

ETS Policy and Procedure for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

1. Purpose of Policy

1.1 To clarify the arrangements for applicants to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application, to appeal a selection decision or to complain about the admissions process.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Seminary is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices, and it believes that providing constructive feedback about an unsuccessful application will help an applicant to achieve a successful outcome in the future. The Seminary will therefore provide feedback, when requested, to anyone whose application to study at undergraduate or postgraduate level has been unsuccessful.

2.2 Following the provision of feedback, an applicant will have the right to appeal the selection decision, providing that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal. An applicant who wishes to make a complaint about the application process may do so using the Seminary's complaints handling procedure (see section 6). Please note that the complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge an academic decision to refuse an application.

3. Data protection

3.1 The Seminary prefers to deal directly with applicants, and where possible, a request for feedback or the submission of an appeal should be made by the applicant, not by a third party. Should an applicant wish a third party to act on his/her behalf, for example because the applicant has disabilities which would make it difficult for him/her to submit an appeal or complaint directly, the applicant must provide written authorisation, including the name and contact details of the relevant third party.

4. Feedback

4.1 Feedback in this context is defined as information about why an application was unsuccessful. Any unsuccessful applicant to the Seminary may request feedback on an admissions decision.

4.2 The Senate is responsible for making selection decisions on all applications to its programmes. It has published information on the Seminary website relating to its admission processes and this information, together with the information given in the decision notice sent to the applicant, will be helpful to many candidates in explaining why their application has been unsuccessful. Applicants are therefore advised to read this information *prior* to approaching the Seminary with a formal request for feedback.

4.3 Procedure for Requesting Feedback

The following procedure should be used to request feedback regarding an unsuccessful application to the Seminary.

4.3.1 Requests for feedback should be made in writing to the ETS Office, within 20 working days following notification of the original admissions decision. Whilst admissions staff are able to provide general advice and information to candidates over the telephone, it is not always possible to provide detailed feedback by telephone.

4.3.2 The ETS Office will respond in writing (usually by email) to each request for feedback within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

5. Appeals

5.1 An appeal is defined as a formal request for a selection decision to be reviewed. An appeal will only be considered where there are adequate grounds, as set out below.

- Where there is substantial new information which, for good reason, was not made available either on the original application or during the selection procedure, and where that new information is significant and directly relevant to the original decision. Please note that the new information must relate directly to the original application and cannot include activities or achievements which have taken place or been ratified subsequently.
- Where there is evidence that the Seminary's published Admissions Policy has not been followed.

5.2 Appeals put forward on any other grounds will not be considered.

5.3 Procedure for Appealing an Admissions Decision

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant believes, in line with the above guidance, he/she has grounds for appeal against an admissions decision.

5.3.1 An applicant should seek feedback from the ETS Office before deciding whether or not he/she has grounds to appeal the admissions decision. An appeal will not be considered until after an applicant has received formal feedback.

5.3.2 Appeals must be received within 20 working days following the provision of feedback from the ETS Office.

5.3.3 An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Principal, Edinburgh Theological Seminary, 15 North Bank Street, The Mound, Edinburgh, EH1 2LS, or by email to imartin@ets.ac.uk stating clearly the grounds for appeal (as above) and outlining the case in full.

5.5.4 The ETS Office will screen each submission in the first instance to determine if there are sufficient grounds for appeal, as set out above. If it is judged that there may be grounds for appeal, the ETS Office will contact the Senate and make arrangements for the appeal to be considered in full. The ETS Office will also inform the applicant of the outcome of initial screening and, if appropriate, the anticipated timescale for consideration of the appeal. If there are no grounds for appeal, the applicant will be informed of this in writing.

5.5.5 If an appeal is to be heard and additional information is required, the applicant will be informed in writing and provided with an appropriate deadline by which to submit the information.

5.5.6 An Appeals Panel will be convened to consider appeals as appropriate. The Principal will decide the membership of the Appeals Panel, and will authorise that Panel to act in the name of the Principal.

5.5.7 The applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal and given an explanation for the decision which has been reached. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

5.5.8 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of appealing a previous admissions decision.

6. Complaints

6.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with an action or lack of action taken by the Seminary, or with the standard of the service provided.

6.2 Complaints relating to admissions will be managed in accordance with the Seminary's Complaint's Procedure which can be found at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/vd8ysuhhz1997hn/Student%20Complaints%20Procedure.pdf?dl=0>. This procedure should be used when an applicant (or the applicant's representative) is dissatisfied with the service they have received from the Seminary with regard to an application.

6.3 The complaints handling procedure cannot be used as a means to change a selection decision. However, if in the course of investigating a complaint the investigator believes there are grounds for an appeal against the selection decision, the investigator may advise the applicant to submit a formal appeal.

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