

The University of Manchester

Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1. General Principles

The University of Manchester welcomes applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed in higher education. We are committed to operating admissions procedures that are fair, efficient, and transparent in order to safeguard the interests of prospective students. Application decisions are made by professional admissions teams to provide a high-quality and consistent service to all applicants. The University's Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy ('Policy') describes the principles that we apply to admissions and outlines the admissions process. The Policy can be found on our [Student terms and conditions, policies and procedures](#) web page.

We recognise however, that there may be occasions when applicants may consider that the University has not adhered to its Policy, or where applicants or offer holders are dissatisfied with their experience or feel that information or material is inadequate or misleading. This procedure informs applicants what to do if they feel that they have grounds for an appeal or wish to make a complaint.

Please note that separate procedures exist for current registered students at the University who wish to submit an academic appeal or make a complaint. Please see our [Student Support pages](#) for further information

2. Definitions and grounds

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to all applicants to the University and to current students who wish to transfer onto a different course where it is necessary for the applicant or student to meet the stated entry requirements. This does not include current students requesting to transfer within an academic School/Department within the same programme for example, from a three-year programme to a four-year programme (e.g. with Industrial/Professional Experience) where progression is subject to meeting specific academic criteria and approval by the relevant School or Exam Board. In such cases, the decision is considered an academic decision, and any appeal should be submitted under the current Student Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 2.2 This Procedure applies to decisions within the admissions process only. Admissions decisions are defined as decisions relating to:
 - the academic selection of candidates for entry to the University and the terms on which candidates are selected.
 - the assignment of an applicant's tuition fee status
 - decisions relating to the verification of documentation used in support of an application for admission.
 - applicant immigration matters, such as the issuance of a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certification
 - acceptance deposit or CAS deposit, including eligibility for refunds.
- 2.3 The University contracts with a select number of international educational advisers who are appointed and monitored according to sector good practice guidance available at

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents>. The International Recruitment team provides training and familiarisation sessions on a regular basis both online and in person to improve applicant experience. Complaints about a contracted educational advisor are not dealt with by the standard process for applicant complaints. Further information about how to submit a complaint about to the University about a contracted educational advisor is set out in this procedure.

- 2.4 This Procedure covers any complaints relating to admissions related University Procedures and Policy which can be found on our [website](#).

Applicants Appeals

- 2.5 An appeal is defined as a request for the review of a selection decision and/or the outcome of an application and asks the University to check that the decision was made fairly on the basis of all the evidence submitted at the time of the original decision.

- 2.6 Applicants may appeal against the handling of their application if there is reason to believe:

- **Procedural irregularity where the applicant believes the University has not adhered to the Policy.** Providing that the decision can be shown to have been reached fairly and in accordance with the Policy, the original decision will not be overturned. Should an applicant believe that the Policy has been wrongly applied this Procedure provides an opportunity for the applicant to appeal.
- **The emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision.** Applicants will need to provide details giving the reasons as to why this information was not available at the time of application. Please note the acceptance of such new material information is at the University's sole discretion and if the University finds that this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application, and was not included in the application, it will not be considered as new material information, and the appeal will be dismissed.
- **Evidence of bias or prejudice.** Applicants will need to provide specific examples with supporting documentation to evidence this.

- 2.7 There is no right to appeal for applications where:

- The applicant has not fulfilled academic or non-academic conditions for admission such as achieving the required qualifications, obtaining a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure, providing necessary information for an occupational health assessment, or receiving medical clearance.
- The appeal is submitted by a third party, unless the applicant has given explicit written consent to the University to correspond with a nominated contact (family member, agent, representative).
- The appeal concerns professional or academic judgment. Examples may include disputes around equivalency/suitability of particular qualifications for entry to the University, the appropriateness of the content of a personal statement or the assessment of a candidate's

interview performance. Applicants are advised that there is no right of appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on an application.

Applicant Complaints

- 2.8 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction by an applicant relating to any information and/or service offered by the University, or to the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the admissions process.
- 2.9 Complaints about external bodies (such as UCAS, UCAT, Research Councils, funding bodies, etc.) cannot be accepted and must be submitted to the relevant organisation.
- 2.10 Complaints will only be considered when submitted within the same admissions cycle that the complaint has arisen in.
- 2.11 Complaints submitted by a third party (family member, agent, representative etc.) without the explicit written consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will complaints which are submitted anonymously.

