

## **Applicant Complaints Procedure**

### **1. Purpose of the procedure**

The University of Manchester ('University') endeavours to be fair, courteous and respectful in our interactions with applicants and offer-holders. Moreover, as articulated in our Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy, we aim to provide accurate, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information in order that applicants and offer-holders can make informed decisions about their applications to our courses. We recognise, however, that on occasion, applicants and offer-holders ('Complainant') may be dissatisfied with their experience or feel that material information provided is inadequate or misleading. If this is the case then Complainants can use this procedure.

The University's Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy ('Policy') can be found at <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=6523>

**Please note that separate procedures exist for current students who wish to make a complaint to the University and for applicants who wish to appeal the outcome of any admissions decision – see [Applicant Appeals Procedure](#)**

### **2. Definitions**

**2.1.** This Procedure applies to all applicants to the University ('Applicants').

**2.2.** A complaint, for the purposes of this procedure, constitutes an expression of dissatisfaction by a Complainant relating to any information and/or service offered by the University, or to the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the admission process.

### **3. General Principles**

**3.1.** The University will seek to ensure that all Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly and with fairness and consistency. This Procedure sets out clear timescales for the submission of Complaints and clear timescales for Applicants to expect a response from the University.

**3.2.** Applicants can expect their Complaint to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others within the University in order to reach a resolution to the Complaint.

**3.3.** An applicant may submit a Complaint only on his or her own behalf; a Complaint submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from the Applicant. Please note that anonymous complaints cannot be investigated.

**3.4.** This Procedure undergoes periodic review and its content is informed by external sources such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

**3.5.** The University ensures that staff working in recruitment, selection and admissions roles are familiar with the Policy and this Procedure and their responsibilities under them.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1. Stage 1: (Informal Stage)

A Complainant should first raise a concern directly with the Academic School or service area that is the subject of their complaint. Efforts will be made to deal with the complaint informally, by an appropriate member of University staff, at this stage. Applicants should receive a response to their Complaint from their School within **10 working days**. Whilst complaints may be resolved at this stage, Complainants are free to access the formal complaints procedure should they not wish to resolve the matter informally, or should they feel that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved.

### 4.2. Stage 2: (Formal Stage)

- 4.2.1. Where early resolution is not reached or where Stage 1 is not suitable due to the complexity or seriousness of the complaint, a Complainant may register a formal complaint within **20 working days** of receiving a response from an appropriate member of University staff. A Stage 2 complaint form should be completed and returned to the Student Admissions Team see section 5 for contact details.
- 4.2.2. The Applicant may seek advice and guidance from the Students' Union Advice Service <http://manchesterstudentsunion.com/advice/service>
- 4.2.3. Please note that Complaint Forms can only be considered where all required information stated has been completed and submitted.
- 4.2.4. On receipt of a Stage 2 Complaint Form, the Student Admissions Team will acknowledge receipt, log the complaint and liaise with the Head of School Administration/Head of service area, or their delegate, from the appropriate Academic School or service area who will investigate the concerns raised by the Complainant. Any further information required by the investigating officer at this stage will be requested from the Complainant and/or the Academic School or service area in writing. This information should be provided by the Complainant and/or the Academic School or service area within **20 working days** of this request. Where additional information is not received from the Complainant within this may be considered formally closed by the investigating officer.
- 4.2.5. Once in receipt of the information required for the Stage 2 investigation, the investigating officer of the Academic School/service area will respond in writing to the Complainant within **20 working days** outlining what, if any, action will be taken in relation to the complaint.
- 4.2.6. The Stage 2 investigation will be undertaken by a member/s of staff not involved in the consideration of the complaint at stage 1.

### 4.3. Stage 3: (Formal Review Stage)

- 4.3.1. Requests for reconsideration under Stage 3 must be made in writing **within 10 working days** of receiving the outcome by writing to the Student Admissions Office via the email address or postal address indicated in section 5 and must indicate the reason for the escalation and why their concerns raised at Stage 2 have not been addressed.
- 4.3.2. The Director of Student Admissions and Administration will review the documents relating to the complaint in order to determine whether appropriate procedures were adhered to under Stage 2 and whether the written outcome was reasonable in the light of the available evidence or if any new evidence should be accepted. The Director of

Student Admissions and Administration will not ordinarily consider the complaint afresh or involve further investigation.

- 4.3.3. The Stage 3 review will be undertaken by a member/s of staff not involved in the consideration of the complaint at an earlier stage.
- 4.3.4. Taking account of the substance of the complaint and the previous attempts at resolution, the Director of Student Admissions and Administration will decide on an appropriate course of action, which may include:
- (a) specific action to resolve the matter; or
  - (b) not upholding the complaint.
- 4.3.5. The applicant will normally be informed of the outcome of a Stage 3 review in writing by the Director of Admissions and Administration's decision **within 20 working days** of receipt of the request for the Stage 3 review. The outcome of the Stage 3 review will be final.

