



Complaints Policy and Procedure for Delegates London School of Business and Finance Executive Education Version 2.3

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This policy is to be read in conjunction with the LSBF EE Delegate Code of Conduct and Delegate Attendance Policy.

1. Policy Statement

1.1. The London School of Business and Finance, Executive Education (LSBF EE) is committed to delivering high quality teaching and learning and we therefore encourage our delegates to give us feedback. We believe that it is important for our delegates to be able to express their concerns and ideas for improvement, complaints and compliments and voice their opinions as this enables us to improve the quality of our services and academic standards. Delegates may do this via a variety of means, including via our Complaints Procedure.

LSBF EE is committed to managing complaints sensitively, and in a way that:

- Ensures full confidentiality;
- Is timely and efficient, to facilitate a speedy resolution;
- Is fair and transparent to all parties;
- Promotes informal conciliation such as mediation, where appropriate;
- Promotes feedback and best practice to inform academic and administrative teams, and enhance the delegate experience.

1.2. This procedure covers all aspects of a delegate's experience at LSBF EE except for the following, for which separate procedures exist:

- All academic matters relating to examination and assessment performance and outcomes are managed via the Academic Appeals Policy.
- Disciplinary issues are covered by the Delegate Disciplinary Policy.
- Racial, sexual and other forms of harassment are covered by the Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- The approval and payment of refunds, which is handled by a separate procedure; any persons seeking a refund should go to <http://refunds.lsbf.org.uk/> and follow the on-screen instructions. The link for tracking refund applications is <http://refunds.lsbf.org.uk/case>

- 1.3. The Formal Complaints Procedure may however be used to investigate any of the processes in 1.2 as an internal quality measure to ensure they have been carried out correctly and fairly.
- 1.4. We aim to address and resolve all formal complaints within **10 working days** whenever possible and without prejudice to the complainant. Where this is not possible, the complainant will receive an acknowledgement and will be kept up to date.
- 1.5. This policy should not be in any way confused with a delegate's right to complain to the accrediting body – i.e. the British Accreditation Council (BAC). The delegate has every right to complain at any time to BAC about their experience once they have exhausted the complaints procedure set out in this document – for full details please refer to <http://www.the-bac.org/bac-complaints-procedure/>

2. Definition

- 2.1. For the purposes of these procedures, a **complaint** is defined as a written expression of concern or dissatisfaction with an aspect of the school's service. This can include (but is not limited to) the provision of a course or programme of study or a related aspect of service or a facility, which is provided to delegates enrolled on, or recently graduated from, programmes studied at LSBF EE.
- 2.2. This Complaints Procedure is designed for legitimate complaints only. Complaints that are vexatious and frivolous (defined for the purposes of this policy as "*a complaint that has no serious purpose or value, or is specifically being pursued to simply harass, annoy or cause financial cost*") will not be considered as legitimate.
- 2.3. Grounds for a complaint might include the following:
- Dissatisfaction with standards of academic provision, for example, insufficient or ill-maintained resources and facilities, arrangements for assessment, academic feedback, or information provided, or not provided, about a course;
 - Dissatisfaction with the quality or frequency of supervision or tuition;
 - Deficiencies in standards of service, for example, support facilities such as administrative services;

- Misinformation about an academic programme;
- Dissatisfaction with the level and availability of pastoral support;
- Other deficiencies in the quality of the learning experience;
- The inappropriate behaviour of a member of staff.

2.4. The procedure does **not** allow for a complaint to be raised about an academic assessment decision, for example an examination or assessment result. All academic appeals are subject to the appropriate appeals procedure, as specified in the Academic Appeals Policy.

2.5. The procedure does **not** allow for complaints by one delegate against another. Such complaints are the subject of separate disciplinary regulations published in the Delegate Disciplinary Policy.

2.6. Delegates who require assistance submitting a formal complaint may seek help from the Delegate Support Officer who can be contacted at executiveadministration@lsbf.org.uk.

3. General Principles

- 3.1.** It is important that delegates, prior to engaging with the Complaints Policy, have a clear understanding of what the procedure is, what it entails and possible outcomes.
- 3.2.** All complaints are taken seriously and delegates will not be penalised for making a genuine complaint. LSBF EE expects that delegates will not engage in frivolous or vexatious complaints. However, where clear evidence exists that delegates submit complaints which are clearly baseless, frivolous or vexatious, action may be taken under the Delegate Disciplinary Policy.
- 3.3.** It is aimed for the procedure to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved, with mediation and informal resolution an option at any point. Complaints will be handled sensitively, courteously and confidentially. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible to avoid issues becoming protracted. However, patience and understanding is urged from all parties when complex issues or complaints involving multiple parties may require longer investigating and resolving.
- 3.4.** The Complaints Procedure operates on the principles of natural justice:
- There are (at least) two sides to every dispute;
 - All parties are given the opportunity to provide evidence to substantiate their version of the issue / incident;
 - Full disclosure of any allegations or evidence will be made to those parties involved in the complaint;
 - All parties involved in a complaint have the right to be accompanied by a friend or non-legal representative at each stage of the procedure;
 - It is assumed that all parties operate in good faith and provide information which is true, complete and not misleading; this includes a duty to disclose all information which is relevant to the issue at stake, including information which may not support their position.
- 3.5.** All information provided regarding a complaint will remain confidential for use within the complaints process and is subject to the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Only staff directly involved with the complaint will be given access to confidential information as specified in the LSBF EE Data Retention Policy.

