

Student Appeals and Complaints Policy for Applicants

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to:

- protect the interests of applicants;
- ensure procedural parity between all applicants;
- provide a definition of an admissions appeal and complaint;
- enable University staff to manage admissions appeals and complaints effectively.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all applicants to the University. The accompanying procedures are relevant to the applicants and to the University staff administering them. This policy is designed to be read with the accompanying student admissions appeals and complaints procedure.

2.2 Appeals and/or complaints should be completed by the applicants themselves. Letters, e-mails, phone calls and other correspondence from others will not be considered unless the University has received written and signed authorisation from the applicant that the third party intends to act on their behalf. The only exception to this is where the applicant is under 18 years of age in which case a parent or legal guardian may act as a representative.

2.3 All correspondence should include the applicant's full details including; name, address, contact details and UCAS or other application reference number should be made by completing the Appeals and Complaints Form attached to the end of the procedure document.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Applicants are expected to familiarise themselves with this section of the policy before using the procedure.

3.2 The following staff roles have responsibilities within the appeals and complaints procedure:

- Admissions Administrators and Officers
 - to deal with verbal complaints (not applicable to appeals)
- Head of Admissions
 - to investigate written complaints at Stage 1
 - to assess the validity of appeals at Stage 1
 - to make a decision with the appropriate admissions tutor on appeals at Stage 2
- Director of Recruitment and Admissions
 - To review Stage 1 appeals and complaints where no valid grounds are found
 - To communicate decisions to applicants
- Admissions Tutors
 - to determine an outcome with the Head of Admissions on appeals at Stage 2

- Appeal and Complaints Review Panel (membership: Head of Graduate School and Student Case Management (Chair); Director of Recruitment and Admissions; Director of Student Support;; and Head of Faculty SAS)
 - to assess the validity of review requests at Stage 3
 - to make a decision on reviews at Stage 3

3.3 Applicants will not be disadvantaged in anyway because they have used these procedures.

3.4 Applicants are expected to treat all members of University staff with respect. Applicants who threaten abuse or mistreat any members of staff either verbally, in writing or physically will not be tolerated and will have their appeal/complaint and application automatically rejected.

4. Definitions of Admissions Appeals and Complaints

4.1 Grounds for making an Appeal

The Appeals procedure can only be used where there are adequate grounds for doing so and **may not be used** simply because a candidate has been unsuccessful with his or her application at any of the stages listed below. Appeals against decisions may be made on one of the following grounds:

- There is evidence that procedure was not followed
- There is new evidence which has come to light, and valid reasons for not previously stating it are provided. If no good reason is given as to why this information was not previously available then it will not be considered
- There is evidence that the University has demonstrated bias or prejudice in the treatment of the application.

4.3 There is no provision for appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on applications. The appeals procedure should not be used to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application.

4.4 The decision of the Director of Recruitment and Admissions on completion of the internal procedure is final. Where possible and practical other University services may be involved in this process to offer an additional view and to help ensure that all procedures are followed appropriately and that applicants have been treated fairly.

If having followed all stages of the appeal process applicants remain dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request consideration by the Appeals and Complaints Review Panel. Further details can be found on the accompanying procedure document.

4.5 Definition of Appeals

An appeal is defined as a request for the reconsideration of a decision on an application. The outcome of a successful request to appeal would be to reconsider the candidate's application with a view to upholding or changing the original decision.

An appeal may relate to the following areas within the application process:

- the decision to interview
- the decision to make an offer
- the content of the offer
- the decision to reject on exam results

5. Definition of Complaints

5.1 Complaints are defined as relating to the services offered by the University or the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the admissions process.

If a complaint were upheld a possible outcome could be a formal or informal apology or decision to review procedures.

5.2 Grounds for making a complaint

A complaint may be made about any stage of the admissions process, where there are adequate grounds for doing so. The Procedure may not be used simply because a candidate has been unsuccessful with his or her application at any of the stages.

5.3 Complaints will only be considered valid if they relate to the following:

- The actions of a member of staff
- The conduct of a member of staff
- The services offered by the University.

5.4 Claims for financial compensation will not be entered into.

5.5 The decision of the Director of Recruitment and Admissions on completion of the internal procedure is final. Where possible and practical other University services may be involved in this process to offer an additional view and to help ensure that all procedures are followed appropriately and that applicants have been treated fairly.

If having completed all the stage of the complaints process applicants remain dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request consideration by the Appeals and Complaints Review Panel. Further details can be found on the accompanying procedure document.

6. Storage of information relating to Appeals and Complaints

By signing your letter of Appeal or Complaint, you agree that the University can process information it contains for all the purposes relating to the Appeal and Complaints procedure for applicants and to your application to the University. Information will be stored and processed in accordance with the University's registration under the Data Protection Act (1998). It may be disclosed to members of the University who have a need to see it and will be stored as part of your application to the University.

7. Monitoring of Appeals and Complaints

The University is committed to continuous improvement and constructive handling of appeals and complaints. This means that the University reviews the number and outcomes of Appeals and Complaints and may report this to internal quality assurance forums and committees with a view to improving customer service. Monitoring reports will not contain any personally identifiable information.

8. Contact details

Address:

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