

## Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure

<b>Responsible for Policy</b>	Admissions Manager
<b>Relevant to</b>	All Staff, All Prospective Students and Student Applicants
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Leadership Team Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee
<b>Date Approved/Last Approval</b>	February 2026
<b>Next review date</b>	July 2026
<b>Relevant Documents</b>	
QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Principal 9 UCAS Admissions Good Practice	
<b>Related Policies and Documents</b>	
LIPA Admissions Policy LIPA Criminal Convictions Policy LIPA Complaints Procedure for Members of the Public LIPA Student Complaints Procedure	

## 1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. LIPA is committed to offering a high-quality admissions service, which is fair, efficient and transparent. We recognise, however, that there may be times when an applicant considers that LIPA has not met the high standards it sets itself. This document outlines LIPA's procedure for any applicant who has a concern about the way in which their application has been handled or how a decision has been made on their application.
- 1.2. This procedure applies to all applicants to LIPA's Higher Education programmes as detailed on our website at [www.lipa.ac.uk](http://www.lipa.ac.uk). It is relevant to applicants applying for entry to our CertHE, degree and postgraduate courses, where the admissions criteria and selection procedures are the sole responsibility of LIPA.
- 1.3. This procedure does not cover:
  - Complaints relating to agencies or service providers external to LIPA;
  - Appeals against decisions made under LIPA's Criminal Convictions Policy (which has its own appeal mechanism);
  - Complaints from current or former students, who can raise concerns via the Student Complaints Procedure or any complaint mechanism that forms part of that procedure;
  - Appeals from existing or former students, who can use the appeal process most relevant to their area of concern;
  - Complaints from members of the public, who can use the Complaints Procedure for Members of the Public.
- 1.4. Applicants who wish to complain about an Admissions Decision made under LIPA's Criminal Convictions Policy may submit a complaint under this procedure. However, this Procedure should not be used when an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made under the Criminal Convictions Policy, since that Policy has its own appeals mechanism.
- 1.5. Admissions complaints and appeals cannot be made on the basis of a disagreement with an academic or professional judgement. In other words, complaints and appeals made solely on the basis that the applicant disagrees with the decision an expert has made based on their professional knowledge, will not be accepted.
- 1.6. LIPA aims to resolve complaints by following the procedures detailed in this document, although these may be adapted if necessary to enable the fair and efficient resolution of a particular complaint or appeal.

## 2. **General Principles**

- 2.1. We are committed to operating a high-quality admissions service, which is fair, efficient and transparent.
- 2.2. We aim to handle complaints and appeals in a way that:
  - encourages informal resolution;

- is fair and efficient;
- is sensitive to, and understanding of, the concerns of applicants;
- is confidential, involving only those who need to be part of the resolution process.

2.3. Most Admissions Complaints and Appeals are resolved amicably and informally, without the need to use the formal procedures.

2.4. Admissions Complaints and Appeals are handled separately from an application for admission. An Admissions Appeal or Complaint made in good faith will not prejudice current or future applications.

2.5. An Admissions Complaint or Appeal can be made by an individual who has made an application for entry onto a programme of study at LIPA, providing no longer than **3 months** has passed since they have received a decision on their application.

2.5.1. Occasionally there may be a good reason for someone to submit an Admissions Complaint or Appeal more than 3 months after they have received a decision on their application. Requests to consider an appeal or complaint out of time will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will normally require evidence to support the reason(s) that the matter has not been raised sooner.

2.6. Admissions Complaints or Appeals will not normally be accepted from third parties acting on behalf of an applicant, except in exceptional cases where this is necessary as a reasonable adjustment for disability, and where evidence of the necessity is provided.

2.7. The Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure cannot be used where an admission decision has resulted from a failure on the applicant's part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission (for example, a satisfactory DBS check or medical report).

2.8. Whilst LIPA aims to respond to matters within the timescales outlined in this procedure, there may be occasions when this is not possible, for example where the issues raised are complex or due to any LIPA closure period. Where this is the case, the applicant will be kept informed regarding the delay.

