

Union

Union School of Theology Complaints Policy (for non-Admissions and non-Academic Issues)

Approved by Union School of Theology (UST) Academic Board December 2017

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1. OVERVIEW

This document contains guidance on the various options available to applicants, students, staff and other users of services at UST when they feel they have been unfairly treated.

Union School of Theology has a Complaints Officer and the School seeks to resolve, as quickly and as fairly as possible, any complaints that may arise. The UST Complaints Officer is the Academic Registrar and can be contacted at academicregistrar@ust.ac.uk

All complaints will be treated fairly and impartially. The person making the complaint has the right, irrespective of whether the complaint is dealt with by informal or formal procedures, to be accompanied by an individual who may speak on the student's behalf if desired. However, this policy is not the one to be used for Complaints About the Admissions Process or for Academic Appeals.

- The Process for handling Academic Appeals is contained in the separate [UST Academic Appeals Policy](#) found on the UST website www.ust.ac.uk and on the Student VLE (the

Union Cloud). If the complaint you wish to make is about an academic matter please refer to that policy.

Complaints relating to the Applications process or Applications decisions are contained in the '[Policy and Procedure For Complaints About the Applications Process and the Outcome of an Application.](#)' If the complaint you wish to make relates to those areas please refer to that document.

Students, staff, and users of Union services are able to use this policy to make complaints about other issues such as -

- The provisions UST makes, such as in the areas of administration, accommodation, catering, IT or other services offered.
- The personal conduct of others including discrimination, harassment, bullying or other malpractice and impropriety.

UST encourages those with complaints initially to seek to resolve any issues by *informal* means with the individual concerned. As a Christian institution we seek to study and work in a community of mutual respect and acceptance, and the ability to resolve issues is an important part of Christian life and thought. If the complaint cannot be resolved by informal means, then the individual has the right to use the formal procedure.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Whether you are a visitor, staff member or a student, Union School of Theology would like you to have a positive experience in your dealings with the School. However, we understand that we do not always get everything right. Should you be dissatisfied with the way you have been treated, you may wish to make a complaint. If this is the case, there are several different procedures you might choose to follow depending on the nature of your complaint. This document has been written to guide you to the correct procedure to use.

2.2 All of the documents mentioned below can be found in the School's in the UST library, UST website www.ust.ac.uk and on the Union Cloud VLE. The forms referred to below can be found in the Appendix of this document.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of the UST Complaints Policy are below, but the deadlines may vary from policy to policy.

3.1 Any complaint (formal or informal) should be made within 30 working days of the incident of the occurrence of the issue over which the complaint is being made.

3.2 UST aims to respond to any enquiry or complaint confidentially, fairly and promptly and in accordance with the School's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#). Staff aim to be courteous to the complainant, responding positively and, wherever possible, offering constructive solutions.

3.3 All complaints will be managed in a sensitive way and with due regard to data protection issues. Whilst it is understood that complainants may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, therefore, the School will discuss

with the complainant the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.

3.4 Parties may also choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a supportive friend. This must be someone independent of the circumstances that gave rise to the meeting and not be the person offering them pastoral support through the process.

3.5 A formal detailed record will be kept of all formal investigations of complaints or reviews by the UST Complaints Officer. These will be kept for three years after a student graduates.

3.6 UST will normally investigate and respond to a complaint within 30 working days of the complaint being received. If there are good reasons for extending the timeframe, the complainant will be notified of any delays and regularly informed of progress and the complainant shall similarly notify the School.

3.8 Any person dissatisfied with School facilities or services should be encouraged to make this known at the place and time of their dissatisfaction to the person directly involved.

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

3.10 No-one will be disadvantaged by making a complaint.

3.11 The complainant will always be informed of the outcome of an investigation or review in writing and with reasons given for the decision which has been reached. The complainant will be informed at the same time of any further appeal processes which may still be available to them.

3.12 The complaint may be withdrawn without prejudice at any time during the process. (The School must be informed of this in writing. Any decision made by the School at the previous stage in the procedure will then be upheld and become the final outcome.)

3.13 The School reserves the right not to investigate any formal complaint or request for review which it considers to be frivolous or vexatious and which does not constitute acceptable grounds.

