

## Applicant Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure

### Policy

#### 1. Guiding Principles

- 1.1 Through the *Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure* below, the University aims to investigate appeals and complaints in a timely, transparent and fair manner.
- 1.2 The University will seek to resolve the matter at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 1.3 Appeals and complaints that require particularly swift action will be identified quickly.
- 1.4 The University will investigate fairly and thoroughly.
- 1.5 Each party will be given an opportunity to present their case.
- 1.6 If there are allegations of a criminal offence, the University may suspend its own investigations until the outcome of any criminal proceedings are known.
- 1.7 All appeals and complaints will be treated with the utmost confidentiality as far as reasonably practicable.
- 1.8 No applicant will be disadvantaged as a result of making an appeal or complaint.

#### 2. Who can appeal?

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all applicants to the University of Buckingham.
- 2.2 An appeal is a formal request for the review and reconsideration of an outcome of an admissions decision if you feel that:
  - a) The University did not appropriately consider the application in accordance with published procedures.
  - b) Not all of the information provided in the application was taken into account.
  - c) New information has become available and you can provide a good reason for it not being disclosed earlier in the process.
  - d) There is evidence of discrimination or bias.
- 2.3 The procedure below cannot be used where the issue relates to the service or procedures of UCAS.
- 2.4 Anonymous appeals will not be considered.
- 2.5 Appeals lodged by third parties will not be considered.

#### 3. Who can complain?

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all applicants to the University of Buckingham.
- 3.2 A complaint is an expression of concern or dissatisfaction with the services or conduct you have received during the application process.
- 3.3 We cannot consider complaints about responses to general enquiries prior to the offer stage of the admissions process.

- 3.4 The procedure below cannot be used where a complaint relates to the service or procedures of UCAS.
- 3.5 Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- 3.6 Complaints lodged by third parties will not be considered.

#### **4. Sources of advice and information**

- 4.1 Before making a complaint, you may wish to seek advice from one of the following:
  - a) Faculty Admissions Officers
  - b) Admissions Tutor
  - c) Central Admissions
  - d) Marketing
  - e) Citizens Advice Bureau

### **Procedure**

#### **5. Informal Stage**

- 5.1 In most cases, it may be possible for issues to be addressed at an early stage by discussing them with a member of staff in Admissions and/or requesting feedback.
- 5.2 Issues must be raised within two weeks of taking place and the staff member will aim to resolve the issue, where practicable, within two weeks.
- 5.3 Any delay to this timing will be communicated to you by the staff member you have consulted.
- 5.4 You are advised to keep a record of any informal contact with staff.
- 5.5 Staff will keep a record of action taken in response.

#### **6. Formal Stage**

If your concerns remain unaddressed after the informal stage, or if resolution is not possible due to the complexity or seriousness of the case, you can lodge a formal appeal/complaint as follows:

- 6.1 The Applicant Appeals/Complaints Form must be completed and submitted to the Admissions Manager, together with evidence that you have previously raised the issue informally.
- 6.2 The Admissions Manager will check the eligibility of the appeal/complaint to ensure that the Applicant Appeals and Complaints Procedure is applicable.

##### *Appeals*

- 6.3 You will be provided with written acknowledgement by the Admissions Manager of receipt of your appeal within five days of submitting your form.
- 6.4 The Admissions Manager will review the application and decision-making information with the relevant academic department.
- 6.5 If your appeal is upheld, you will be informed of the outcome and the action taken.
- 6.6 If your appeal is not upheld, the Admissions Manager will detail the reasons for your decision to you in writing.
- 6.7 The University seeks to review all appeals **within two weeks** of receipt of an Applicant Appeals/Complaints Form.

6.8 Any delay in this timing will be communicated to you.

*Eligible complaints:*

- 6.9 You will be provided with written acknowledgement by the Admissions Manager of receipt of your complaint within five days of submitting your form.
- 6.10 The Admissions Manager, or nominee, will investigate it.
- 6.11 You will be notified of the outcome by the Admissions Manager in a Completion of Investigation Letter, detailing the decision and an explanation for it.
- 6.12 The University seeks to resolve all complaints **within two weeks** of receipt of an Applicant Appeals/Complaints Form.
- 6.13 Any delay in this timing will be communicated to you.

*Ineligible complaints:*

- 6.14 Malicious or vexatious complaints will not be considered.
- 6.15 If a complaint is deemed to be malicious, frivolous, vexatious or ineligible, the Registrar (or nominee) will inform the applicant.
- 6.16 In such circumstances, the applicant will have the right of appeal to Pro Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor.
- 6.17 Such appeals must be made in writing to the Pro Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor within two weeks of the decision of the Registrar (or nominee).
- 6.18 The decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor will be final.

## **7. Review Stage**

- 7.1 If you are unsatisfied after the investigation into your appeal/complaint, you have the right to ask for a review of your case **within two weeks** of receiving the outcome.
- 7.2 You will need to complete The Applicant Request for Review Form and submit it to the Student Complaints Officer.
- 7.3 No new grounds may be raised, but new evidence can be submitted.
- 7.4 You may be invited to a meeting to discuss the appeal/complaint where an administrator will be present to take notes.
- 7.5 A friend or representative may attend the meeting with you.
- 7.6 The Registrar (or nominee) will review the case **within one month**.
- 7.7 The Registrar (or nominee) may uphold the appeal/complaint in part or whole and take appropriate action or dismiss the appeal/complaint if there is no case to answer.
- 7.8 If the Registrar (or nominee) has a conflict of interest, the case will be referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellor for review.
- 7.9 You will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter from the Student Complaints Officer informing you of the outcome.
- 7.10 Central Admissions will keep confidential records of all formal complaints that have been lodged.