



Union School of Theology Code of Conduct

Approved by UST Academic Board 17-01-2018

Policy review date – January 2020

Introduction

Union School of Theology (UST) is a theological training institution in the Evangelical and Reformed theological tradition. It is committed to providing a community that integrates academic excellence with spiritual formation, preparing students for future Christian ministry. It operates on the learning-community principle, whether on its Bridgend Campus, or in its Learning Communities. Such community is founded on the biblical principle of love, respect, and service to one another. Effective learning thrives on a partnership between the School and its students. Staff and students commit to work and worship together, and uphold the School's regulations. The following guidelines are intended to create an environment which enables you and all other students to be successful in welcoming, safe and friendly surroundings. It is expected that all members of the UST community's behaviour will reflect these concepts and to live in a manner that pleases God. Local churches and placement providers are also part of the larger School community and the values of Union should be reflected by UST students when there.

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1. Overall Expectations

UST expects all members of the UST Community to –

- a. Act justly, fairly and honourably as an expression of their Christian commitment and to the work and values of UST;
- b. Commit to work wholeheartedly in all aspects of life at UST, including its academic, pastoral and social dimensions;
- c. Play a full role in the creation and maintenance of a supportive community in which everyone can self-manage their learning and teaching and value the contribution each individual makes;
- d. Attend all scheduled learning activities and other UST activities where attendance is expected;
- e. Support, embrace, and promote the values set out in this Code of Conduct

UST students are also encouraged to attend social events which may from time to time be arranged by UST or its student body on campus or in its Learning Communities.

2. Purpose and scope

2.1 UST is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which learning can take place unimpeded by the behaviour of others that falls below expected Christian standards. It seeks to ensure that its interests, reputation, staff, students and visitors are protected from any form of unsatisfactory conduct.

2.2 The Code applies to all students of the School from the moment of enrolment and throughout their period of study.

2.3 The Code sets standards of conduct in relation to all activities engaged in and all services or facilities enjoyed by students anywhere within UST and its Learning Communities, and all activities of students wherever they take place in connection with their studies at UST.

2.4 It is a condition of study at UST that each student agrees to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the Code throughout the period of their studies.

2.5 The application of the Code is without prejudice to the application of other specific policies or rules. Where such specific policies or rules exist they are in addition to and supplementary of the Code and action may be taken under one or both procedures either consecutively or concurrently. In the event of a conflict, the higher standard is the one to which the student shall be subject.

2.6 Any breach of the Code may lead to the invoking of the relevant disciplinary procedure and appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may lead, in the case of serious or repeated breaches, to expulsion from the School, or, if appropriate, in contacting the police.

2.7 The procedure for dealing with alleged breaches of the Code are set out below in Sections 7 and 9.

3. Major Disciplinary offences

In keeping this Code of Conduct students are expected to follow the following general rules and conduct themselves at all times in a manner which is fitting with the School's aims as set out in section 1 above. Acts considered Major Disciplinary offences will be dealt with under the Major offences procedure below. Major Disciplinary offences include:

- a. Conduct that does, or is liable to cause, **violence to a person or damage to property**. Please note that while exercising freedom of speech or academic freedom, no-one is permitted to commit or promote acts of violence or terrorism (see [UST Prevent Policy](#)).
- b. **Bribery, theft, fraud or misapplication** in connection with funds or property of any kind in UST.
- c. **False pretences or impersonation of others**, within or without the School, in connection with academic attainments or financial awards (full details are given in the UST '[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)').
- d. All forms of **bullying and harassment, including sexual and racial harassment**, in all UST locations, and situations where students are participating in formal UST activities or are representing UST, or are present at events, social or otherwise, organised in association with UST. If such an offence has been alleged, please see the UST '[Harassment Policy](#)' for added information.
- e. **Victimisation or retaliation** against a student or staff member or employee who has, in good faith, made, supported or assisted in the making of a complaint – even if the complaint is not upheld – provided the action was taken in good faith.