3.14 All Complaints procedures should be available to all, monitored regularly, and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaints: The word complaint in this document is used to refer to “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more individuals about a provider’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the provider.”¹

- There are two types of complaint: **informal** and **formal**.

- **Formal Review:** If you have made a complaint but, at the conclusion of the investigation, you are unhappy with the decision which was reached you may ask for that

¹ Office of Independent Arbitrator Good Practice Framework, Student Complaints and Appeals, p. 8.

decision to be reviewed. However, you may only do so if your review request fulfils the specific criteria outlined in the procedural document being used.

(Academic Appeals, and Complaints about Applications and Admissions Decisions are dealt with separately under their respective policies found on the Union website www.ust.ac.uk)

5. POLICY GUIDANCE

5.1 This guidance has been written to help you find out which procedure you need to follow, depending on the nature of your complaint.

5.2 This explains how you can make a complaint. Please read the document carefully and follow the instructions it contains.

5.3 This guidance also provides extra general information. See Step by Step guide below.

6. FORMS

All complaints or review requests must be submitted using a specific form, which may be found in the Appendix below.

7. DECIDING WHICH PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW

7.1 INFORMAL COMPLAINTS (NOT RELATED TO ADMISSIONS OR ACADEMIC DECISIONS)

UST encourages those who wish to make a complaint to, wherever possible, initially to explore informal means of resolving complaints they have. A student's personal tutor can assist you in working out if this is appropriate, [see Section 7.1 below], as can the Student President or the relevant Student Representatives [see 7.2 below]

7.2 FORMAL COMPLAINTS (NOT RELATED TO ADMISSIONS OR ACADEMIC DECISIONS)

7.2.1 A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about the action or lack of action by the School, or about the service provided by or on our behalf. Examples of complaints about service include:

- Failure by the School to meet obligations including those outlined in any of the School Handbooks or Policy and Procedure documents.
- Misleading or incorrect information in prospectuses or promotional material and other information provided by the School.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme teaching or administration.
- Poor quality of facilities, learning resources or services provided directly by the School.
- Complaints involving others providing a service on behalf of the School.

To make a formal complaint about any of these issues, please follow the procedure below and use the *Formal Complaint form* (please see Appendix 2).

7.2.2 For other complaints, for example complaints about other students or members of staff (including accusations of bullying or harassment), please consult the the UST [Policy on Harassment](#), and the Conflict Resolution and Disciplinary Procedures in the UST [Code of Conduct](#), found on the UST website www.ust.ac.uk, or the student VLE. For Formal Complaints in these areas please use the **Formal Complaint form** below.

7.3 FORMAL REVIEWS

7.3.1 It is possible to ask for a review of any decision which has been reached about a complaint you have made.

7.3.2 You must check the relevant policy document to find out:

- Whether you satisfy the grounds mentioned in the policy to request a review
- The procedure you need to follow.

7.3.3 You must submit a review request by using the **Formal Review Request form** (see Appendix 3 below)

8 STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT

8.1. Step One: Seek to resolve the Issue Informally

8.1.1. Whatever your complaint, we would urge you first to think carefully about the situation and the response you are seeking. The next step, where appropriate, is to speak informally with the person(s) most concerned. In this way misunderstandings can be clarified and errors hopefully resolved to everyone's mutual satisfaction, with no further action being necessary. A personal tutor can assist you in working out how to address such matters.

8.1.2. You may wish to speak with the Student President about a general complaint. The Student President meets regularly with the Provost for information exchange and to air student issues. Each level of study also has a student representative who meets termly with various UST Programme and Quality Assurance Committees and the Academic Board to represent student's views about the programmes and/or programme delivery.

8.2. Step Two: Find the Correct Procedure to Use

8.2.1 If you have tried the above approaches but are still unhappy, the next step is to find the correct procedure to use to lodge your formal complaint.

8.2.2 If none of the procedures (see 6.1; 6.2; 6.3 above) apply to your case, or you are still uncertain which procedure you should use, please see the UST Complaints Officer will be able to advise you.

If a complaint involves more than one issue which do not fall neatly into one category, UST may discuss with you the best way to proceed in order to resolve the issues as quickly and fairly as possible. This may, in some cases, involve resolving one complaint/review before dealing with another.

