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COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (APPLICANTS)

# Key Details

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| **POLICY TITLE** | Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applicants) |
| **DATE APPROVED** | May 2023 |
| **APPROVING BODY** | Academic Board via Academic Quality and Standards Committee |
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| **RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / GUIDANCE** | Admissions Policy:  <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/study/adviceforapplicants/Pages/Admissions-Policy.aspx>  Complaints Policy and Procedure:  <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/Complaints.aspx> |
| **IMPLEMENTATION DATE** | May 2023 |
| **POLICY OWNER (JOB TITLE)** | Director of Registry Services |
| **UNIT / SERVICE** | Registry Services |
| **CONTACT EMAIL** | complaints@cardiffmet.ac.uk |

# Version Control

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| **VERSION** | **DATE** | **REASON FOR CHANGE** |
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Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applicants)

# Introduction

## Cardiff Met University (‘the University’) is committed to providing a high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedure for all applicants. As outlined in the University Admissions Policy decision making is free from bias and prejudice.

## The University recognises, however that there may be occasions when an applicant may have a concern about the operation of the University’s Admissions Policy and Procedure, or feels dissatisfied with a particular outcome of an application. As such, this Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applicants) has been implemented to offer an opportunity for applicants to raise such concerns.

## The University Admissions Cycle runs from September to October each academic year. For some postgraduate and all Doctoral research programmes applications can be made to the University at different times throughout the year, dependant on when programmes start. Please refer to programme webpages at cardiffmet.ac.uk for start dates.

## The University sets out as part of the application process important minimum entry requirements (including non-academic) for its programmes. To ensure these requirements are accessible these are set out in the entry requirements section of the University website, and for undergraduate programmes via UCAS course search.

## Applicants are encouraged to discuss any problems with the service provided as part of the Admissions Cycle with members of the Admissions Team in the first instance. This would normally be the staff member they have been dealing with initially and then if not resolved via the Head of Admissions. It is envisaged that such an informal approach will resolve most of such issues. Should an applicant then wish to formalise their concerns they can choose to make use of the formal procedure specified in Section 6.2 below.

## An applicant will not be disadvantaged in any way from them making use of the Complaints Policy and Procedure (Admissions)

## The formal procedure makes a distinction between an appeal against the decision made on a specific application, and a complaint about the application process. An appeal and / or complaint will only be considered on specific grounds.

# Applicants

## This Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applications) is available for use by anyone who has concerns about the University Admissions Cycle. This includes both Home and International applicants and includes applications that are made directly to the University, or via a third party such as UCAS or agents. It also includes applications for internal transfers between programmes at the University.

## Home undergraduate applications will normally progress through the UCAS system information: ucas.com.

## Further information is provided to International Applicants e.g. UKVI requirements via the International pages of the University Website: <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/international/Pages/default.aspx>

# Other Relevant Policy

## A copy of the Admissions Policy is available at: <https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/study/adviceforapplicants/Pages/Admissions-Policy.aspx>

## Further information on the Admissions Policy, or alternative versions can also be obtained from the Admissions Team via [askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk).

# Third Parties

## A complaint, and / or appeal must normally be made directly by the applicant to the University. A complaint or appeal from a third party will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where an applicant has provided valid reasons for such a request.

## The University takes its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act / GDPR extremely seriously. Appeals / complaints which are submitted by third parties without the specific written consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will appeals / complaints which are submitted anonymously be investigated.

## An applicant can nominate a representative to manage their complaint / appeal on their behalf. To action this, the applicant must email: [askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk) using the email address supplied as part of their application, to confirm the name / relationship / email address of the person they wish to represent them.

# Complaints and Appeals

## The Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applicants) can be used by an applicant to **complain** about the admissions process within the same admissions cycle that the complaint has arisen in. A complaint under this policy is defined as **‘*an expression of dissatisfaction or concern an applicant may have about an alleged procedural error, irregularity or poor administration in the admissions policy or procedure’.***

## The Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applicants) can also be used by an applicant to **appeal** a decision to refuse a particular place on a programme within 30 working days following the date of the University’s decision. An appeal under this policy is defined as ***‘a request for reconsideration of an admissions decision and /or the outcome of an application or interview, or the wording or terms and conditions of an offer made to an applicant’.***

## Appeals outside of this date, may still be considered if an applicant provides a good reason or mitigating circumstance (supported by evidence) for submitting an appeal outside of the specified timeframe. The Head of Admissions or their nominee may consider the reason for the lateness and will confirm, whether the appeal will be accepted for consideration. This decision will be final.

## The University will not consider complaints and /or appeals that are based on matters considered to be of ‘academic judgement’. Staff in the Admissions Team and School will provide guidance on entry and selection criteria, and can explain why a particular decision has been made. The University will not however action a complaint or appeal simply because an applicant does not agree with the set criteria.

# Complaints Procedure

## Informal Stage (Stage 1) – Admissions Team

## Request for Feedback

### An applicant is entitled to receive feedback on their application if it is rejected. An applicant should initially make a request for feedback via the Admissions Team: askadmissions@cardffmet.ac.uk. The Team will aim to provide a response to an applicant within 10 working days of a request. This response will include the main reason for the application being unsuccessful. Further information may also be provided by the relevant School.

### Informal Complaint

### An applicant may wish to raise a complaint about the admissions process followed. In the first instance a complaint should be sent to the Admissions Team who will look to provide a response to the concerns raised within 30 working days. The applicant will be informed if there is any anticipated delay.

### Informal Appeal

### Once feedback is provided, an applicant may ask for an application to be reconsidered. A request for such an appeal should be made in writing and sent to: askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk within 30 working days of the applicant being notified by the University that their application has been refused. If the same / similar information is provided as part of an appeal, then the Admissions Team will apply an informal approach and will ask the relevant School to reconsider the application. An outcome will be sent to an applicant within 20 working days of receiving the appeal request. The applicant will be informed if there is any anticipated delay.