- f. **Behaving in an indecent, disorderly, threatening, anti-social or offensive manner, using offensive language or spitting;**
- g. **Deliberate damage of UST property, or wilful interference with any mechanical, electrical or other services or installations within the UST;**
- h. **Majorly interfering with, or unreasonably impeding the work of the School,** such as obstructing, frustrating or disrupting any lecture, class or other instruction, or any examinations, or any meeting or other function (including social or sporting activities) authorised to take place within UST; or obstructing, frustrating or disrupting the conduct of the administrative work of UST or its public or official functions, activities or legal duties
- i. **Refusal or failure to pay a fee, fine or comply with any penalty** (subject to any right of appeal applicable) imposed by the School (full details are given in the [UST Student Contract](#)).
- j. **Misuse of e-mail, social media, computer facilities, or any aspects of UST's communications networks** ([see UST Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy](#)).
- k. **Actions that contravene the [UST Equal Opportunities Policy](#).** UST believes that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience;
- l. **Dishonesty** in relation to dealings with UST, its staff members, visitors and associates and other students.
- m. Using or knowingly being in **possession of a prohibited item** within the precincts of UST (or whilst taking part in any UST activity) including:
 - (i) any illegal drug as defined in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Regulations promulgated thereunder of any legislation for the time being in force modifying or replacing that Act;
 - (ii) any 'weapon', defined as being 'any article made or adapted for use to causing injury to the person or intended by the person having it with him for such use';
 - (iii) any 'stolen' items.
- n. Students should note that the law provides the Provost and staff authorised by them with the statutory power to search students or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student have any of the above prohibited items.
- o. Performing **any actions which may be injurious to the health, safety and welfare** of any person.
- p. **Being under the influence of drink or of illegal drugs** while at the UST campus, its offices, or in a Learning Community.

- q. **Forgery, falsification or misuse of UST's name** or of any UST record or document, or knowingly making any false statement or being party to impersonation in relation to any academic examination or assessment or UST administrative function service.
- r. **Being convicted of a criminal offence** by a court or **being charged or cautioned** for a criminal offence by a police officer;
- s. **Gambling** on School premises.
- t. **Aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring other in infringing any rules of the School**, whether contained within this Code or otherwise, and failing to comply with any sanction previously imposed for a breach of this Code;
- u. Making or distributing photographic, video or audio recordings of members of staff, students or visitors of the School without their permission;
- v. **Refusing to make any payment**, or comply with any direction or restriction (subject to any right of appeal applicable) imposed by the Librarian in respect of the use of Library facilities

4. Staff Gross Misconduct

Staff Gross Misconduct includes all major offences outlined above, and issues such as

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- a. **Forgery or falsification** of records
- b. **Physical assault**
- c. Being **under the influence of drink or of illegal drugs** while at work
- d. **Gross negligence**
- e. **Bribery or Fraudulent** recording of time worked
- f. **Wilful absence from duty**
- g. **Misuse of the internet, e-mail or mobile telephone**
- h. Sexual or racial **harassment**
- i. Explicit and publicly expressed dissent from the UST's Statement of Faith
- j. **Serious breach** of the School rules including those that relate to Health and Safety (or any associated rules of the School)
- k. **Failure to report a criminal conviction** or pending prosecution

Full details of what constitutes Staff Gross Misconduct, and the procedures for dealing with these and other issues of minor misconduct, are set out in the UST Staff Handbook.

5. Minor Offences or mild infringements

In keeping this Code of Conduct students are expected to follow the following general rules and conduct themselves at all times in a manner which is fitting with the School's

aims as set out in section 1 above. Failure to do may cause minor offence to UST and its members, and where it does so will be dealt with under the minor offences procedure.