8.3. Step Three: Check Who Should Make the Complaint

8.3.1 Complaints can be made by anyone who is dissatisfied with a service or lack of a service they could reasonably expect to have received from UST.

8.3.2 Students should expect to receive a good service from the School. The term 'student' refers to students who have registered on their programme. It also includes those who have recently

left, although former students will only usually be able to raise issues of complaint within 30 working days of the issue or incident occurring.

8.3.3 Students must submit a complaint themselves. Students may be accompanied by or represented at any investigation interview by a supportive friend (See clause 3 of the Policy above)

8.3.4 Group complaints are permissible where the issue raised affects a number of students. In such circumstances, in order to manage the progression of the complaint, we ask the group to nominate one student to act as a group representative; this student may also be supported by one other person.

8.3.5 Only in very exceptional circumstances, and only when compelling evidence has been produced to back up the complaint, will UST investigate an anonymous complaint. However, this would not be the normal practice. Anonymous complainants must be aware that raising a concern anonymously could, in most cases, impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.

8.4. Step Four: Submit Your Formal Complaint

8.4.1 To make a formal complaint you must complete the relevant form (i.e. either the **Formal Complaints Form** which can be found as appendices to this document and in Union Cloud VLE.

8.4.2 Please express your concerns clearly and succinctly and provide evidence to substantiate the issues raised wherever possible. Such evidence may include independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements.

8.4.3 The completed and **signed** form, together with all your supporting evidence, should be given to the Complaints Officer. They will direct the form to the appropriate person -

- For issues relating to your programme of study or its administration which do not constitute a formal academic appeal - the Academic Registrar or Programme Leader
- for catering, accommodation, IT and other relevant issues - to the ICT and Networking Administrator
- If the 'responsible' person is the subject of the complaint, then the complaint will be directed to the Provost or the Executive Director.

8.4.4 All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Whilst it is understood that you may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances therefore UST will discuss with the student the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the person making the investigation.

8.4.5 If a complaint involves more than one issue which does not fall neatly into one category of complaint/review, UST will discuss with you the best way to proceed in order to resolve all the issues as quickly and fairly as possible. This may, in some cases, involve resolving one complaint before dealing with another.

8.5. Step Five: The School's Response

8.5.1 The Complaints Officer to whom the complaint has been submitted will within 5 working days acknowledge receipt of the complaint and notify The Provost.

8.5.2 You will be notified, in no longer than 10 working days, of the name of the person who has been appointed as Investigator. They will also confirm which complaints procedure is going to be followed.

8.5.3 The investigator will usually be someone who is independent of the circumstances which gave rise to the complaint.

8.5.4 In rare circumstances, e.g. when there are no independent staff in the School who were not involved in the original circumstances which gave rise to the complaint, the School will seek to find someone else to carry out the investigation, for example an External Member of the Academic Board, or one of the Board of Trustees.

8.6. Step Six: The Investigation

8.6.1 For straightforward complaints the Investigator will review all the material presented and reach a conclusion fairly quickly. NB If you are late in responding to a request for further information this may cause a delay.

8.6.2 The investigation and response to the complaint should take no more than 30 working days. You will be kept informed at all stages of the progress of the investigation by the person leading the investigation.

8.6.3 All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Whilst it is understood that you may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances therefore the School will discuss with the student the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.

8.6.4 If the investigator feels it would be helpful, an interview may be arranged with you or other parties involved in the complaint to, for example, clarify facts or share information before reaching a conclusion. You may be accompanied by or represented at this meeting by a supportive friend (see clause 3 of the Policy above).

8.6.5 Minutes will be taken.

8.6.6 This meeting may result in further documentary evidence needing to be accessed or reviewed before a final decision can be reached.

8.7. Step Seven: The Decision

8.7.1 You will always be informed of the outcome of the investigation in writing, and with reasons given for the decision which has been reached, within three working days of the judgement. You will also be informed at the same time whether you have any grounds for an appeal, and the options open to you.

8.7.2 A record of any complaint and the resolution will be maintained in the complainant's file if they are a member of the UST community or an external user.

9. REQUESTING A REVIEW OF THE DECISION

9.1 The only grounds for requesting a review of the School's decision about your complaint is if you were treated unfairly or if you have material information you were unable or, with valid reason, unwilling to divulge to the original investigator when it made its decision. A simple disagreement with the outcome is not sufficient grounds.