- 3.6.** Anonymous or third party complaints will not be accepted. No investigation of a complaint made on behalf of a delegate will be undertaken without the delegate's written signed agreement to the concerns raised and their signed consent for an investigation to be carried out. This includes complaints made by the parent or spouse of the delegate concerned.
- 3.7.** No delegate bringing a complaint under this procedure, whether successfully or otherwise will be treated less favourably by any member of staff.
- 3.8.** LSBF EE will endeavour to address and resolve all complaints within 10 working days. Certain complex cases may however take a longer time to resolve than other cases. In such instances delegates will be kept informed of the progression of their case and LSBF EE will attempt to give an indication of when the matter will be resolved.
- 3.9.** LSBF EE reserves the right to discontinue communications where the complainant becomes abusive/aggressive to members of staff.
- 3.10.** Complaints will not be upheld where the complaint raised is about something that has been made clear in the terms and conditions or policies of LSBF EE
- 3.11.** Where complaints are against a member of staff (academic or operation) LSBF EE will at times be required to share a copy of the complaint with the subject of the complaint

4. LSBF EE's Three-Stage Complaints Procedure

- 4.1. LSBF EE has a three-stage internal delegate complaints procedure.
- 4.2. Any complaints that are escalated before the earlier stages of the complaints procedure have been used will be reverted back to the appropriate stage unless there is a strong reason for the escalation.

Stage 1 - Informal Local Resolution

- 4.3. When first making a complaint, delegates should raise the issue informally with a member of LSBF EE staff; this may initially be with an academic member such as the Tutor. In most cases this will be a member of the School's Administration or Delegate Support Officer. Delegates can raise issues by calling into the office and/or, if necessary, by arranging a meeting to discuss the matter. In most cases a face-to-face discussion is the quickest and most effective way of resolving issues. However, delegates may also submit complaints via email if they find this more convenient.

We would request at this stage that delegates only contact the Delegate Support Officer, and if applicable request that other members of staff be notified as appropriate.

- 4.4. All complaints should normally be made within **15 working days** of the alleged incident, matter or concern.
- 4.5. When a delegate raises an informal complaint with an Administrator/Delegate Support Officer, they may need to refer the complaint to a more senior member of the team or to the Academic Director. The delegate will be informed that the staff member is raising the issue with Management and made aware that the staff member will get back to them within a given time frame.
- 4.6. Delegates should keep a record of their action taken to resolve the complaint and keep copies of any relevant correspondence.
- 4.7. A delegate should normally expect to receive a written or email acknowledgement from the School's administration within two (2) working days and a full response, via email or in writing,

within 10 working days. This timescale may need to be extended during vacations or when the complaint is complex or involves multiple parties.

- 4.8.** If it is not possible to resolve your complaint at this first stage then you can submit your complaint under Stage 2 of the Delegate Complaints Procedure.

Stage 2 - Formal Procedure:

- 4.9.** Where the complaint has not been resolved or satisfactorily dealt with locally, then a delegate can submit a formal complaint. Delegates will be expected to provide details of their attempt to resolve the matter locally, or a suitable reason as to why local resolution is not possible.

Submitting a Formal Complaint:

- 4.10.** Formal complaints should be sent in one of the following ways:

Email: An email should be sent to executiveadministration@lsbf.org.uk

My Page: a complaint should be logged through the Delegate Engagement tab

- 4.11.** Where necessary delegates should provide appropriate evidence to support any allegations they make (evidence may include signed witness statements, letters, emails and any other relevant information). Where a delegate fails to provide reasonable evidence to substantiate their allegations, LSBF EE reserves the right not to progress the complaint further as a justified case would not have been established.
- 4.12.** If a formal complaint is submitted outside the advertised deadlines, without good cause or reason, then the complaint will be deemed out of time and LSBF EE reserves the right not to progress the complaint, unless it would be inequitable to do so.
- 4.13.** A delegate should normally expect to receive a written or email acknowledgement from the School's administration within 2 working days and a full response, via email or in writing, within 10 working days. This timescale may need to be extended during vacations or when the complaint is complex or involves multiple parties.

Resolution of Formal Complaints

- 4.14.** In addition to informing continuous quality enhancement, the aim of this policy is to provide resolutions. Accordingly, while general expressions of concern are welcome, delegates are encouraged to specify the remedy they seek and/or the desired outcome to their complaint.

