

Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

At Keele University we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions policies and procedures for **all** our applicants. If an applicant has cause for concern about the way their application has been handled and is not satisfied with the initial feedback received, they may use the Complaints and Appeals procedure to inform the University of their concerns through a formal channel.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Complaints and Appeals Policy is to enable applicants to raise matters of concern regarding the admissions process without risk of being disadvantaged and for the University to resolve these concerns quickly and fairly.

1.2 Scope

The Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy applies to any Undergraduate or Postgraduate applicant who has received a decision on their application for admission onto a programme at Keele University.

However, it does not apply to the following:

- Applicants where the complaint relates to concerns about a decision or service provided more than 4 months previously;
- A current student regarding their academic progression;
- A former Keele student seeking re-admittance when they have previously had their studies terminated or been withdrawn due to academic failure, non-engagement, non-payment or for disciplinary reasons;
- Current students who are applying for an Intercalated degree programme.

1.2.1 An applicant may complain or appeal against the handling of their own application if there is reason to believe that:

- The decision made contradicts the published entry criteria;
- There was an administrative or procedural error in the handling of the application;
- There was concern regarding a member of staff's behaviour during the application process;
- The emergence of substantial new information which may have affected the decision and which could not have been available at the time the original decision was made.

1.2.2 Complaints or Appeals will not be considered for the following:

- If the dispute is against a decision made on academic grounds. Due to the level of competition particularly for selective programmes of study, there will inevitably be occasions when an applicant is disappointed with a selection decision;
- About an applicant's failure to satisfy professional body or non-academic requirements as specified by an external agency for a particular programme of study;
- If a complaint or appeal is submitted anonymously or through a third party;

- If the dispute concerns a decision from a previous admissions cycle or one that has already been accepted by the applicant.

2. POLICY

2.1 The principles which support the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy are that:

- All complaints and appeals are treated seriously and constructively. It will also seek to ensure that complaints and appeals are dealt with quickly, with fairness and consistency;
- If it found that an incorrect decision has been made the University will make every effort to either reverse or rectify the error and will do so promptly;
- Applicants lodging a complaint or an appeal and those against whom the complaint or appeal are made may expect the matter to be dealt with confidentially and with respect for their privacy. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others internally in order to deal with the complaint or appeal.

2.2 Complaints

i) First Stage – Informal Resolution

Keele University shall attempt, wherever possible, to resolve application queries quickly and informally. In the first instance, applicants should contact the Admissions Office (via email to admissions@keele.ac.uk subject heading 'Informal Feedback Request') to ask for feedback regarding their admissions decision, fee status or scholarship outcome. Feedback should be requested by the applicant within 20 working days of the admissions decision being communicated¹. The relevant Admissions Officer will normally respond to the applicant within 5 working days verbally or in writing. Feedback is provided with the intention of enabling the applicant to understand the rationale for the admissions decision. It will not automatically lead to reconsideration of the application. If this course of action proves unsatisfactory, then the formal complaints and appeals policy should be followed.

ii) Second Stage – Formal Complaint

Where an applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their application and the feedback received or there is substantial new information, they may complain via the Complaint Form (Annex A) to the Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries within the Directorate of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions (GSRA).

A formal complaint should be submitted as soon as an applicant believes there is a concern. This should normally be within 20 working days of any specific alleged incident, feedback received or action.

The Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries shall investigate the complaint and shall respond to the applicant within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint (if it should prove impossible to respond fully within 15 working days, the complainant shall be informed in writing of the revised timescale).

Complaints made to the Vice Chancellor will be acknowledged and referred to Admissions for consideration within this policy.

¹ Some of our courses will send automatic feedback to all applicants at the end of the decision processing period via the Applicant Portal. Applicants wishing to query that feedback will have 30 calendar days from the date the feedback was published)

If the formal complaints process does not resolve the matter, applicants can submit an appeal to the Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions within 15 working days, subject to certain criteria, and have the case reviewed. This is known as the Final Stage: Appeal.

Please note that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) cannot consider complaints regarding admissions.