9.2 To request a review, you must:

- Submit a signed and completed **Formal Review** request form (please see Appendix 3 below) to the Complaints Officer within 10 working days of receiving the judgement of the complaint. This form is attached as an appendix to this document and it can also be

found on the UST VLE and on the website: www.ust.ac.uk. This will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

- Provide any additional supporting evidence with, where appropriate, an explanation of why this was not submitted with the original complaint. Without a reasonable explanation, further evidence will not be accepted.
- Explain on the form how or why the School complaints processes failed to satisfy you, beyond a simple disagreement with the outcome and in accordance with the grounds permitted in the relevant policy document.

9.3 The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original investigation (usually the Provost or Executive Director) and will occur within 30 working days of receipt of your completed form and supporting evidence. You will be informed in the event that there is going to be any unavoidable delay, with reasons given.

9.4 You will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing, and with the reasons given within three working days of the judgement. You will also be informed of any further appeal process which may still be available to you.

9.5 The resolution of your complaint will include any options you may have of appealing to another body. External options include appealing to either the validating university or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. However, none of these options are available to you until after you have first exhausted the School's own internal complaints and review procedures.

10 APPEALING TO EXTERNAL BODIES (FOR NON-ACADEMIC AND NON-ADMISSIONS-RELATED ISSUES)

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

10.2 APPEALING TO THE VALIDATING BODY, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

10.2.1 The School is a partner of the Open University. As the body which validate our BA, GDip and MTh awards, the OU is interested in the concerns of all students undertaking those programmes. As the awarding institution OU is responsible for ensuring that procedures for dealing with complaints are carried out fairly. If, after going through our own internal procedures (which have been approved by the OU), you still feel your concerns have not been properly addressed, you may approach the OU and make a formal appeal to them, if you have sufficient grounds according to the OU regulations.

These can be found in the [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards \(Appendix 3\)](#) which is found on the School's website: www.ust.ac.uk.

Alternatively the Open University can be contacted directly by email: OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk, by phone: 01908 332840 or by post: Open University Validation Partnerships, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

In order to Appeal to the Open University you must:

- Request a Completion of Internal Procedures letter from UST within 30 days of the conclusion of our internal processes. This letter can be requested from the UST Complaints Officer.
- Appeal within 3 months of the receipt of the Completion of Internal Procedures letter to the Open University.
- Follow the Open University's own procedures. (see 9.2.1 above).

10.3. APPEALING TO THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR:

Once a student has exhausted all the internal complaints procedures and OU procedures if they are still dissatisfied with the outcome, they may be able to apply for a review of the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education For complaints related to academic standards and academic appeals, students must first complete the internal UST process, and also the process with the Open University. You can contact OIA at: 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. However, the OIA can only consider unresolved complaints from students **after** the School's own complaints and review procedure has been concluded.

10.3.1 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 plagiarism.

*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.

10.3.2 The OIA cannot consider complaints/appeals concerning:

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

10.3.2 In order to appeal to the OIA, you will need to

- a. Submit a 'Completion of Procedures Letter' from the Open University to submit with your appeal to the OIA. The letter must be requested within one month of your complaint or appeal being upheld. If your complaint or appeal is not upheld the completion of internal procedures letter will be issued automatically within 28 days of the completion of the internal processes. This letter can be requested from the Programme Leader of the relevant programme 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 your appeal to the OIA within twelve months of the date of your Completion of Internal Procedures letter.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All complaints will be considered impartially. UST makes every effort, in accordance with its '[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)' to ensure that students are not unlawfully discriminated against on the grounds set out in the Equality Act of 2010. We believe that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience at Union School of Theology.

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1 All records of complaints are kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. See the [UST Data Protection Policy](#) for details. Complaints are kept securely on file with Student Records by the Academic Registrar for 6 years.

12..2 In line with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation, students are entitled to a copy of all their personal data held by us.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND UPDATING

The Provost and Executive Management Team have overall responsibility for the Complaints policy for non-academic issues policy, including its approval and annual review and ensuring that decision making complies with Open University regulations.

