to submit a complaint or an appeal.
- 6.2. The applicant must input their name and application number for the appeal or complaint to be processed.
- 6.3. The rationale behind the complaint or appeal must be fully outlined on the form. Any supporting information can be provided to the individual dealing with the complaint or appeal once the form has been completed.

## **7. Appeals**

### **7.1. The informal review phase**

- 7.1.1. The appeal will be dealt with by the Admissions Lead from the relevant Faculty. If the Admissions Lead was personally involved in the decision

the informal review will be handled by their line manager. For International applications this will be dealt with by the Head of Admissions.

7.1.2. The applicant will receive a response within seven working days. If further information is required and a full response will take longer than the normal response time the applicant will be contacted within seven days and informed of the timescale by the individual managing the appeal.

7.1.3. Where possible, the appeal will be resolved and a response sent to the applicant. If the response is not to the applicant's satisfaction they can appeal within seven working days and the appeal will be referred to the formal review phase

## **7.2. The formal review phase**

7.2.1. The appeal will be referred to the Head of Admissions who will conduct a formal review of the information and evidence provided in the informal review phase and where appropriate liaise with the applicant for further information or clarification. For International Admissions this will be dealt with by the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (SR&A), for Postgraduate Research Admissions this will be dealt with by the Postgraduate Registrar.

7.2.2. An initial response will be made within seven working days. If more time is required to investigate the appeal the applicant will be informed of the timescale by the Head of Admissions/ Director of SR&A within seven working days.

7.2.3. The outcome of the formal review is final.

## **8. Complaints**

### **8.1. The informal review phase**

8.1.1. The complaint will be dealt with by the Admissions Lead from the relevant Faculty. If the Admissions Lead was personally involved in the decision the informal review will be handled by their line manager. For International applications this will be dealt with by the Head of Admissions.

8.1.2. The applicant will receive a response within seven working days. If further information is required and a full response will take longer than

the normal response time the applicant will be contacted within seven days and informed of the timescale by the individual managing the complaint.

- 8.1.3. Where possible, the complaint will be resolved and a response sent to the applicant. If the response is not to the applicant's satisfaction they can appeal within seven working days and the complaint will be referred to the formal review phase.

## **8.2. The formal review phase**

8.2.1. The complaint will be referred to the Head of Admissions who will conduct a formal review of the information and evidence provided in the informal review phase and, where appropriate, liaise with the applicant for further information or clarification. For International Admissions this will be dealt with by the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, for Postgraduate Research Admissions this will be dealt with by the Postgraduate Registrar.

8.2.2. An initial response will be made within seven working days. If time is required to investigate the complaint the applicant will be informed of the timescale by the Head of Admissions/Director of SR&A within seven working days.

8.2.3. The outcome of the formal review is final.

## **9. Outcomes**

9.1. The outcome of the complaint or appeal will be communicated to the applicant along with a full explanation of the reasons for the decision and where appropriate any further action to be taken.

9.2. If the outcome is in favour of the applicant (at either the informal or formal stage) every effort will be made to resolve the issue for the applicant.

## **10. Storage of information relating to Appeals and Complaints**

10.1. By submitting an appeal or complaint via the online form the applicant is agreeing that LJMU can use the information provided to fully investigate the appeal or complaint with relevant members of staff.

10.2. The University will carry out an annual review of all complaints and appeals to help improve the admissions process for future applicants. No personal data will be used in this analysis.

## 11. Contacts

Further information about these procedures can be requested

from:

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