### **3. Complaint or Appeal?**

#### Complaints

3.1. For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is a means of registering a specific concern or expression of dissatisfaction about:

- LIPA's Admissions Policies and Procedures and the way in which they have been applied or not applied in reaching a selection decision on an admissions application; And/or
- An action or lack of action by LIPA and/or its staff in relation to the Admissions process.

- 3.2. A complaint will not directly result in the amendment of an admissions decision. However, if a complaint was upheld, this could result in a referral to the Appeals strand of this procedure, if appropriate.

#### Appeals

- 3.3. For the purposes of this procedure, an appeal is a request by an applicant for a formal review of an admissions decision, or of the wording, terms or conditions of an offer.
- 3.4. Applicants may appeal on the basis that:
  - They believe their application has not been considered in accordance with the LIPA Admissions Policy and related procedures and can explain why;
  - They have reason to believe that LIPA has not taken account of all the information provided in their application and can explain why.
- 3.5. Appeals against an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of LIPA staff about an applicant's suitability for entry onto a particular course are not permitted.

### **4. Stage 1 – Informal Complaints and Appeals**

- 4.1. Most concerns can be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis. If an applicant is unhappy with a decision made about their application, or the way in which their application has been handled, they should contact the Admissions Team in the first instance to discuss their issue(s).
- 4.2. Applicants should raise any concerns with the Admissions Team within **20 working days** of the event(s) giving rise to the concern(s) or, in the case of concerns about an admissions decision, within **20 working days** of being notified of the decision.
- 4.3. A Stage 1 Informal Appeal or Complaint will be considered by a member of the Admissions Team. You may be asked to provide further information or evidence. Outcomes of an informal Admissions Appeal or Complaint might include (but are not limited to) the provision of further information, explanations, suggested solutions and/or the receipt of an apology if this is appropriate.
- 4.4. Applicants should normally expect to receive a response to their concern(s) or complaint within **20 working days** of raising the matter(s), although these will be progressed as soon as possible.
- 4.5. Once the matter is considered to be resolved, a member of the Admissions Team has determined that no informal resolution is possible, or an issue raised is considered to be too serious or complex to resolve informally, the applicant will be issued with an email and/or electronic letter confirming the outcome of the Stage 1 Informal Complaint or Appeal, and detailing their right to submit a Stage 2 Formal Complaint or Appeal.

### **5. Stage 2 – Formal Complaints and Appeals**

- 5.1. Where an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of their Stage 1 Informal Complaint or Appeal, they may submit a Formal Complaint or Appeal using the Admissions Appeals and Complaint form. Stage 2 Formal Admissions Complaints or Appeals will only be considered where it is not possible to resolve the matter informally with the Admissions Team via the Stage 1 procedure.
- 5.2. Applicants should raise any Stage 2 Formal Complaint or Appeal within **20 working days** of the date they have been formally notified of the outcome of their Stage 1 Informal Complaint.
- 5.3. In making a Stage 2 Formal Complaint or Appeal, an applicant must provide as much information as possible regarding their concerns and should include information about:
  - Details of any steps they have already taken to resolve the matter, if applicable;
  - Details of any response received regarding the concerns to-date;
  - A statement explaining why any response received regarding the complaint to-date has been unsatisfactory, and/or why it has not been possible to resolve the concerns via the Stage 1 Informal procedure;
  - What outcome the applicant is seeking.
- 5.4. Stage 2 Formal Admissions Complaints and Appeals will be investigated and considered by the Admissions Manager, or their nominee, who will seek information from the relevant School and staff at LIPA. The applicant may also be asked to provide further information and/or evidence.
- 5.5. Where the Admissions Manager has already provided a response at the Informal Stage, an alternative member of staff without previous involvement in the case will be appointed to consider the case.
- 5.6. Applicants should normally expect to receive a response to their Admissions Complaint or Appeal within **20 working days** of submitting it. The decision will be issued by electronic letter, detailing the reasoning for the decision and any remedy offered, where appropriate.
- 5.7. There may be occasions when a complaint or appeal is upheld but the outcome is not the desired outcome expressed by the student and/or LIPA is nevertheless not satisfied that the applicant is suitable for admission to the programme.