14. DOCUMENT COMMUNICATION

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. They can be found on the UST website: www.ust.ac.uk

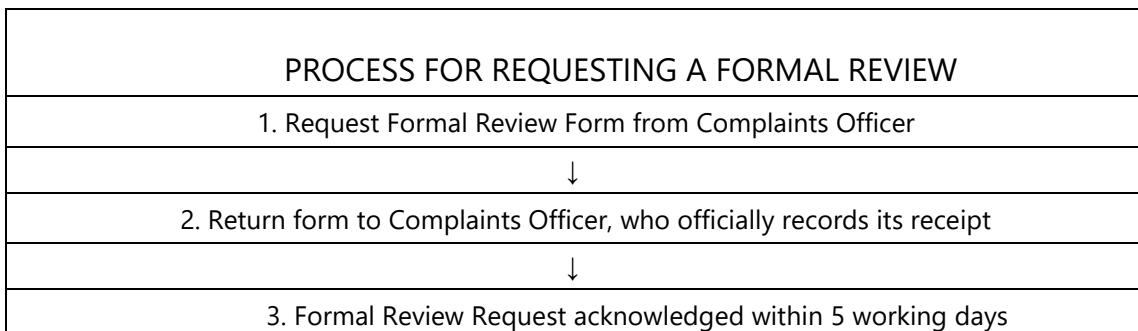
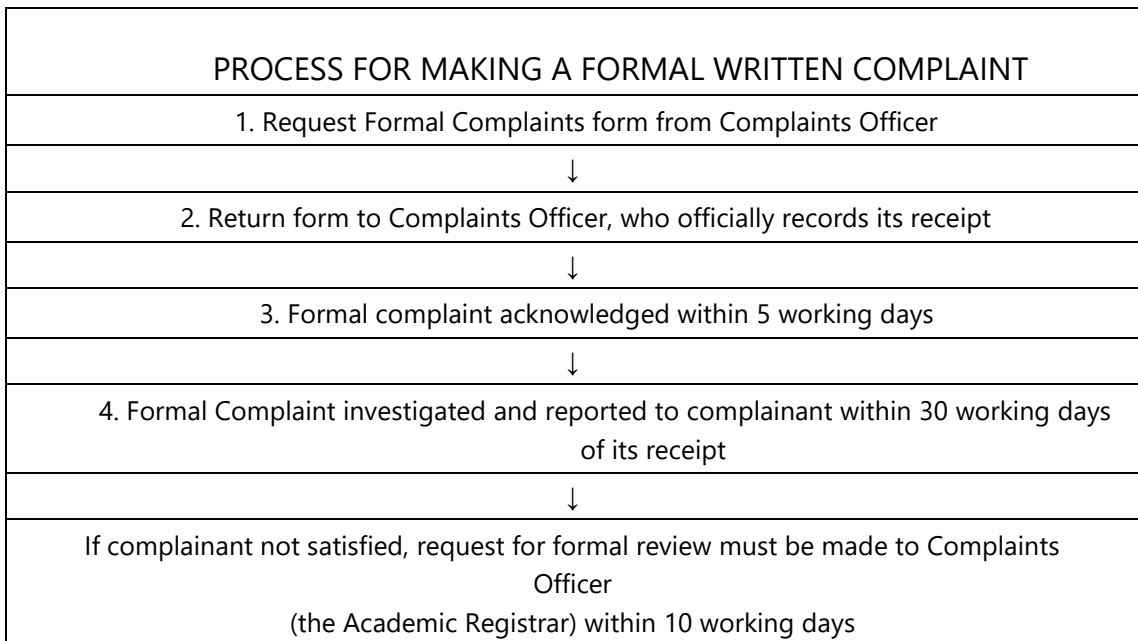
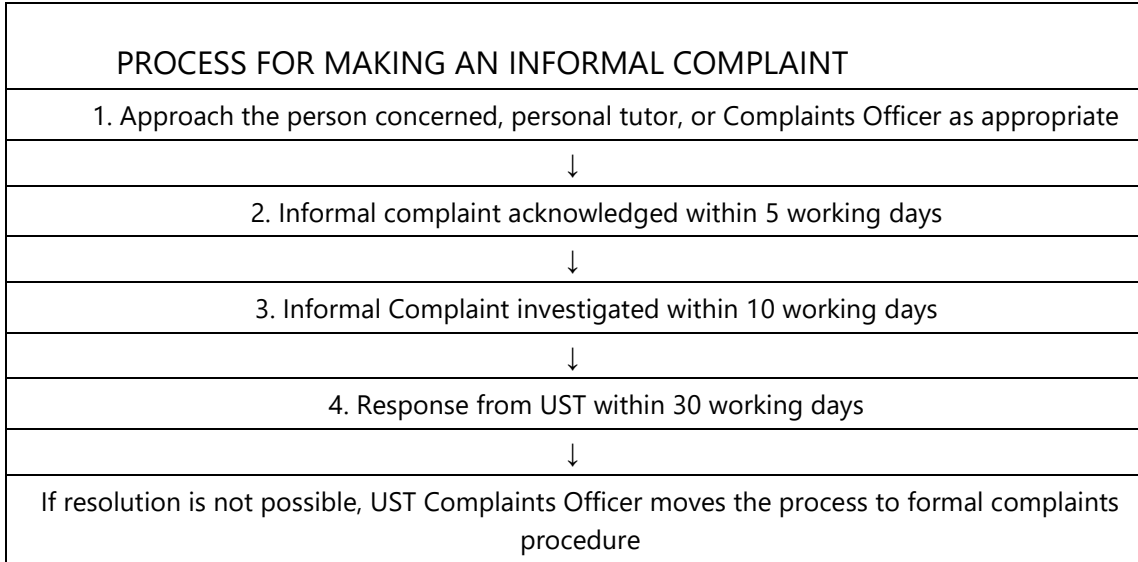
Version	Author	Review Date	Reason for change	Equality Impact Assessment check (and comment)	AB Approval date *
1.3	Iain McGee	March 2022	Clarification that UST can only issue a 'Completion of Internal Procedures Letter', updating contact details	Checked	23 rd May 2023