Students are expected to –

- i. familiarise themselves with and comply with UST’s health and safety rules, particularly insofar as they relate to activities undertaken by that student;
- ii. familiarise themselves with and comply with UST’s fire notification and evacuation procedures, particularly in areas regularly visited by that student;
- iii. drive courteously and carefully whilst on UST premises, including in car parks;
- iv. maintain high standards of academic integrity as set by their lecturers;
- v. arrive at teaching sessions in good time;
- vi. prepare classwork in advance in a timely manner;
- vii. keep mobile telephones, pagers and other audible electronic equipment turned off whilst in teaching buildings;
- viii. refrain from taking food or drink (other than water) into teaching rooms;
- ix. Students should exercise sensitivity to the views of others on the question of alcohol. Therefore student common areas should normally be considered alcohol-free areas. Alcohol may be made available at public events held on campus if permission is obtained in advance from the Executive Director and non-alcoholic alternatives are also available.
- x. dress in a manner appropriate to the vocation for which they are studying;
- xi. refrain from bringing animals on UST premises, with the exception of dogs trained to support disability;
- xii. refrain from smoking on UST premises;
- xiii. avoid causing any nuisance by the use of mobile telephones, personal radios or music players (including in-car equipment);
- xiv. to keep safe and not share personal medication
- xv. comply with the reasonable instruction of any member of the School staff;
- xvi. dispose of litter appropriately.
- xvii. exercise politeness and courtesy to all staff, other students and visitors;
- xviii. respect and take reasonable care in relation to the property of UST, its staff, students or visitors, including that which has been borrowed;

6. STUDENT AND STAFF CONFLICT RESOLUTION & MINOR OFFENCES: POLICY

6.1 Whilst UST will not investigate any grievance which it considers to be frivolous or vexatious, dissension between members of the community, whether staff or students, will always be given due attention when all attempts at mutual conciliation have failed between the aggrieved parties.

6.2 UST aims to respond to all issues confidentially, fairly, promptly and in a sensitive way. UST will do so in accordance with documents such as [UST's Complaints Policy](#); and its [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) and [Policy on Harassment](#) and with due regard to data protection issues.

6.3 Staff called to mediate or investigate alleged unacceptable behaviour aim to facilitate resolution and offer constructive solutions. All mediators, facilitators and investigators will act in the best interests both of any and every student concerned and of every other member of the UST community.

6.4 No-one will be disadvantaged by raising a complaint, dispute or grievance.

6.5 The complaint may be withdrawn without prejudice at any time during the process.

6.6 Complaints involving more than one issue may, in some cases, require the resolution of one issue before dealing with another. This may necessitate having a discussion with all parties regarding the best way to resolve the whole situation satisfactorily.

6.7 Since any process of conciliation and mediation will, by its very nature, usually take some time to resolve, no timescales have been put on this process.

6.8 In bringing the issue to the attention of UST both parties are agreeing to accept the solution proposed by the UST mediators.

7. STUDENT AND STAFF CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE & STUDENT MINOR OFFENCES PROCEDURE

This procedure is for minor offences which would not normally necessitate following the [Complaints Grievance Procedure](#).

Procedure for Personal Conflict Resolution

7.1 It is expected that minor personal conflicts and mild offences by students will be dealt with informally within the tutor system and that staff will usually be able to resolve conflicts between themselves. Minor offences committed by a member of staff will be dealt with by their line manager.

7.2 There is no universal formula to fit all such occasions, but generally we would expect both parties to follow biblical guidelines by behaving as follows:

7.2.1 The aggrieved student/staff member(s) should stop and think carefully about the situation and their response.

7.2.2 Those concerned should seek to resolve the issue between themselves, without spreading information to third parties, and not take the issue further until an attempt has been made to find a mutually acceptable solution.

Where minor action has been committed that has been accepted to have caused concern or offence, the offender should welcome this being pointed out to them, desist from the action, and offer an apology for their behaviour or action.

7.2.3 The exception would be in a case of perceived harassment, (see the UST '[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)' and '[Policy on Harassment](#)' for definitions of what constitutes harassment). In this case a person may feel, quite reasonably, that they do not feel able to confront the person(s) concerned. They may instead initially approach a member of staff e.g. the Personal Tutor. However, since harassment is considered to be a major breach of the UST Code of Conduct, it should be dealt with as a disciplinary procedure (see below).

7.3 If, despite their best endeavours, the parties are unable to resolve their conflict or they feel the minor offence has not been adequately dealt with, they should:

7.3.1 In the case of a minor conflict between students or where a member of staff has an issue with a student: consult one or both of the student(s)' personal tutors to mediate.

7.3.2 In the case where a student has a grievance with a member of staff: consult the student's personal tutor and/or the staff member's line manager to mediate.

7.3.3 The consulted person should be independent of the circumstances which gave rise to the grievance. If there is a conflict of interest, the Programme Leader of the student or the Line Manager of the member of staff or, if inappropriate, the Provost should be called upon to select a mediator who would be acceptable to both parties.

Mediation

7.4 The chosen mediator will seek to facilitate a resolution by taking the appropriate actions to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

7.5 Resolving the conflict may include:

7.5.1 inviting a third party or parties, either as witnesses or for support for those involved, or to assist in mediation.

7.5.2 appointing a mutually acceptable facilitator for formal resolution procedures, which will be set up as sensitively and confidentially as possible.

Procedure for Minor Offences

7.6 If the grievance involves a student's minor infringement of this Code of Conduct, i.e. an action which could cause minor offence to the UST and its members, the mediator will:

7.6.1 **Either** arrange an informal meeting with themselves, the student and any others concerned in the alleged misdemeanour to consider the evidence before bringing the matter to a conclusion.

7.6.2 **Or** suggest that the case should be considered by the Programme Leader of the Programme on which the student is studying, who will arrange an informal meeting with themselves, the student and any others concerned in the alleged misdemeanour to consider the evidence before bringing the matter to a conclusion.

7.7 The primary aim of such an investigation would be corrective rather than punitive. The object would be to help the individual whose performance and/or conduct has failed to reach the required standards, to make the necessary improvement and where appropriate, to bring about appropriate restitution.

7.8 In the event of a reasonable suspicion arising that a student has committed a minor offence the tutor will ensure that credible evidence exists for any decisions reached.

7.9 However, if the conflict involves an accusation of a larger breach of the School's Code of Conduct, the mediator may, in consultation with the Programme Leader, suggest that the matter should be dealt with by the appropriate formal disciplinary procedure.

8. STUDENT DISCIPLINARY POLICY FOR MAJOR OFFENCES

8.1 UST hopes that all students will enjoy their studying and the community life at UST and will observe the rules and standards which have been set. However, in the event of a student failing to fulfil its policies, standards of performance or rules of conduct, the following principles and procedures will be adopted by the School. These principles are in addition to the [Student Contract](#), and those outlined in the Conflict Resolution policy principles above

8.2 These principles and procedures are designed to clarify the rights and responsibility of UST and students in respect of disciplinary action.

8.3 The student disciplinary procedure applies to all students of UST.

8.4 The primary aim is corrective rather than punitive. The object is to help the individual whose performance and/or conduct has failed to reach the required standards, to make the necessary improvement.

8.5 UST also aims to combine consistency in the overall procedure with justice for the individual.

8.6 All parties to an investigation will be offered support by UST Personal Tutors. Students may also choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a

supportive friend. This friend must be someone independent of the circumstances that gave rise to the meeting and not the person offering them pastoral support through the process.

8.7 Any person or body appointed by the Provost to take decisions in line with this Policy shall seek to act in the best interests both of any and every student concerned and of every other member of the UST Community and society in general, especially where offences committed may have legal implications.

8.8 In particular, where an issue arises in line with this Policy, the decision-maker may decide to adjourn for the time being any disciplinary proceedings, if the decision-maker considers that concern and support are more in the student or member of staff's best interests than continuing such proceedings.

8.9 In such cases, the relevant decision-makers may impose such conditions or requirements as are appropriate in the circumstances.

