



## ADMISSIONS COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Originator:	Academic Registrar
Approved by:	SMT
Type:	Policy/Procedure
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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all admissions' decisions are conducted according to the agreed policies and procedures and to this end, the University has adopted the following complaint policy. No applicant shall be prejudiced or disadvantaged by using this policy. The University will ensure that all complaints are investigated thoroughly, promptly and with due regard to the confidentiality of all parties.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this policy, an applicant's complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more applicants about the University's action or lack of action, or about the service provided by or on behalf of the University.
- 1.3 If a complaint is upheld, the University will take appropriate action or provide an appropriate remedy. If a complaint is not upheld, the reasons for this will be communicated to the applicant in a timely and accessible manner. Applicants may not make a complaint about a selection decision that seeks to dispute the academic or professional judgement of admissions staff regarding their suitability for entry to a particular course.
- 1.4 This policy may not be used where the decision not to offer a place arises from a failure on the applicant's part to fulfil any academic requirements for admission (e.g. specific achievement in examination results, English language requirement). Admissions decisions do not involve setting the level of the tuition fee, determining arrangements for paying the tuition fee, awarding funding or allocating student accommodation and complaints relating to these matters cannot be raised under this policy.
- 1.5 Complaints will be reviewed to determine if there is a prima facie case to consider. Complaints will not be considered if they are:
  - (a) harassing, or repetitive where they have already been answered;
  - (b) pursuing complaints already deemed by the University to be non-meritorious;
  - (c) where a complainant seeks, or persists in seeking, unrealistic and/or unreasonable outcomes;
  - (d) pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner, including unacceptable, harassing, malicious or offensive communications;
  - (e) intended to cause offence, disruption or annoyance;
  - (f) unreasonable demands for redress.
- 1.6 A complaint will only be considered from the applicant, and not from any third party. If the applicant is under eighteen, the University will consider a complaint made on an applicant's behalf with their written permission. The applicant will need to confirm that they agree the University can communicate with the third party on their behalf. All correspondence will be copied to the applicant as well as to their representative.
- 1.7 Complaints submitted outside of the timescales stipulated in the procedure will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances, and where there is good reason, supported by evidence, for the late submission. This decision will be final.
- 1.8 If the University is unable to respond within the timescales set out in the procedure, the applicant will be contacted with a reason for the delay and will be informed of when to expect a decision or response.

## 2 Procedure

### 2.1 Stage One: Informal Procedure

- 2.1.1 Most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage. The applicant should first raise their complaint in writing within 10 working days. The complaint should be addressed to the Admissions Manager.
- 2.1.2 A member of staff will respond to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being made and shall retain a record of the correspondence and any action taken. Staff will make every reasonable effort to explain procedures, allay concerns or otherwise respond to the issue raised. These discussions may be by telephone, email or other contact, as appropriate to an informal process. If it is not possible to fully respond within 10 working days, the complainant will be advised of the timescale for a full response. Confirmation of the completion of the informal stage will be put in writing to the complainant.
- 2.1.3 Every attempt will be made to resolve any issues informally at this stage. If this proves to be unsatisfactory then the procedures set out below should be followed.

### 2.2 Stage Two: Formal Procedure

- 2.2.1 While most cases are resolved by the provision of informal feedback, if the applicant is dissatisfied with the response received above, they should submit, within 10 working days, a written complaint to the Academic Registrar. Any complaints received outside this timeframe will not be considered. A complaint should be submitted by email within the same admissions cycle that the complaint has arisen in. The complaint should include all the following information:
- Name, email address, postal address, and (if appropriate) UCAS number;
  - Details of the course applied for;
  - The nature of the complaint, giving as much detail as possible;
  - Any steps that have already been taken to resolve the matter;
  - Details of any responses received and a statement of why it is felt that the response is unsatisfactory;
  - Any evidence to support the complaint;
  - An indication of the outcome being sought.
- 2.2.2 If the complaint is accepted, the Academic Registrar will investigate the complaint. The applicant will normally be informed within 10 working days in writing whether the complaint will be considered under the formal procedure. If further information is required from the applicant the Academic Registrar will request this by email and advise of the timescale for the response.
- 2.3 The Academic Registrar will submit a written response to the complainant within 10 working days from acknowledgement that the complaint will be considered under the formal procedure. The response will include details of the investigation which has taken place and the findings of the investigation. The Academic Registrar's decision following completion of this process will be considered as final.
- 2.4 If the complaint is upheld, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and the applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing.

- 2.5 If the Academic Registrar has had previous involvement in the applicant's admissions process or complaints procedure, they will refer the complaint to a Pro-Vice- Chancellor.

### **3 Unacceptable behaviour**

The University may exceptionally terminate or suspend consideration of a complaint where a complainant's behaviour is unacceptable or disruptive, for example, where aggressive or unreasonable demands are made or where repeated representations are made on matters which have already been considered under these procedures.

### **4. Reports and Documentation**

A summary of admissions complaints and their outcomes is reported to either the Further Education Committee, Undergraduate Quality and Standards Committee or Postgraduate Quality and Standards Committee (as relevant) and Academic Board for monitoring purposes.

### **5. Storage and Processing of Complaints and Appeals Information**

- 5.1 All complaints and appeals will be dealt with confidentially and with due regard for privacy. Information may be disclosed to members of the University who have a need to see it to investigate the appeal or complaint.
- 5.2 The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). The record of the complaint and any supporting papers will be destroyed two years following resolution of the case.

### **6 Further Education courses only**

If following the completion of the University's procedures regarding a complaint, the applicant is still not satisfied then they can take the complaint to the ESFA.