#### Stage 2 Formal Complaints

- 5.8. The Admissions Manager (or nominee) will create an Admissions Complaint Report. This may take the form of a simple summary, to be considered in conjunction with the complaint and any other relevant documents, or a more-detailed report, depending on the nature of the case.
- 5.9. The Admissions Manager will determine whether the complaint should be upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld, and will determine the remedy, where appropriate.
- 5.10. If a complaint is upheld, possible remedies include, but are not limited to:

- An apology;
- A revision or review of LIPA processes or a commitment to review;
- A referral to the Admissions Appeal process (if it is considered that the applicant has been disadvantaged).

#### Stage 1 Formal Appeals

5.11. In addition to the information outlined in point 5.3 above, applicants making a Stage 2 Formal Appeal must also explain:

- Why they consider that their application has not been considered in accordance with LIPA's Admissions Procedure, and/or
- Why they believe that all the information they provided as part of their application has not been considered.

5.12. The Admissions Manager will review the application and decision-making information with the relevant School to determine whether the application has been considered in accordance with procedure and whether all information the applicant provided has been considered. This will be captured in an Admission Appeal Report, which may take the form of a simple summary, to be considered in conjunction with the complaint and any other relevant documents, or a more-detailed report, depending on the nature of the case.

5.13. If your appeal is upheld, possible remedies include, but are not limited to:

- An apology;
- A fresh audition, without prejudice, either in the current round (if possible) or in a subsequent year;
- A conditional offer of a place;
- An unconditional offer of a place.

## **6. Stage 3 – Request for Review**

6.1. An applicant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of their Stage 2 Formal Complaint or Appeal may request a review of the decision on the basis of one or both of the following:

- They consider the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure has not been followed correctly;
- There is new evidence available which may alter the decision made at Stage 2 of this procedure and there is good reason this was not available at an earlier point;
- They can demonstrate that the decision made at Stage 2 of this procedure was wholly unreasonable based on the evidence available.

6.2. Applicants cannot request a review on the basis that they simply disagree with the decision made at Stage 2 of this procedure, and disagreeing with the decision does not make it 'wholly unreasonable'.

6.3. If an applicant wishes to submit a Request for Review under this procedure, they must complete an Admissions Appeal and Complaint Review Request form, available from

the Admissions Manager, **within 10 calendar days** of receiving the outcome of their Stage 2 Formal Appeal or Complaint.

- 6.4. A Request for Review will be considered by the Director of Students, or their nominee, whose decision on the matter is final.
- 6.5. Possible outcomes of a Request for review include, but are not limited to:
  - Further consideration by the relevant School regarding the application in light of new information and/or evidence;
  - An apology;
  - Dismissal of the Request.
- 6.6. Applicants can expect to receive a decision on their Request for Review within **20 working days** of submitting it in writing. The reasons for the decision will be explained.

## **7. Record-keeping and Confidentiality**

- 7.1. Details of Applicant Complaints and Appeals, and any accompanying evidence, will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with staff where this necessary to enable investigation and/or implement any remedy. A person, people, Head of School or Professional Service to which a complaint or appeal relates, is/are entitled to be made aware of any details that relate to them, and to provide a response. All information will be shared in confidence, in line with General Data Protection Regulations.
- 7.2. Applicants should not include any sensitive or personal information in their Admissions Complaint or Appeal, unless it is relevant to their case. If the complaint or appeal contains any personal information relating to a person other than the applicant (for example, medical evidence relating to a family member), it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have that person's consent to disclose that information.
- 7.3. If a member of staff is the subject of a complaint, the matter may be referred to the Human Resources team for consideration. The letter detailing the outcome of such a complaint will not normally include full details of any Human Resources process in relation to the staff member.
- 7.4. Complaint, appeal and investigation findings are stored confidentially, and will be retained in line with LIPA's data retention schedule, and for a minimum of 12 months after the final outcome of the matter.
- 7.5. All Formal Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure, and any action taken in response, is monitored by the Admissions Team.

## **8. External Advice**

- 8.1. Once an applicant has exhausted Stage 3 of this procedure, there are no further internal mechanisms for an admissions appeal or complaint to be considered. Applicants are advised that the remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for

Higher Education (the ombudsman for student complaints in Higher Education) does not include complaints or appeals about admissions. However, applicants may wish to seek further advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau.