

Ethics protocols governing the admissions process at LSE

1. This is a code of practice governing LSE divisions, services and departments' communications with alumni and/or potential donors who have a connection with or an interest in an undergraduate or graduate applicant to the School. This code also applies to communications with VIPs/people of note who have an interest or a connection with an applicant. This code is designed to ensure that all applications are handled transparently, fairly and ethically, as per the LSE Admissions Policy, and that decisions are made consistently and on the basis of academic merit and potential only. It codifies the recommendations of the Ethics Framework Review Group which were approved by Council in April 2014.
2. All conversations about donations with potential individual donors who make themselves known to be applicants or parents, relatives or friends of LSE applicants or upcoming applicants will be deferred until the end of the admissions cycle. The end of the admissions cycle is the start of the academic year for which the application has been made and, for successful candidates, after the student has registered (usually the last week of September).
3. Appropriate barriers are in place to prevent inappropriate influence of funders on admissions. There should be no dialogue between alumni and/or potential donors and LSE divisions, services and departments regarding:
 - a) the application of a candidate known to the alumnus and/or potential donor,
 - b) the status of an application,
 - c) the conditions of an offer (if an offer is made), or
 - d) any aspect of the admissions process.
4. LSE Advancement's Donor Charter and Gift Agreement both state that the School's selection criteria for admissions are based exclusively on academic achievement and potential, and are fully independent of philanthropic support.

Pre application

5. In the event that an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP enquires about the application process, and/or about studying at the School in general, on behalf of a prospective student, the LSE division, service or department should put the enquirer in touch with the Student Recruitment Office.
 - a) Detailed and up to date information is available for applicants via the LSE website <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/studyHome.aspx>, prospectus <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/meetLSE/Prospectus/requestProspectus.aspx>, and by visiting the School.
 - b) Student Recruitment Office staff are available to respond to enquiries by email and phone and are also available, by appointment, to meet with enquirers and visitors to discuss their application to LSE.

Post application

6. In the event that an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP asks an LSE division, service or department staff to enquire about the status of an application or queries any element of the process the alumnus and/or potential donor should be referred to the Undergraduate Admissions Office or the Graduate Admissions Office for further information.

7. It would be helpful if staff could refer the alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP to the points below regarding admissions information online and, if necessary, the Data Protection Act.
8. Advice and guidance, including information about the time taken to assess applications, are published on the following websites and prospectuses. These are useful reference points for candidates and their families.
 - The Undergraduate Admissions pages on the LSE website <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/undergraduateHome.aspx> and in the LSE prospectus <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/meetLSE/Prospectus/undergraduateProspectus.aspx>
 - The Graduate Admissions pages on the LSE website <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/graduate/home.aspx> and in the LSE prospectus <http://www.lse.ac.uk/study/graduate/pdfs/graduateProspectus2014.pdf>
9. In the event that an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP writes to an LSE division, service or department in support of a candidate (e.g. supplies a supporting reference) this should be passed on to the Undergraduate Admissions Office or to the Graduate Admissions Office.
10. In the event that an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP contacts an LSE division, service or department seeking feedback on an unsuccessful application or seeking to appeal an unsuccessful application, the LSE division, service or department should
 - a) advise the alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP that it cannot intervene on the part of an applicant; and
 - b) forward the request to the Undergraduate Admissions Office or the Graduate Admissions Office.
11. LSE division, service or department staff are not permitted to issue admissions feedback to candidates or their parents/relatives either before or after the admissions decision has been issued to the candidate.
12. The provision of confidential information pertaining to an applicant or student to a third party, such as a parent or teacher, is prohibited under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Only when the Admissions Office has received the written consent of the candidate does the Office issue feedback to the nominated third party.
13. Private and confidential information includes, but is not limited to, details of a candidate's admissions decision (offer/reject), information contained within their application, feedback on the decision, status of their application, etc.
14. All unsuccessful undergraduate candidates are sent an email by the Undergraduate Admissions team within two days of the 'reject' decision being sent to UCAS, providing general feedback to the candidate on why they were unsuccessful. This might be, for example, as a result of A level subject combination, predicted grades, personal statement, level of competition, etc. This means that the undergraduate applicant will receive some feedback on their application as a matter of course and usually by the time the alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP contacts the School on behalf of the candidate.

15. In the event that an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP contacts an LSE division, service or department seeking information about the terms of an offer made to a candidate, or any other aspect of the admissions process, the request should be referred to the relevant Admissions Office. As with queries regarding unsuccessful candidates, the Admissions Office will only correspond with the candidate (as per the provisions of the Data Protection Act) unless they have the written consent from the candidate to liaise with a third party.
16. When an alumnus and/or potential donor and/or VIP has been referred to the Admissions Office, a member of the Admissions team will respond to the query within a reasonable timeframe and inform LSE Advancement or the referring department/service when this has happened.

