



# Union School of Theology Termination of a Student's Registration Policy and Procedures

Approved by Union School of Theology (UST) Academic Board 17-01-2018

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## **2. INTRODUCTION**

Union School of Theology reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student on academic grounds, disciplinary grounds, where the student is in debt to the School or the student is deemed to be unfit for study. A student must notify the School in writing if they wish to discontinue their studies and so discontinue their programme.

## **3. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:

- Union School of Theology [BA](#), [GDip](#), [MTh](#), PhD Research Programme Handbooks
- [Union School of Theology Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- [Union School of Theology Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Union School of Theology Code of Conduct](#)
- [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#)

#### **4. TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION ON DISCIPLINARY GROUNDS**

4.1. Union School of Theology is committed to function as a community whose members, both staff and student, live in harmony with one another, are happy to work within the School regulations and behave in a way that is generally considered to be acceptable. Any serious offence warranting termination of a student's registration is extremely rare.

4.2. Decisions relating to termination of registration for disciplinary reasons must be made in accordance with the School's '[Student Contract](#)' and '[Code of Conduct](#)'

4.3. Termination of registration is a penalty which can be applied for the proven committing of a major disciplinary offence after a thorough investigation, including any appeals process, has been carried out according to the disciplinary policy and procedures referred to in the paragraph above.

4.4. The UST Code of Conduct sets out the differences between Major and Minor Disciplinary Offences. In determining action the Provost will 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 School and/or its facilities and/or members and the School's reputation as a model of Christian moral values and behaviour.

4.5. The process by which Disciplinary issues are handled is set out in the UST Code of Conduct, and the sanctions which can be applied.

4.6. If leave to continue as a student is withheld unreasonably, then the student can appeal to the Board of Trustees – see UST Code of Conduct. In this case it shall be this body which has the power to terminate the student's registration if proven guilty.

4.7. Students who have their registration terminated on disciplinary grounds will receive the Certificate and Transcript of Studies or Diploma Supplements to which any successful completion of studies entitles them to receive.

4.8. Where a student's registration is terminated on disciplinary grounds in the course of an academic session, they will not normally be entitled to any refund of fees paid for

the semesters up to, and including, the semester in which the decision to terminate registration was made.

4.9. The only grounds for an appeal is if the School failed to follow its own procedures, which are outlined in the '[UST Code of Conduct](#),' and the [UST Complaints Policy](#).

## **5. TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION OF A STUDENT ON ACADEMIC GROUNDS**

### ***5.1. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT***

5.1.1 The School '[Academic Misconduct Policy](#)' document, defines the procedure that must be followed in order for a student's registration to be terminated for reasons of academic misconduct.

5.1.2 Termination of student registration is an available penalty for extreme academic misconduct according to the scale set out in the AMBeR Tariff.

5.1.3 The penalty can be combined with either credits retained or credits withdrawn.

5.1.4 The penalty can only be enforced after an investigation according to the School Academic Misconduct Procedure has been carried out, including any appeals process.

5.1.5 If a case of alleged academic misconduct is under investigation at the time of the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners, the Board shall defer consideration of the candidate's work until a decision on the case has been made and the decision has been conveyed to the candidate.

5.1.6 A candidate found guilty of academic misconduct may only lodge an appeal on procedural grounds. The appeal process can be found in the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

### ***5.2. ACADEMIC FAILURE***

5.2.1 The School reserves the right to terminate the registration of a student on academic grounds for failure in their programme of study; any such termination must be made in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

5.2.2 Failure for academic grounds, includes the following: unsatisfactory academic progress, unsatisfactory attendance at prescribed lectures, classes, practical sessions or other prescribed activities, failure to complete or submit required written work by due dates or to satisfactory standards, failure to attend for prescribed tests or examinations, failure to comply with school academic requirements.

5.2.3 Cases which fall within the jurisdiction of the Programme Leader will be referred to him/ her or his/her nominee.

5.2.4 The School is responsible for ensuring that the academic requirements to be met by students, for normal satisfactory progress through the various stages of their programme of study, are made known to students. Such academic requirements will be stated in writing and made available to students in the appropriate handbooks and on the School VLE [Union Cloud].

5.2.5 Where a student's registration is terminated on academic grounds in the course of an academic session, they will not normally be entitled to any refund of fees paid for the semesters up to, and including, the semester in which the decision to terminate registration was made.

5.2.6 The only grounds for an appeal is if the School failed to follow its own procedures, in which case the student may appeal using the [Academic Complaints Policy](#).

## **6. PROVISIONS FOR SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION OF A STUDENT IN DEBT TO THE SCHOOL**

6.1 Students make an agreement with the UST Finance Officer at the start of each Academic year, agreeing to pay all amounts due to the School by their due date.

6.2 The Finance Department will notify a student's tutor by Week 6 of the second semester of a student's academic year, if that student is in debt before the end of their academic year. This is so that the personal tutor may meet with the student to discover a) whether they need any other support and b) to discuss whether they will be able to either meet their debt or defer their studies until they are able to do so.

6.3 If the student is unable to meet their financial obligations, the personal tutor will refer the situation to the Programme Leader who will arrange with the student how they can defer their programme until they are able to clear their debt.

6.4 The Programme Leader will inform the Finance Department who will meet with the student and arrange an instalment plan to schedule reasonable repayment terms.

6.5 All student debts to the School must be cleared by 31<sup>st</sup> August (students studying on a September to July course) or 31<sup>st</sup> December (students studying on a January to December course) before a student is permitted to resume the next level of their course.

6.6 Should a student not have cleared the debt by the start of their next academic year the Programme Leader will write a letter to the student outlining their need to defer their studies until the debt has been repaid.

6.7 Students may usually only resume their studies at the next appropriate entry point in their programme (to be determined in consultation with the Programme Leader)

and only when they have cleared their debt. No student may progress on to the next level if they are still in debt to the school.

6.8 Should the student no longer wish to continue his/her studies or the student has completed his/her course, the School will not release any reference, Transcript of Studies, Diploma Supplement or Award Certificate if the student has not paid all tuition fees due.

6.9 The School reserves the right to suspend or terminate the registration of any student who is in debt to the School, although this is considered to be a measure of last resort, after all other avenues of debt recovery have been exhausted.

6.10 Under these circumstances, and after at least 12 months have elapsed since the debt was incurred, the Programme Leader or his/her nominee will:

- inform the student of the final deadline for repayment to be made before he/she will have their registration terminated.
- not release a Transcript of Studies, Diploma Supplement or Award Certificate if the student has not paid all tuition fees due.
- reserve the right refuse to provide a reference for a third party.

6.11 When that final deadline has passed without repayment the student's registration will be terminated.

6.12 There is no right of appeal.

## **7. TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION ON OTHER GROUNDS**

7.1 Where a student has been unable to study or complete a year of study due to extenuating circumstances the Board of Examiners may agree to defer the student's studies for a year and therefore agree to extend the student's registration. The procedure is dealt with using the School's [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

7.2 Should the student wish to make a complaint, or appeal against any decision relating to termination made on non-academic grounds they should follow the procedure set out in the [UST Complaints Policy](#).

## **8. APPEALING TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

8.1 It will usually only be possible to appeal against a School decision if the School has either not followed its own procedures properly or it has not dealt with a complaint fairly.

8.2 The resolution of a complaint will include any options a student may have of appealing to another body either within the School 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 until after they have first exhausted the School's own complaints or appeals procedures.

### 8.3 Appealing to the Open University:

8.3.1 The School is a partner of the Open University. As the body which validates our awards, the OU is interested in the concerns of all students undertaking those programmes. If, after going through our own internal procedures (which have been approved by the OU), a student still feels their concerns have not been properly addressed, they may approach the OU and make a formal appeal or complaint with them, if they have sufficient grounds according to the OU regulations. These can be found on the Union Cloud (VLE) and also on the School website: [www.ust.ac.uk](http://www.ust.ac.uk).

Alternatively the Open University can be contacted directly by email: [OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk](mailto: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.

8.3.2 In order to appeal to the Open University a student must:

- i. Request a 'Completion of Procedures' letter from the School within one month of the conclusion of the School's internal processes if their 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 Recruitment and Training Administrator of the relevant programme.
- ii. Appeal within 3 months of the receipt of the Completion of Procedures letter.
- iii. Follow the Open University's own procedures (see previous paragraph).

### 8.4 Appealing To The Office Of The Independent Adjudicator:

8.4.1 If a student is dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled, they may prefer to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) by contacting them at: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). 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 in some circumstances 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 School or the OU complaints or appeals processes. However the OIA can only consider unresolved complaints from students *after* the School's own complaints and appeals procedure has been concluded.

8.4.2 The complaints which the OIA will consider include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Appeals
- Extenuating Circumstances
- Teaching and Facilities
- Accommodation
- Research supervision
- Welfare
- Discrimination (but see \* below)
- Bullying and harassment
- Placements
- Procedural irregularities
- Unfair practices
- Disciplinary matters – including academic malpractice.

\* In considering issues related to discrimination the OIA does not act as a court. It does not investigate or make legal findings in the same manner as a court. However, it is appropriate for the OIA to refer to the law and guidance on discrimination to form an opinion as to good practice and to decide whether the provider has acted fairly.

8.4.3 The OIA cannot consider complaints/appeals concerning:

- Admissions
- Academic judgement
- Matters which are already are or have been the subject of Court or Tribunal proceedings, unless the proceedings have been ‘stayed’ or adjourned.

8.4.4 In order to appeal to the OIA, a student will need to:

- i. Request a ‘Completion of Procedures Letter’ from the School to submit with their 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 Recruitment and Training Administrator of the relevant programme after the complaints procedure has been completed.
- ii. Complete the OIA’s own complaint form, which is available from [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).
- iii. Submit an appeal to the OIA within twelve months of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter.

## **9. DATE OF TERMINATION**

The date of termination recognised by The Open University will be taken as the date on which the School records the student’s registration as terminated.

## **10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Termination of a student's registration will be considered impartially. The School makes every effort, in accordance with its '[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)' to ensure that students are not unlawfully discriminated against. We believe that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience at UST.

## **11. DATA PROTECTION**

11.1 All student records, past and present, are kept in accordance with current Data Protection Regulations. See the [Union School of Theology Data Protection Policy](#) for details.

11.2 In line with the terms of current Data Protection Regulations, students, past and present, are entitled to a copy of all their personal data held by us. All requests should be made to the Data Protection Officer.

## **12. RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND UPDATING**

12.1 The Provost and the Programme Leaders have responsibility for overseeing the termination of a student's registration through the School Student Disciplinary Procedure and ensuring that decision-making complies with Open University regulations.

## **13. POLICY COMMUNICATION**

13.1 This document can be found on the Union Cloud (VLE) and on the School website: [www.ust.ac.uk](http://www.ust.ac.uk).

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

13.3 This policy will be included in staff and student induction.