APPENDICES

1. Process and Timeline for Making a Complaint / Requesting a Review
2. Formal Complaint Form
3. Formal Review Request Form
4. Completion of Procedures Letter Template
5. Location of External Appeals Documents

UNION SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY COMPLAINTS AND REVIEW PROCESS

APPENDIX 1 - PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT



↓
4. Formal Review undertaken within 30 working days of Review Form being received. This is undertaken by person not involved in original investigation
↓
5. Report on formal review sent on completion of review.
↓
6. Completion of Internal Procedures Letter Sent within 30 working days if review not successful
↓
7. If complainant is not satisfied they can appeal to the Open University within 3 months of receipt of the completion of internal procedures letter, and then appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, if needed.

APPENDIX 2 - FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

Student Name:		Student Number:	
Preferred email contact details: If this is a complaint made by a group of students, please give the email details of <u>one</u> nominated point of contact.			
Do you have a disability or additional learning need you would like us to be aware of when considering your complaint?		Yes/No (circle). If yes, please give details of adjustments that will assist you.	
Programme:		Level:	
Complaint relates to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Programme of study *Delivery or lack of delivery of a School service *UST did not follow its own procedures properly *UST investigation was not conducted fairly *Conduct of a School staff member *Conduct of a School student *Other (please state) 		
Informal Complaint: Have you raised the concerns informally in the first instance? If yes, please say who with and when:		Yes/No (circle) When and with whom (if applicable)	
Have you also submitted any other complaint or review request at the same time as this complaint?		Yes/No (circle) When and with whom (if applicable)	

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Brief outline of the complaint: Outline a factual statement of the circumstances of the complaint. Be specific, regarding Who? What? When? And Where?

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List any documents you are attaching to support your complaint e.g. medical or financial evidence, witness statement, etc.

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What are you looking for as an outcome (remedy)? (A requested remedy will be considered but cannot be guaranteed.)

Do you have any suggestions for change so that this situation could be avoided in the future?		Yes please	No thanks
Do you have anyone to support you with this complaint? Please speak with your personal tutor or a friend/other staff member about this so that they can support you.			
Signed (Student)		Date:	

NEXT STEP

1. Have you completed all sections of this form?
2. Have you included all supporting documents (if appropriate)?
3. Have you followed the Complaints process set out in the UST Complaints Policy which is located in the Library and the Union Cloud VLE and on the website: www.ust.ac.uk. This document tells you:
 - a. Which procedure will be used to judge your complaint
 - b. The permissible grounds for your complaint
 - c. Any time limits relevant to your complaint
4. You should pass this completed and signed form on to the Complaints Officer.