## 5. Submission of Stage 2 and Stage 3 Complaints

Appeals must be submitted on the Complaints Form and be sent to:

Email: [applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk)  
Division of Student Admissions and Administration  
Directorate for the Student Experience  
The University of Manchester  
Burlington Street, Oxford Road  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

## 6. Storage and Processing of Information

All information provided in relation to this complaints procedure will be used solely for the purpose of handling a Complainant's complaint, in accordance with procedure outlined above.

The personal data held about a Complainant is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. It is shared internally only where appropriate in order to meet the purposes detailed above.

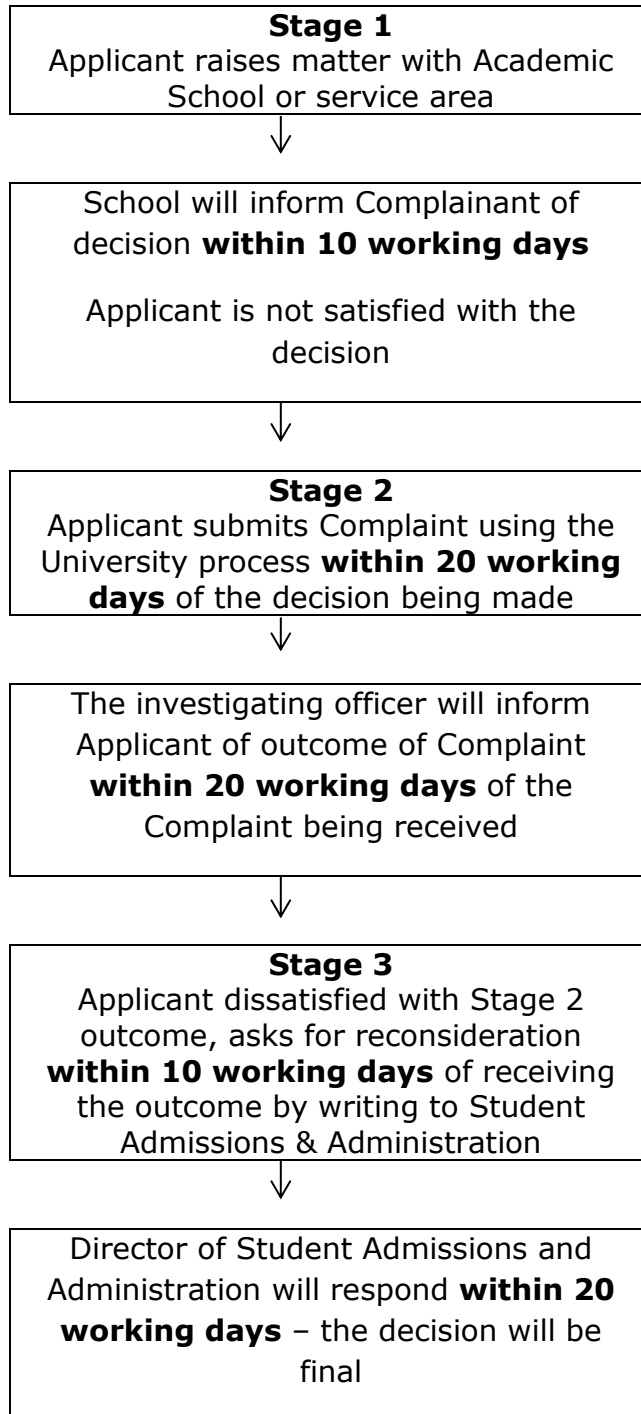
All data is held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

On an annual basis, anonymous statistical information on Complaints will be compiled and reported to the University's Recruitment & Admissions Management Group (RAMG).

## 7. Accessibility

The University endeavours to ensure that this complaints procedure remains easily located and accessible to Complainants via the University website. It will also be provided in writing and (where necessary) verbally, to any Complainant who specifies their intention to register a formal complaint.

## 8. Process Summary – Complaints



<b>Document Control Box</b>	
Procedure title	Applicant Complaint Procedure
Date approved	June 2017
Approving body	Recruitment and Admissions Management Group
Version	1
Supersedes	Appeals and Complaints Procedure
Next review date	February 2020
Related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, General Regulations:	
Equality relevance outcome	High
Related policies and procedures	Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy. Applicant Appeals Procedure.
Related guidance and/or codes of practice	
Policy Owner	Director for Student Admissions and Administration
Lead Contact	Catherine Schofield, Head of Student Services Operations