3. Appeals and Complaints process.

- 3.1 The University will seek to ensure that all appeals and complaints are treated seriously and dealt with promptly and with fairness and consistency. This Procedure sets out clear timescales for the submission of an appeal or complaint and clear timescales for applicants to expect a response from the University.
- 3.2 If an appeal or complaint is upheld, the University will communicate the decision to the applicant and take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If an appeal or complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.
- 3.3 Applicants can expect their appeal or 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 look into an Appeal or Complaint or to provide the appropriate remedy where an appeal or complaint is upheld. By submitting an appeal or complaint, the applicant consents to the disclosure, storage and sharing of information relevant to the appeal or complaint within the University at all stages of the Procedure. If this presents a problem for the applicant, they may wish to seek advice from the appeal or complaint case handler; not providing consent may however affect the University's ability to consider the appeal or complaint fully. A copy of the appeal or complaint casefile will also be retained in accordance with the University's Records Retention Schedule
- 3.4 Applicants are expected to respond promptly to requests for additional information or documentation. Delays by applicants in responding to such requests may result in a place no longer being available for them in the current year of entry, should an appeal or complaint be upheld.
- 3.5 The University ensures that staff working in recruitment, selection, admissions, and immigration roles are familiar with this Procedure and their responsibilities under them.

4. Procedure

Applicant Appeals

4.1 Stage 1 - Informal Feedback Stage

Applicants should request feedback from the relevant admissions team or service area responsible for handling their application. In most cases, this will help applicants to understand why their application was unsuccessful. This stage allows for an informal review of the decision in the event of an error having been made.

4.2 Requests for feedback must:

- be submitted by the applicant via email to the admissions team or service area responsible for handling their application.
- Include the applicant's University ID number, full name, date of birth and the programme of study applied for in their written request.

4.3 Applicants should undertake Stage 1 – Informal Feedback Stage of this Procedure promptly in order to ensure that they can comply with the timescales for submitting a formal appeal set out under Stage 2, should they be dissatisfied with the outcome.

4.4 Stage 2 - Formal Stage

If the applicant remains dissatisfied and believes that they have grounds for appeal they should make an appeal within **20 working days** of the original application decision being made by completing the appeals form and emailing it to the Student Admissions Team (applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk)

4.6 Applicants should ensure that they provide details of the circumstances of their case, including a copy of the feedback provided at Stage 1 – Informal Feedback Stage, set out the actions they have already taken to try to resolve their concern, and state clearly the remedy that they are seeking.

4.7 On receipt of a Stage 2 Appeals Form, a member of the Student Admissions Team will initially consider whether the appeal is made on one or more of the grounds specified in paragraph 2.6, and if it has been submitted in the timeframe specified in 4.4. The University will not normally consider appeals made outside this timeframe, unless there is a credible and compelling reason for the delay. If this test fails, the Applicant will be notified within ten working days of the appeal being received that the appeal is not eligible with the reasons given. There will be no opportunity of the applicant to appeal against this decision.

4.8 If a request for an appeal is accepted, the applicants will be notified. Appeals will be considered by the relevant service area manager (or their nominee), who must not have been involved in the original decision or the Stage 1 informal feedback process.

Depending on the nature of the appeal, this may include:

- The Faculty Admissions Manager or Doctoral Academy Recruitment and Admissions Officer (or their nominee) for application appeals relating to academic Schools or Departments.
- The Student Immigration Manager (or their nominee) for appeals relating to immigration decisions.
- The DSE Admissions Manager (or their nominee) for appeals concerning documentation verification and tuition fee status.

- 4.9 Applicants will normally be informed of the outcome of their appeal in writing via email within 20 working days. If the service area is unable to reach a decision within the stated timescale, the University will inform the applicant of the expected timescale for a full response.
- 4.10 If the appeal is upheld, in all circumstances [the Student Admission Team] will work with the applicant in an attempt to find a suitable remedy, wherever possible. The University may not be able to guarantee admission in the academic session initially requested; admissions at an alternative point of entry may be offered.
- 4.11 The outcome of the Stage 2 Appeal will be final.

Applicant Complaints

4.12 Stage 1 – Informal Stage

An applicant should first raise a concern directly with the relevant admissions team or service area responsible 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 the relevant admissions team or service area within 10 working days. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response, they may submit a formal Complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

Applicants may submit a formal complaint, in accordance with Stage 2, at the outset where they consider that the complaint is too serious or complex to be considered through the informal route.

