

Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy (Research Degrees)

1. Purpose and Context

The policy covers the following types of complaint/appeal:

- Complaints about the University's handling of a query or an application for admission for example, a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration;
- Allegations that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or even-handedly, resulting in a formal request for a review of the admission decision;
- Emergence of new material which may have affected the decision. In such cases the applicant must also provide details of why the new information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application but not included for whatever reason, it will not normally be considered.

The policy does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and delivery of research degrees, or to caps on student numbers in particular research areas whether imposed by the University, government, research councils or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Dean of the Graduate School who has overall responsibility for the admissions policy.

Timescales for complaints/appeals are stated within Section 3 below.

There is no right of appeal for applications where:

- the application is from a third party;
- the dispute concerns academic judgement;
- the dispute concerns a decision already accepted by the applicant;
- the request would contravene government regulations or any contract with external organisations, such as a Research Council;
- the application was made more than 6 months previously.
- the application would put the applicant and/or University in breach of immigration regulations

2. Scope

This policy covers applicant complaints and appeals for all research degrees, including those run in conjunction with external organisations. This policy covers applicant complaints and appeals for all modes of attendance.

3. Submission and Investigation of Complaints/Appeals

3.1 Stage 1: School-level Resolution

Complaints/appeals against admissions decisions should normally be made by the applicant in question only after receiving feedback under the Feedback processes outlined in the Admission Policy (Research Degrees) [Admissions Policy \(Research Degrees\)](#)

Written requests, using Stage 1 of the form in Appendix A, should be made to the Student Recruitment Manager, Student Recruitment Team, (UK applicants email study@hud.ac.uk or Head of International Operations, International Office (International applicants, email international.office@hud.ac.uk) within 10 working days of receiving formal feedback. If necessary, the Student Recruitment Manager/Head of International Operations will consult with relevant academic staff before responding to the complaint/appeal. A written response, providing reasons for the outcome will be made normally within 20 working days of the date your Stage 1 complaint or appeal was received.

3.2 Stage 2: University-level Resolution

An applicant who is not satisfied with the Stage 1 response should complete Stage 2 of the form attached as Appendix A within 10 working days of the date of the Stage 1 response. This should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction with the response from the Student Recruitment Manager/Head of International Operations and include any previous correspondence.

The Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment (or nominee) will investigate your complaint/appeal and provide a written response providing reasons for the outcome, normally within 20 working days of the date your completed Stage 2 complaint or appeal was received.

When a complaint is made about specific members of staff, those staff shall have the right to see copies of relevant documentation, to present evidence to the Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment or her nominee, and to be informed of the outcome of the complaint/appeal. The University reserves the right to maintain confidentiality in relation to staff disciplinary matters.

Appendix A: Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form

General Information		
Surname/Family Name		
First Name		
Student ID Number (if known)		
Research Degree Applied For		
Have you read the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy?	YES	NO

Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal	
Please tell us who or what your complaint/appeal is about by explaining the events that have taken place in date order, including what action you have taken and who you have spoken with to resolve your complaint/appeal	
Date(s)	Details

Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting to resolve your complaint/appeal

Evidence
Please also provide us with a list of your supporting evidence and explain why you think that this evidence is relevant. Please submit your evidence as separate documents.

Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal Submission and Declaration	
Please ensure that you have completed all sections of the forum under General Information and Stage 1. Failure to complete this form correctly and submit evidence promptly, may delay the processing of your complaint/appeal. By signing this form, you are declaring that the information you have sent to us is true and accurate.	
Signed:	Date:

We accept electronic signatures. You are not required to print, sign, and scan your complaint/appeal form.

Please submit you form and evidence by emails, as attachments, to:

UK applicants: study@hud.ac.uk

International applicants: international.office@hud.ac.uk

Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal

You should only complete Stage 2 of the form if you have received a response at Stage 1 and you are dissatisfied with the outcome. Please explain why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome:

Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal Submission and Declaration

Please ensure that you have completed all relevant sections of this form under General Information, Stage 1, and Stage 2. Failure to complete this form correctly and submit evidence promptly may delay the processing of your complaint/appeal. By signing this form, you are declaring that the information that you have sent to us is true and accurate.

Signed:

Date:

We accept electronic signatures. You are not required to print, sign, and scan your complaint form.

Please submit your form by email to:

UK applicants: study@hud.ac.uk

International applicants: international.office@hud.ac.uk

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy; (Research Degrees)
Version Number:	2.1
Equality Impact Assessment:	06.09.23
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Effective from:	17 February 2026
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Author:	Graduate School Manager
Owner (if different from above):	Graduate School
Document Location:	https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Applicant-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy-Research-Degrees.pdf
Compliance Checks:	Number of appeals/complaints received and investigated.
Related Policies/Procedures:	Admissions Policy (Research Degrees); Interview Policy Research Degrees Policy Statement on Student Admissions Where Applicants are Ex-Offenders

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V1.0	July 2020	New policy approved by Graduate Board and University Research Committee	Project Manager on behalf of Student Recruitment Manager
V1.1	August 2021	Minor amendments to include reference to International Office and removal of reference to EU	Project Manager on behalf of Student Recruitment Manager
V2.0	September 2023	Major review and amendments	Student Recruitment Manager
V2.1	February 2026	Change of Author and Ownership	Student Recruitment Manager