8.10 Where a student fails or refuses either to accept any supports offered or to comply with any conditions or requirements imposed, then:

- a. where the proceedings have been adjourned for one year or less, the relevant decisionmakers shall decide whether or not to recommence the adjourned proceedings or to commence new proceedings pursuant to this Policy, and
- b. where the proceedings have been adjourned for longer than a year, the relevant decision-makers shall not have the option to recommence any such adjourned proceedings, and may only decide whether or not to commence new proceedings pursuant to this Policy.

8.11 This is an evidence-based process, so in the event of a reasonable suspicion arising that an offence has been committed, it will be the responsibility of the Provost to ensure that credible evidence exists for any decisions reached.

8.12 Evidence may be in any form usually admissible in a court of law, including the testimony of any witnesses, the statements of the student, documentary or other tangible evidence such as visual or auditory records or material evidence such as physical items.

8.13 Social networking and other websites or similar media may be referred to by the panel when investigating offences under this Policy.

8.14 This disciplinary process will be progressed in a timely manner and all stages of the investigation will be completed in no longer than 90 days unless unavoidably

delayed. In the case of delays at any stage during the process, all parties will be informed of the reason for the delay and the new timetable.

8.15 Serious issues may be referred to the Chair of the Board of Trustees if the Provost or President is a party to the issue.

8.16 Serious issues may necessitate taking legal advice or involve the police (for example in cases of sexual violence (see the UST '[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)') and where there is a concern relating to other extreme violence or potential or actual terrorism, i.e. offences that could put others at risk, (see section 3.a above). See UST's [Prevent Policy](#).

8.17 An investigation into a claim of sexual harassment will be conducted wherever possible by a worker of the same sex as the complainant and confidentiality maintained.

8.18 Any malicious complaints may result in action against the complainant.

9 STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR MAJOR OFFENCES

These procedures will be used if an accusation of misconduct is made against a student regardless of the origination of the complaint.

Initial Enquiry (to determine the seriousness of the offence)

9.1 It shall be for the personal tutor of the accused student to decide whether there is a case to answer. They may consult the Provost if unsure.

9.2 Normally the Provost shall formally interview the student as soon as is practicable when an alleged disciplinary offence is brought to his/her attention. He/she will carry out a preliminary investigation by speaking or writing to the student setting out the charge and if possible indicating whether the offence is minor or major. The student will be given the opportunity to refute any charges and/or explain their behaviour.

9.3 It shall be for the Provost to decide whether an offence is serious, but he or she shall have regard to factors such as the potential for criminal or professional misconduct proceedings arising out of the offence, the impact of the offence on others, the disruption of the normal functioning of the UST and/or its facilities and/or members and the UST's reputation as a model of Christian moral values and behaviour.

Informal Disciplinary Procedure - Optional

9.4 If the decision-makers rule it to be appropriate and the student consents, all minor and in some cases major infringements, may be dealt with summarily by the Provost without recourse to the procedure set out below. Major offences which could result in the termination of a student's registration would normally be dealt with according to the full disciplinary procedure below.

9.5 A record shall be kept of the meeting, decisions made and any actions taken with rationales.

Formal Disciplinary Procedure

9.6 In the event of a reasonable suspicion arising that a student has committed a major offence under this Policy or the student elects to have the complaint against them investigated by a full disciplinary procedure, a Panel of Enquiry will be set up.

9.7 The Chairperson of the Panel shall be the Provost, or a nominee of the Provost.

9.8 There shall be up to four further members, consisting so far as possible of a mix of members of the academic and support staff, and a mix of men and women.

9.9 The Panel shall conduct an investigation and make decisions in line with this Policy.

9.10 At this interview, and at all stages of the disciplinary process, students are entitled to representation by their personal tutor, a member of the Student Committee, or a supportive friend. The student or any such representative shall be given full opportunity to comment on the allegations made.

9.11 A careful record shall be kept of the meeting's proceedings, those in attendance, decisions made and any actions taken with rationales.