4.13 Stage 2 – Formal Stage

Where early resolution is not reached, an applicant may submit a formal complaint within 20 working days of receiving the informal response at Stage 1.

4.14 A complaint must be submitted via email to the Student Admissions Team

(applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk) within the same admissions cycle that complaint has arisen in and include all the following information:

- Applicant's name, email address, postal address, and (if appropriate) University ID number.
- Details of the programme 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 that response is unsatisfactory.
- Any evidence to support the complaint.
- An indication of the outcome the applicant is seeking.

- 4.15 If an applicant fails to supply any of the above information the Complaint may not be investigated. The Student Admissions team will confirm this to the complainant in writing and the reason/s for not processing the complaint any further.
- 4.16 On receipt of a Stage 2 Complaint, the Student Admissions Team will acknowledge receipt, log the complaint, and liaise with the relevant service area manager (or their nominee), who must not have been involved in the Stage 1 informal stage.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, this may include:

- The Faculty Admissions Manager or Doctoral Academy Recruitment and Admissions Officer (or their nominee) for complaints relating to academic Schools or Departments.
- The Student Immigration Manager (or their nominee) for complaints relating to immigration decisions.
- The DSE Admissions Manager (or their nominee) for complaints concerning documentation verification and tuition fee status.
- International Country Manager (or their nominee) for complaints regarding University contracted educational advisors.

The relevant service manager will investigate the concerns raised by the applicant. Any further information required by the investigating officer at this stage will be requested from the applicant and/or the academic School/Department in writing. This information should be provided by the applicant and/or the academic School/Department within 20 working days of this request. Where additional information is not received from the applicant within this time period, the complaint may be considered formally closed by the investigating officer unless there is a credible or compelling reason for the delay.

- 4.17 Once in receipt of the information required for the Stage 2 investigation, the investigating officer of the relevant service area will respond in writing to the applicant within 20 working days outlining its findings and what, if any, action will be taken in relation to the complaint.
- 4.18 Reasonable action to remedy a complaint which is upheld could, for example, include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedure.
- 4.19 The outcome of the Stage 2 Complaint will be final.

5. Conclusion of appeal/complaint process

The outcome of an Applicant Stage 2 Appeal or Complaint is final. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) - the independent student complaints body - is only able to review complaints and appeals from current or former registered students of a university. It does not consider complaints or appeals from applicants in relation to admissions decisions, including fee assessment, the admissions process, or the handling of an application, as applicants are not registered students at the time these matters occur. Where an individual is not a current or former registered student of the University, the University is unable to issue a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter, as the matter falls outside the scope of the OIA scheme. This position is set out on the OIA [website](#).

6. Submission of Stage 2 Appeal

Applicant Appeals must be submitted on the relevant Appeals Form and be sent via email to: applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk

Applicant Complaints should be submitted via email to: applicantappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk

7. Complaints about University contracted international educational advisors.

Where an applicant has a complaint about a University contracted educational advisor, they should submit a complaint in writing to the International Recruitment team at overseasnetwork@manchester.ac.uk. The

International Recruitment team will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, look into the issues raised with the contracted educational advisor and take any appropriate action to ensure an improved experience for applicants.

8. Unacceptable behaviour

The University may exceptionally terminate or suspend consideration of an appeal or complaint where an applicant'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.

9. Storage and Processing of Information

All information provided in relation to this Procedure will be used solely for the purpose of handling an Applicant's Appeal and Complaints, in accordance with Procedure outlined above.

The University's [Privacy Notice – prospective students, applicants and offer-holders](#) explains how we collect, maintain and use personal data when you make enquiries about studying at The University of Manchester (including by registering to attend our open days), make an application and if you go on to become an offer holder i.e. the time before you become a registered student.

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

10. Accessibility

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

Document Control Box	
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Date approved	28.04.2026
Approving body	Admissions Operational Management Group (AOMG) Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Implementation Group (TLSiG)
Version	2
Supersedes	Applicants Appeals Procedure Applicants Complaints Procedure
Next review date	April 2028
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Equality relevance outcome	High
Related policies and procedures	Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy
Related guidance and/or codes of practice	
Policy Owner	Head of Student Admissions and Administration
Lead Contact	Admissions Officer (Training, Policy and Governance), DSE Admissions