- 4.15.** There are a number of ways in which the complaint may be progressed at this stage, depending upon the nature of the complaint. Delegates will be notified of this in writing. Such action may include:
- A meeting with a designated senior officer to clarify matters of procedure;
 - Forwarding the complaint to a named person in the LSBF EE or department who will investigate the matter locally and provide a written response to the complaint;
 - Mediation facilitated by the designated Delegate Support Officer or other senior officer
- 4.16.** Where the complaint is complex and / or contains serious allegations against staff, the designated senior officer will either:
- Appoint an independent Investigating Officer to investigate the circumstances of the complaint; or
 - Arrange a Formal Hearing of the complaint.
- 4.17.** Notwithstanding the above, the delegate may formally request that the case be taken to mediation at any point in the proceedings up to the convening of a Delegate Complaints Committee (Stage 3, below).
- 4.18.** Wherever possible LSBF EE will seek to facilitate an early resolution of the complaint. LSBF EE aims to provide a resolution within **10 working days** of submission of the formal complaint. Should this not be possible (due to complexity or requests for information from other parties), then delegates will be kept informed of any likely delay and the reasons for the delay, at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.19.** Delegates will receive written notification of the outcome of their complaint from the Delegate Support Officer or other designated member of staff. This will include whether the complaint is upheld or not and any further action to be taken.
- 4.20.** A report of the nature and outcomes of the complaints received will be prepared by the Delegate Support Officer (with input from the other designated senior officers) to assist in monitoring the effectiveness of the Complaints Procedure. The report will identify relevant quality assurance issues and, where necessary, ensure that the procedures are revised and impact assessed as appropriate. The Reports will be submitted for consideration to the Academic and Planning Committee three times a year.

Stage 3 - Review

- 4.21.** If the response to the complaint following completion of the Stage 2 procedure is not considered by the delegate to be acceptable, they may invoke Stage 3 which involves a review of the case by the Delegate Complaints Committee. Requests for review must be submitted by the complainant within **21 days** of the date of the outcome notification of the formal complaint.
- 4.22.** The Complaints Committee convenes as required. This is to ensure that where a review of a formal complaint outcome is required, this can be provided by the Committee within the 10 working day target.
- 4.23.** The grounds for requesting a review of a formal complaint outcome should be clearly stated in writing and sent with full supporting evidence to the Delegate Support Officer at executiveadministration@lsbf.org.uk who will refer the case to the next Complaints Committee meeting if:
- There remains, at the time, a complaint which comes within the scope of this procedure;
 - The request for review has been lodged within the set time limit;
 - The complaint is not of a petty or harassing nature.
- 4.24.** The review will not consider new evidence unless there are good reasons as to why such evidence was not produced at Stage 1 or 2 of the Complaints Procedure.
- 4.25.** In the event of a decision not to uphold a complaint, the Delegate Complaints Committee will advise the delegate of the range of support services that are available such as the **Delegate Counselling Service**, if appropriate.
- 4.26.** The delegate will be formally notified in writing of the decision normally within **2 working days** of the Delegate Complaints Committee meeting. If a complaint is not upheld, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for its rejection. The letter will be copied to the MD of the School or other designated senior academic, and/or the Academic Director as appropriate.
- 4.27.** The decision of the Complaints Committee is final and concludes the LSBF EE Complaints Procedure.

4.28. The notification of outcome will advise the delegate of the opportunity for external review of the case, which is available at request from the accrediting organisation (i.e. British Accreditation Council <http://www.the-bac.org/>)



5. Completion of Procedures

- 5.1. Complaints procedures are considered to be 'exhausted' only when all internal review stages AND external review by the award's validating partner (if applicable) have taken place, and any required actions have been implemented.
- 5.2. Once procedures have been exhausted, LSBF EE will inform the delegate that a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter can be requested. The COP letter will be provided within **2 working days** of a request. Such requests should be directed by the delegate to the Delegate Support Officer within 1 month of the notification of outcome.
- 5.3. If complaint is not upheld or there are found to be insufficient grounds to investigate a complaint or conduct a review, a COP letter will be issued to the delegate automatically by the Delegate Support Officer.

6. Training and Awareness

The Administration Office and Academic Programme Manager will organise activities to raise awareness of the Complaints Procedure, and how it is to be used, amongst the delegate body.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 7.1. Records of all complaints and their outcomes will be maintained by the London School of Business & Finance, Executive Education School for a period of at least 2 years. Complaints are monitored by the Academic Planning Committee in line with School Reporting requirements.
- 7.2. Any lessons learned from the monitoring of complaints will be acted upon as part of continuous review.
- 7.3. The Complaints Policy and Procedure is subject to review once every two years by the Academic and Planning Committee at LSBF EE to ensure practices are maintained to the highest standard and remain compliant with regulatory/accreditation bodies requirements.

Document Information Table

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Applicable Institution(s)	LSBF EE
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*Content owner is responsible for ensuring the regular review and update of the document to reflect changes in both internal governance and external regulations.

Authorship

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Delegate Reviewers	N/A	N/A	

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