APPENDIX 3 - FORMAL REVIEW OF DECISION ABOUT A COMPLAINT FORM			
Student Name		Student No.	

Preferred email contact details: If this is request for a review of a decision about a complaint made by a group of students, please give the email details of <u>one</u> nominated point of contact.			
Do you have a disability or additional learning need you would like us to be aware of when considering your review?		Yes/No (circle). If yes, please give details of adjustments that will assist you.	
Programme:		Level	
Review Request relates to:	(State the decision about which you are seeking a review and/or the policy which was used in any original investigation)		
Informal Means: Have you raised the concerns informally in the first instance? If yes, please say who with and when:	Yes/No (circle) When and with whom (if applicable)		
I am requesting this Review based on: (tick the relevant box(es) only if they are listed as permissible grounds in the review request section of the relevant UST policy)	I offer the following information in support of the ground(s) selected (complete the relevant box(es) below):		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. The School Procedure was not followed correctly.	(You need to state clearly which parts of the procedure used in the original investigation was not followed correctly.)		

<p>2. You have new material evidence that you were unable to provide earlier. (By material evidence, we mean information that might have the potential to change a decision, although this cannot be guaranteed.)</p>	<p>(State the evidence and explain why this information was not given to the School at the correct time.)</p>		
<p>3 Other</p>			
<p>Optional: Additional information offered for consideration:</p>			
<p>Where New Evidence is available (ground 3), list attachments if applicable:</p>			
<p>Do you have anyone to support you with this complaint? Please speak with your personal tutor or a friend/other staff member about this so that they can support you.</p>			
<p>Signed (Student)</p>		<p>Date:</p>	

1. Have you completed all sections of this form?
2. Have you included all the supporting documents (if appropriate)?

3. Have you checked the Complaints Policy for procedure which is being used? This, which is located in the Library and the Union Cloud VLE and on the website: www.ust.ac.uk tells you
 - a. Which procedure will be used to judge your complaint
 - b. The permissible grounds for your complaint
 - c. Any time limits relevant to your complaint

4. You should pass this completed and signed form on to the Complaints Officer.

APPENDIX 4 COMPLETION OF INTERNAL PROCEDURES LETTER TEMPLATE

Please note - the format may be adjusted to meet the individual circumstances of a complaint provided that the key points below are included.

Dear [Name of complainant],

Completion of Internal Procedures Letter

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of *Union School of Theology* in relation to your *complaint / review etc** regarding [please describe] have been completed.

The issues that you raised in your *complaint / review etc** were [details]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint / review etc was / were**: [brief summary of the complaint etc].

The final decision of *Union School o Theology* is* [detail] because [reasons].

The procedures / regulations applied were*: [details and date]].

If you are a student registered with the Open University and if you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint, etc** to the Open University.

In order to do this, you need to submit this completed letter to them, using the contact information provided in this document.

If, after receiving a decision from the Open University which you consider to be unsatisfactory you may be eligible to appeal to the OIA. You can fill in the OIA's complaint form online or download a copy from the OIA website. <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>. The OIA also publishes *An Introduction to the OIA Scheme for Students*, which can be downloaded from http://oiahe.org.uk/media/42715/oia_intro_leaflet_16pp.pdf. Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. **You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.**

Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia.aspx>.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues once the provider's internal complaints procedures have been fully exhausted.

Yours sincerely,

[Authorised signatory]

APPENDIX 5 - LOCATION OF EXTERNAL APPEALS DOCUMENTS

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY:

The 'Open University Appeals and Complaints Procedure' is found in the *Open University Handbook for Validated Awards* which is found on the School's website: www.ust.ac.uk. Alternatively you can contact the Open University directly by email: OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk, by phone: 01908 332840 or by post: Open University Validation Partnerships, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR:

Contact details and Information about appealing or complaining to The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education Complaints and Appeals Procedures for Appeals(OIA) is available on their website: www.oiahe.org.uk.