Guilty Plea

9.12 A student wishing to do so may plead guilty to any charge, either in person before the Panel or by letter addressed to the Provost prior to the hearing.

9.13 In either case the student shall appear before the Panel, to answer questions and/or make submissions in relation to the matter of penalty, and to be informed of the Panel's decision.

Hearings

9.14 The panel shall call a Hearing.

9.15 At least five days in advance of any hearing, the Provost shall cause the following documents to be served on the student:

- a. a statement of the charges against the student,
- b. a list of witnesses whom the Provost proposes to call (if any),
- c. a written summary of the evidence that it is proposed should be given by each of them, and
- d. a list of exhibits (if any). The student shall have the right to inspect all exhibits.

9.16 Where witnesses are called, they may be examined, cross-examined and/or re-examined by the parties and by members of the Panel. The student shall have the right to address the Panel.

9.17 Following the testimony of any witnesses/the student's address the members of the Panel shall retire to consider their verdict in private, and then either return to immediately announce the Panel's decision or announce it at a later specified date.

9.18 The verdict will be given in writing and the student informed of any right of appeal.

10 SANCTIONS

10.1 The sanctions available to the Provost, or Executive Director or the Panel to impose on a student they have found to have committed a major offence shall include, but not be limited to:

- suspension,
- termination of registration,
- being deemed to be 'not in good standing' with UST.

10.2 The student may be required to pay compensation, make reparation and provide restitution.

10.3 Depending on the offence, the student may be reported to outside authorities such as a professional body, a government agency and/or the police.

10.4 **Suspension:** of a student may include any of the following:

- suspension of UST funding, e.g. bursary,
- suspension from UST
- other prohibition on the student either from entering or attending or being present at any part of UST, or from using specific services provided by UST, or from communicating with a specified member or specified members of the UST Community.

10.5 Students who are suspended from their studies must pay the validating university's deferral fees and they will not be allowed to return unless they produce a satisfactory reference from their sponsor or supporting body (such as a church) that it is considered appropriate for them to resume their studies.

10.6 **Termination of Registration:** will result in a permanent:

- exclusion from UST, or similar exclusion,
- termination of UST funding e.g. bursary,

- other prohibition on the student either from entering or attending or being present at any part of UST, or from using specific services provided by UST, or from communicating with a specified member or specified members of the UST Community.

10.7 A student may be deemed to be ‘not in good standing’ with the UST as a disciplinary sanction. A student who is not in good standing for disciplinary reasons cannot proceed to graduation and cannot be re-admitted to UST.

11 APPEALS: TO UST

How to complain about the way the investigation was conducted

11.1 Should the student feel that UST did not follow its own regulations correctly or treated them unfairly the student may complain using the [‘Complaints Policy for Non-academic Issues’](#) which sets out the step by step process which needs to be followed.

11.2 The [Formal Complaint form](#) and documentary evidence should be submitted within 14 calendar days of the student being notified of the verdict.

How to request a review of the decision

11.3 Students who wish to request a review of UST’s decision may only do so if they produce evidence that they were unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge before the UST made its decision.

11.4 To appeal/request a review a student must:

- Submit a signed and completed [Formal Review form](#) within 14 days of receiving the judgement. This form is attached as an appendix to this document and it can also be found in the Student Area/General UST Information on the UST Cloud VLE and on the website: www.ust.ac.uk.
- Explain on the form how or why the UST decision was unreasonable, beyond a simple disagreement with the outcome.
- Provide any additional supporting evidence with an explanation of why this was not submitted with the original complaint. Without a reasonable explanation, further evidence will not be accepted.

11.5 The appeal will be heard by someone who was not involved in the original investigation and will occur within 30 calendar days of receipt of the completed form and supporting evidence. The student will be informed in the event that there is going to be any unavoidable delay.

11.6 The student will be informed of the outcome of the appeal in writing, and with the reasons given. They will also be informed of any further appeal process which is still available to them.

Appeal to the Board

11.7 If the student feels they have been unfairly denied the right of appeal, they can appeal to the Board of Trustees on this issue of leave being denied on the basis of the principles of natural justice by the Provost.