Summary of protocols

17. Communication with alumni and/or potential donors and/or VIPs regarding an LSE undergraduate or graduate application made by someone known to them should be kept to an absolute minimum. Enquiries should be passed to staff in the Student Recruitment Office (pre application) and in the Undergraduate or Graduate Admissions Office (post application).

This protocol will be reviewed annually in September to assess if any revisions are required.

Catherine Baldwin
Director of Recruitment and Admissions
February 2015

Assessments and Appeals Ethics Protocol

This is a protocol governing communications with individuals or organisations who have a connection with or an interest in a student of the School who is or will be undertaking academic assessments. Such individuals may include, but are not limited to, parents, alumni, donors and potential donors. For the purpose of this protocol, 'third party' is used as a generic term applying to all enquirers.

The protocol applies to all staff of the School and is designed to prevent inappropriate influence of funders or other interested parties on academic oversight, assessments and academic independence.

1. If a third party enquires about assessments and/or about the academic regulations of the School you should refer him/her to the Calendar and to the more detailed information available from the Research Degrees Unit (RDU) or the Registry in the Student Services Centre (SSC).
2. If a third party asks about the status of a student, their academic progress or their results, you should refer him/her to the Registry.
3. If a third party enquires about details of a member of staff in the context of their acting as an assessor or examiner or about membership of Boards of Examiners, you should refer him/her to the Registry (for undergraduate or taught postgraduate students) or the RDU (for MPhil/PhD students).
4. If a third party enquires about appealing¹ against an assessment result or an academic award on behalf of a student you should:
 - (a) advise him/her that the School's appeal procedure must be followed and that individuals or departments (other than those referred to in paragraph 4b) cannot intervene in the appeal process;
 - (b) advise him/her that the student should discuss the matter with the Assessment Regulations Team (ART) for undergraduate or taught postgraduate students or with the RDU for MPhil/PhD students.
5. If a third party enquires about raising a complaint² about any aspect of assessment you should:
 - (a) advise him/her that the School's complaints procedure must be followed and individuals or departments (other than those referred to in paragraph 6b) cannot intervene in the submission or consideration of a complaint and
 - (b) advise him/her that the student should discuss the matter with the Governance, Legal and Policy Division (GLPD), ART or the RDU for guidance on the relevant process.
6. The Data Protection Act prohibits all School staff from providing confidential or personal information about a student to a third party, including parents. The SSC, RDU and GLPD will only issue personal information or discuss a specific student's situation when they have received written consent to do so from the student.

¹ Appeals are often submitted by students who have failed an examination, failed their programme of study or who believe they are entitled an academic award at a higher classification than that conferred. The appeals procedure is publicly available and provides a fair and transparent method for reviewing such circumstances.

² The School's complaints procedures allow students to raise concerns about academic matters or about a service. GLPD, ART or RDU staff will be able to advise students about the most appropriate way to raise their concern(s).

7. Communication with third parties regarding a registered student should be kept to an absolute minimum, except where formal sponsorship of a student makes provision for such discussion. Enquiries should be passed to staff in the SSC or RDU.

Useful Links

Appeals (MPhil/PhD students):

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/academicRegulations/AppealsRegulationsForResearchStudents.htm>

Appeals (undergraduate and taught postgraduate students):

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/academicRegulations/AppealsRegulations.htm>

Calendar (for current and past regulations): <http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/>

Complaints:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/priAndProForTheConOfStuCom.pdf>

Ethics (further information and guidance):

www.lse.ac.uk/ethics

Governance, Legal and Planning Division:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/governanceLegalAndPlanning/home.aspx>

RDU (MPhil/PhD examination information):

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/researchStudents/researchDegrees/Home.aspx>

Registry (undergraduate and taught postgraduate examination information):

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/registrationTimetablesAssessment/home.aspx>

Contacts

Assessments Regulations Team: Martin Johnson (m.johnson@lse.ac.uk or 020 7955 7894)

Governance, Legal & Policy Division: Mr Kevin Haynes (k.j.haynes@lse.ac.uk or 020 7955 7823)

Registry: Please use registry@lse.ac.uk and your enquiry will be forwarded appropriately.

Research Degrees Unit: Ms Louisa Green (l.j.green@lse.ac.uk or 020 7955 6766)

Student Services Centre: Mrs Hannah Bannister (h.r.bannister@lse.ac.uk or 020 7955 7457)

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Head of Student Services

February 2015