

# University of Huddersfield

## Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy (Taught Courses)

### 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 courses, or to caps on student numbers in particular courses whether imposed by the University, government or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) who has overall responsibility for 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 UCAS;
- the application was for a previous academic year.

### 2. Scope

This policy covers applicant complaints and appeals for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, including courses based at partner institutions (eg PGCE courses). This policy covers applicant complaints and appeals for all modes of study including full and part time, distance learning, block delivery.

### 3. Submission and Investigation of Complaints/Appeals

#### 3.1 First stage: Informal 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 [Admissions Policy](#).

Written requests should be made to the Recruitment Manager, Recruitment Team, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, HD1 3DH (email [s.l.elstub@hud.ac.uk](mailto:s.l.elstub@hud.ac.uk)) within 10 working days of receiving formal feedback. If necessary, the Recruitment Manager will consult with relevant tutors before responding to the query. A written response will be made to every complaint/appeal, (i.e. by letter or e-mail) normally within 10 working days, and this written response will mark the completion of the informal stage of the procedure.

### **3.2 Second Stage: Formal Stage**

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the written explanation at stage one should put his/her concerns in writing to the Head of Registry using the form attached as Appendix A within 10 working days of the date of the stage one response. This should set out the grounds for dissatisfaction with the response from the Recruitment Manager, and include any previous correspondence.

The Head of Registry (or nominee) shall then consult with the Recruitment Manager and staff within the University school as appropriate, and shall undertake such further enquiries as are deemed necessary before providing a written response, normally within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. 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 Head of Registry 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.

Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, the Head of Registry may make recommendations to the Dean/Director or Head of the Academic or Service department. Recommendations may also be made to University committees in respect of quality assurance policies or procedures.

### **3.3 Third Stage: Appeal**

An applicant who is still dissatisfied after the second stage may appeal in writing to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) within 10 working days of the date of the letter stating the decision of the Head of Registry. Copies of previous correspondence and any supporting documentation should be included and should outline why the outcome of the second stage does not resolve the complaint/appeal. New evidence cannot be introduced at this point.

Taking into account the substance of the complaint/appeal, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will then review the case and a decision will be made about the appropriateness of the matter being referred to a hearing of a Review Panel. However, there would be no grounds for referral of an appeal to the Review Panel where, in the reasonable judgement of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, the relevant admissions decision has been made as a result of the correct and impartial application of the published admissions criteria and the appellant has not demonstrated evidence that a material irregularity has occurred. In such cases, the Pro Vice-Chancellor shall communicate this decision in writing to the appellant, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

Where a Review Panel is deemed necessary, the Panel shall normally comprise the Pro Vice-Chancellor or a Dean (in the Chair), two Heads of Department or interviewers from a department other than the one(s) applied to. The Head of Registry or her nominee will act as technical adviser and note-taker to the Panel. Panel members will not have had any prior involvement in the case. The Review Panel shall meet, normally, within 20 working days (although in University vacations this time period may be extended) of the date of receipt of the appeal letter and communicate its

conclusions to the applicant and the department within 20 working days of meeting. The decision of the Review Panel is final and not subject to appeal.

Should a complaint/appeal be upheld, the Chair of the Review Panel may make recommendations to the Dean/Director or Head of the relevant Academic or Service department. Recommendations may also be made to University committees in respect of quality assurance policies or procedures.

If a complaint/appeal is not upheld, the applicant will be informed in writing with reasons for its rejection.

There is no further appeal permitted beyond the Third Stage.

**Appendix A: APPLICANT COMPLAINT/APPEAL FORM**

**This form is in two sections. Boxes A and B should be completed when attempting to resolve a complaint/appeal by the informal Stage One process. This section must be completed before referral to the Recruitment Manager.**

**Boxes C and D should be completed if the applicant does not consider the complaint/appeal to have been resolved by the response to the informal Stage One process and should be sent to the Head of Registry**

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**COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE**

**Personal Details**

Full Name: .....

UCAS Personal Identification Number (if applicable): .....

Course applied for: .....

Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint/appeal:

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.....  
.....

Postcode: ..... Telephone/Mobile number: .....

Email address: .....

**FIRST STAGE: INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

**BOX A: Details of complaint/appeal, including any supporting evidence for example any correspondence (please use additional sheets if necessary):**

**BOX B: Please indicate what outcome or further action you are expecting:**

**SECOND STAGE: FORMAL STAGE**

To be completed if the applicant does not consider the complaint/appeal to have been resolved by the response to the informal procedure via the Recruitment Manager

**BOX C: Please explain why you are unsatisfied with the response you have received:**

**BOX D: Please explain here what steps you have taken, together with dates and supporting evidence, to resolve your complaint/appeal (as per the informal procedure)**

**As part of the investigation of your complaint/appeal, any members of staff mentioned, for example, the admissions team will be made aware of the complaint/appeal, as will the Dean/Director/Head of the relevant Academic or Service Department involved.**

**Declaration**

I declare that the information given in this form is true, and that I am willing to answer further questions relating to it if necessary.

Signed ..... Date: .....

<b>POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS</b>	
<b>Document name:</b>	Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy;
<b>Version Number:</b>	1.0
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	May 2017
<b>Approved by:</b>	UTLC 23.05.17
<b>Effective from:</b>	September 2017
<b>Date for Review:</b>	Major review June 2020; annual updates as appropriate
<b>Author:</b>	ASIS Director
<b>Owner (if different from above):</b>	Director of Marketing Recruitment and Communications
<b>Document Location:</b>	<a href="https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Applicants-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy.pdf">https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Applicants-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy.pdf</a>
<b>Compliance Checks:</b>	Number of appeals/complaints received and investigated.
<b>Related Policies/Procedures:</b>	Admissions Policy (Taught Programmes); Interview Policy; Arrangements for the admission of applicants under the age of 18

<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision description/Summary of changes</b>	<b>Author</b>
V1.0	May 2017	First draft under new Policy Framework	ASIS Director