11.8 The Chair of the Board has the right to see the hearing evidence before determining whether to permit their appeal to go ahead. If the student is given leave to appeal, an Appeals Committee will be formed, consisting of the President and at least one Board member appointed by the Chair of the Board, plus others deemed suitable by the Chair of the Board.

11.9 The Committee shall otherwise determine its own procedures, and perform its functions with due enquiry.

11.10 The Committee will meet within 14 calendar days of receiving the formal appeals form, together with all the paperwork regarding the appeal. The student will be kept informed of any unavoidable delays.

11.11 The Committee may make such decisions as it deems appropriate, having regard to the evidence before it.

11.12 The student will be informed of the outcome of the appeal in writing, and with the reasons given. They will also be informed of any further appeal process which is still available to them.

12 APPEALS: TO EXTERNAL BODIES

12.1 It will usually only be possible to appeal against the UST's final decision if the UST has either not followed its own procedures properly or it has not dealt with student complaints fairly.

12.2 The resolution of any complaint will include any options of appealing to another body either within the UST or externally. External options include appealing to either the Open University or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. However, none of these options are available to you until after you have first exhausted the UST's own complaints or appeals procedures.

12.3 It is important that any appeal is made as soon as possible. Appeals to the Open University, who is the validating authority for the UST's graduate and postgraduate programmes, must be made within three months of the outcome of the UST's internal procedures and within 12 months if the appeal is being made to the OIA.

12.4 The OIA was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide 'an independent student complaints scheme'. All Higher Education Institutions in England and Wales are required to comply with the scheme, which is free to students.

Complaints can be submitted to the OIA either before or after their appeal to the Open University if they are dissatisfied with the result of either the UST or the OU complaints or appeals processes. However, the OIA can only consider unresolved complaints from students after the UST's own complaints and appeals procedure has been concluded. Full details may be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.

12.5 To Appeal to the Open University a student must:

- a. Request a 'Completion of Procedures' letter from the UST within one month of the conclusion of the UST's internal processes if the complaint/appeal is upheld. If the complaint or appeal is not upheld the completion of procedures letter will be issued automatically within 28 days of the completion of the internal processes. This letter can be requested from the UST Academic Registrar.
- b. Appeal within 3 months of the receipt of the Completion of Procedures letter.
- c. Follow the Open University's own complaints procedures. This is attached as an appendix to this document, posted in the Open University and Quality Assurance Agency section of the student area on the UST VLE and on the UST website at www.ust.ac.uk. Alternatively students can contact the Open University directly by email: OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk, by phone: 01908 332840 or by post: The Director, Centre for Inclusion and collaborative Partnerships, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

12.6 To Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator a student must:

- a. Request a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' from the UST to submit with the appeal to the OIA. This must be requested within one month of the complaint or appeal being upheld. If the complaint or appeal is not upheld the completion of procedures letter will be issued automatically within 28 days of the completion of the internal processes. This letter can be requested from the UST Academic Registrar after the complaints procedure has been completed.
- b. Complete the OIA's own complaint form, which is available from www.oiahe.org.uk
- c. Submit the appeal to the OIA within twelve months of the date of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

13 STAFF DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

If an accusation of misconduct is made by a student against a member of staff or employee, it will be investigated using the UST **Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure** which is contained in the UST Staff Handbook.

14 RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND UPDATING

14.1 This document, as well as all other policy, procedure and guidance documents relating to students studying at UST, will be available to all, monitored regularly and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

14.2 The Provost and the Senior Management Team have overall responsibility for the UST Code of Conduct and procedure documents, including their approval and regular review.

14.3 They also have responsibility for overseeing the disciplinary process and ensuring that decision making complies with Open University regulations.

15 POLICY COMMUNICATION

15.1 This document can be found on the UST website and Union Cloud VLE.

15.2 Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

15.3 This Code of Conduct will be included in staff and student induction.