### On the basis of feedback provided to an applicant under Para 6.1.1. above an applicant may consider it necessary to submit further documentation as evidence to support their application. If new evidence is supplied, such as additional qualifications that were not listed on the application, or personal mitigating circumstances then the University reserves the right to decide whether the new evidence should be considered as part of a complaint or appeal, An applicant wishing to rely on new evidence must provide a reason as to why the documentation or mitigating circumstances were not submitted as part of the original application, for this to be taken into consideration.

## Formal Stage (Investigation) (Stage 2)

### The University envisages that the majority of cases will be resolved through the informal routes (including feedback) outlined above. An applicant can however request that their complaint and /or appeal is progressed to the Formal Stage (Investigation).

### A request must be submitted in writing, and the University’s Complaints Form can be used for this purpose. The Form can be found using the link below. A Welsh language version of the form is also available on the link:

### [Cardiff Met Complaints](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/Complaints.aspx)

### A complaint should be submitted in the same Admissions Cycle the complaint has arisen in. The following information should be provided:

### Name / Email Address / Postal Address;

### Programme applied for;

### Nature of complaint;

### Steps taken to resolve the matter (including informal stage);

### Details of any response received and reasons why this is not satisfactory;

### Evidence to support complaint;

### Outcome being sought.

### An appeal should be submitted within 30 days of the University’s decision to refuse an application. The following information should be provided:

### Name /Email Address / Postal Address;

### Programme applied for;

### Specific detail of the ground(s) of appeal;

### Evidence to support appeal;

### Outcome being sought.

### The complaint / appeal will normally be acknowledged by the Complaints and Conduct Team (Registry Services) within 5 working days. An applicant will then be notified if their complaint and appeal is to be taken forward under the formal stage Investigation).

### The Dean of School with the support of the Head of Admissions, and Complaints and Conduct Manager will arrange for an investigation to be undertaken by an Investigating Officer (IO), who will be a senior colleague who has not previously been involved in the matter. The Investigation may consider a complaint and /or appeal from an applicant. When the Investigation is concluded, the IO will submit a report to the Complaints and Conduct Manager for monitoring purposes.

### The investigation will be completed as quickly as possible and the applicant will normally be informed of the outcome of their complaint and/ or appeal within 30 working days of receipt of it. The Investigating Officer may however require some further information from the applicant. The applicant will be informed if there is any anticipated delay. It is anticipated that most correspondence with the applicant will be via email.

### If the complaint and /or appeal is ‘upheld’, then the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate. The applicant will be informed of the outcome in writing. If an appeal is ‘Not Upheld’ then the applicant will be informed of the reasons for this decision in writing.

### Reasonable action to address a complaint could, for example, include an apology from the School, or agreement to review policy and procedures etc. Reasonable action following an appeal that is ‘Upheld’ would be for the University to reconsider the application, or conditions of offer. In such circumstances, the University may not be able to guarantee admission to the academic session originally requested. Admission at an alternative point of entry may be required.

## Formal Stage (Review) (Stage 3)

### Where an applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome provided at Formal Stage (Investigation), they may request that the outcome of their complaint / appeal be reviewed by a different investigator at Formal Stage (Review), who will be independent of the matter. In order to request a complaint and /or appeal is progressed to Formal Stage (Review) an applicant must submit details in writing to the Complaints and Conduct Team: complaints@cardiffmet.ac.uk within 10 working days from the notification of the outcome of Formal Stage (Investigation). The following information should be provided:

### Specific details on ground(s) of complaint, and /or appeal;

### Outcome being sought;

### Reasons why the decision at Formal Stage (investigation) is not satisfactory.

### Taking into account the substance of the complaint and / or appeal, the matter will normally be reviewed by the Complaints and Conduct Manager or his /her nominee (Reviewer), and an applicant will be notified within 5 working days whether the Review is to proceed.

### The Reviewer will have access to all previous correspondence and Outcomes form previous stages.

### The Review should be completed, and outcome communicated to the applicant within 30 working days of the start of the Review. The Reviewer may however require some further information from the applicant. The applicant will be informed if there is any anticipated delay. Most correspondence with the applicant will be via email. Where appropriate, the applicant will also be informed of any action the University intends to take.

### The decision of the Reviewer will be final, and will be the end of complaint, and /or appeal by an applicant.

# Welsh Language Standards

## The University supports the principles of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and has adopted the principle of treating the English and Welsh language equally.

## The University is fully committed to meeting the Welsh language standards set under the powers provided in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and to ensuring that the Welsh language has equal status. In line with those standards the following principles apply:

* This policy and procedure is available in Welsh;
* Applicants can submit a complaint and or an appeal, and any correspondence in Welsh;
* Where any complaint and / or appeal is made in Welsh any written response will be provided in Welsh;
* When the University informs an applicant of a decision and / or an outcome that has been reached in relation to a complaint or appeal, this will be made available in Welsh where the applicant has submitted a complaint and /or appeal in Welsh.

# Storage and Processing of Complaints and Appeals Information

## All complaints and appeals by an applicant will be dealt with confidentially and with due regard for privacy. Information may be disclosed to members of the University who have a need to access it to investigate or review the matter. The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the University’s duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR.

## The Complaints Policy and Procedure (Applications) will be reviewed annually, usually before the beginning of the next academic year. This is the responsibility of the Complaints and Conduct Manager, in consultation with the Head of Admissions.

# Contact Details

## Head of Admissions: [askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:askadmissions@cardiffmet.ac.uk) and

## Complaints and Conduct Manager: [complaints@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@cardiffmet.ac.uk)

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