2.3 Appeals - Final Stage

An appeal must be submitted on the Approved Appeal form (Annex B) no later than 15 working days from the date of the email or letter informing the outcome of the Admissions complaint. The formal appeal may include an investigation and the Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions will write to the applicant with the outcome.

The Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions will find either:

- That the appeal is upheld and the University will take appropriate action.
OR
- That the appeal is not upheld and will communicate the reasons for this decision and confirm that no action will be taken.

The decision reached by the Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions is final and will be communicated to the appellant within 15 working days of receiving the appeal. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within 15 working days, the appellant will be advised in writing of the revised timescale.

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants

Applicants are responsible for following the process outlined in the Admissions Complaints and Appeals procedure. This includes ensuring that Admissions Complaints and Appeals are submitted using the forms provided within the timescales outlined (Annex A – Complaint Form, Annex B – Appeals Form).

If further guidance regarding the process outlined in this policy and/or an alternative format of this policy (including its Annexes) is required, please contact Admissions.

Admissions Review Officers

Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries will be responsible for Admissions Complaints.

Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions will be responsible for Admissions Appeals.

4 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- Admissions Policy

5 REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

The Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions will review this Policy and associated procedure every three years.

- This Policy will be submitted to the University Executive Committee for approval together with any subsequent reviews;

- The Policy and Procedure will be stored within Policy Zone and will be linked to from both the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions Criteria and Policies webpages.

6 DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy
Owner	Deputy Director - GSRA
Version Number	3.0
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	6 December 2023
Approval Date	9 February 2024
Approved By	UEC
Date of Commencement	12 February 2024
Date of Last Review	4 April 2017
Date for Next Review	9 February 2027
Related University Policy Documents	Admissions Policy
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	Complaint; Appeal; Admissions; Application

ANNEXES

Annex A

Applicant Complaint Form

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal appeal in accordance with the University's Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Please read this information prior to submitting the form as we may be unable to consider an inappropriate submission. Please note that all sections must be completed before we can consider your complaint.

If you have any queries concerning the completion or submission of this form, please contact the Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries, on m.a.fidler@keele.ac.uk

Applicant First Name:	
Applicant Family Name:	
Application Number/UCAS Personal ID:	
Email:	
Telephone Number:	
Course(s) applied for:	
Please provide details of your complaint below <i>(please provide copies of any communications regarding your application or feedback received)</i>	
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>continue on separate sheets if necessary</i></p>	

Please explain why you are not satisfied with the feedback or communications you have received.

Have you already discussed your complaint informally with a member of University staff?	Y/N
<p><i>If yes, please provide details (Also please enclose copies of any feedback received relating to your complaint)</i></p>	

What would you like the University to do to resolve your complaint?

Your declaration and signature

I confirm that the information given on the form is accurate and a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information.

I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of Keele University sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation.

I understand that the University will not accept a complaint from third parties or anonymous sources.

Signed		Date	
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Please send the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries, at m.a.fidler@keele.ac.uk

Annex B

Applicant Appeal Form

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal appeal in accordance with the University’s Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Please read this information prior to submitting the form as we may be unable to consider an inappropriate submission. Please note that all sections must be completed before we can consider your appeal.

If you have any queries concerning the completion or submission of this form, please contact the Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, on j.l.ladwa@keele.ac.uk

Applicant First Name:	
Applicant Family Name:	
Application Number/UCAS Personal ID:	
Email:	
Telephone Number:	
Course(s) applied for:	

<p>Please provide details of your appeal below <i>(please provide copies of any communications regarding your application or feedback received)</i></p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>continue on separate sheets if necessary</i></p>

Please explain why you are not satisfied with the formal outcome of your complaint that you have received.

Have you already discussed your appeal informally with a member of University staff?

Y/N

If yes, please provide details (Also please enclose a copy of the response received relating to your complaint)

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

Your declaration and signature

I confirm that the information given on the form is accurate and a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information.

I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of Keele University sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation.

I understand that the University will not accept an Appeal from third parties or anonymous sources.

Signed		Date	
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Please send the completed form and any additional documentation to:

Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, Jo Ladwa, at j.l.ladwa@keele.ac.uk