

APPLICANT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY (TAUGHT COURSES)

1.0 Introduction

The University of Huddersfield is committed to providing a high-quality service to all applicants and the University's Admissions Policies are designed to ensure that all applicants are considered fairly, consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

This policy aims to ensure that all complaints or appeals are handled fairly, consistently, and in line with the University's commitment to transparency and professionalism.

2.0 Purpose and Context

The University aims to resolve most applicant complaints and appeals informally where possible, for example by providing detailed feedback to applicants about how an admissions decision was reached. However, the University recognises that there may be instances where applicants are dissatisfied with or wish to formally appeal against an admissions decision. The University takes all such matters seriously and deals with them in confidence and without fear of recrimination or disadvantage.

The policy does not cover strategic decisions relating to the overall size and delivery of courses, or to caps on student numbers in particular courses whether imposed by the University, government or professional bodies. Any correspondence on these matters should be directed to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) who has overall responsibility for the admissions policy.

The policy specifies the timescales within which complaints and appeals should be submitted, which are outlined in Section 3.

3.0 Scope

This policy establishes a framework for addressing admissions-related complaints and appeals at the University, ensuring fairness, transparency, and efficiency. It outlines how staff should manage complaints and appeals, offering clarity on the procedures and types of cases covered under the policy.

Definitions

- **Complaint:** A formal expression of dissatisfaction with the University's admission process or staff conduct, such as procedural errors or maladministration.

- **Appeal:** A formal request to reconsider a decision made during the admissions process, typically about an application outcome.

Covered Complaints/Appeals:

- **Procedural errors or maladministration:** Complaints regarding how a query or application was handled.
- **Admissions criteria not applied fairly:** Requests to review an admission decision due to concerns about the application of criteria.
- **New material affecting the decision:** If new relevant information emerges, the applicant can appeal. However, if this information was available at the time of application but not submitted, it will generally not be considered.

Exclusions from Complaints and Appeals:

- Complaints or appeals from third parties.
- Disputes based on academic judgment.
- Appeals regarding decisions already accepted by the applicant.
- Requests that violate government regulations or external contracts (e.g., UCAS).
- Applications from previous academic years.
- Appeals that would breach immigration regulations for the applicant or the University.

This policy covers applicant complaints and appeals for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses, including Apprenticeships. It covers direct applications to the University of Huddersfield for courses delivered at partner institutions (e.g. PGCE courses) as students on these courses are registered as University of Huddersfield students. This policy covers admission for all modes of study including full and part time, distance learning and block delivery.

4.0 Submission and Investigation of Complaints/Appeals

Complaints or appeals against admissions decisions should normally be made by the applicant **only after** they have received feedback under the feedback processes outlined in the University's Admission Policy: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Admissions-Policy.pdf>, section 4, Feedback to Applicants.

This approach ensures that applicants have a clear understanding of how their application was assessed and the reasons behind the admissions decision. If, after receiving the feedback, the applicant still feels dissatisfied with the outcome, they can then proceed with a formal complaint or appeal.

A flow chart showing a summary of the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure is available: <https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/ApplicantComplaintsandAppealsProcessFlowchart.pdf>

4.1 First stage: Informal Resolution

Applicants who are dissatisfied with feedback received should submit their complaint or appeal under **Stage 1 Informal Resolution** as outlined in the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure. The procedure can be accessed <https://www.hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/how-to-apply/applicant-complaints-and-appeals-procedure/>

An applicant must put their concerns in writing using the **Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form (Stage 1 section)**, which is found in **Appendix A** of the policy. The complaint or appeal must be submitted within **10 working days** of receiving formal feedback.

This ensures that concerns are raised promptly and allows for an initial informal resolution before potentially progressing to more formal stages of the complaints and appeals process.

Completed **Applicant Complaint/Appeal Forms (Stage 1)** along with supporting evidence, should be sent by email to the appropriate contact:

- For UK applicants, send to: study@hud.ac.uk:
- For EU and International applicants, send to: international.office@hud.ac.uk

Upon receiving the complaint or appeal, the **Student Recruitment Manager** (for UK applicants) or the **Head of International Operations** (for EU and International applicants), or their nominee, will investigate the matter. If necessary, they will consult with relevant academic staff before providing a response.

A written response will be provided to the applicant, either by letter or email, **normally within 10 working days**. This response will conclude the **informal stage** of the complaints and appeals procedure.

4.2 Second Stage: Formal Stage

Applicant who are dissatisfied with the written explanation provided at **Stage 1** of the complaints or appeals process, should proceed to **Stage 2: Formal Stage** of the **Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy Procedure**. The procedure can be accessed <https://www.hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/how-to-apply/applicant-complaints-and-appeals-procedure/>: Stage 2 offers a more formal review of the complaint or appeal, allowing the applicant to present their concerns for further investigation and resolution.

If an applicant wishes to proceed to **Stage 2: Formal Stage** of the complaints and appeals process, the must put their concerns in writing using the form in **Appendix A - Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form (Stage 2 section)**.

This form should be submitted **within 10 working days** of the date they receive the response from **Stage 1**. This ensures that the complaint or appeal is raised in a timely manner and allows for a formal review of the matter.

Completed **Applicant Complaint/Appeal Forms (Stage 2)**, should be sent by email to the appropriate contact:

- For UK applicants, send to: study@hud.ac.uk:
- For EU and International applicants, send to: international.office@hud.ac.uk

Completed Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form Stage 2 with evidence should be sent by email to:

study@hud.ac.uk: UK applicants

international.office@hud.ac.uk (EU and International applicants)

The **Stage 2** complaint or appeal form should clearly outline the **grounds for dissatisfaction** with the response provided by the **Student Recruitment Manager, Head of International Operations**, or their nominee.

Applicants should:

- **Explain why they are dissatisfied** with the Stage 1 response.
- **Include any relevant supporting evidence or previous correspondence** related to the complaint or appeal.

This will provide a complete context for the formal review at Stage 2, helping the University to understand the applicant's concerns and ensure a thorough investigation.

At **Stage 2**, the **Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment** (for UK applicants) or **Director of International Development** (for EU/International applicants), or their nominee, will review the complaint or appeal. They will consult with the **Student Recruitment Manager, Head of International Operations**, and relevant staff within the University School as necessary. Further inquiries will be conducted, and a written response will be provided **normally within 15 working days** of receiving the complaint or appeal.

In cases where the complaint involves specific members of staff, those staff members will have the right to:

- See copies of relevant documentation.
- Present evidence to the **Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment** or **Director of International Development** (or their nominee).
- Be informed of the outcome of the complaint or appeal.

The University reserves the right to maintain confidentiality in cases related to staff disciplinary matters.

If a complaint or appeal is upheld, the **Director of Marketing, Communications and Student Recruitment** or **Director of International Development** may make recommendations to the **Dean/Director** or **Head of the relevant Academic or Service Department**. Additionally, recommendations may be made to University committees regarding quality assurance policies or procedures.

4.3 Third Stage: Appeal

An applicant who is dissatisfied with the outcome of **Stage 2** can follow **Stage 3 Appeal** of the **Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy Procedure**. The procedure is available <https://www.hud.ac.uk/undergraduate/how-to-apply/applicant-complaints-and-appeals-procedure/>

An applicant who remains dissatisfied after **Stage 2**, may **appeal in writing** to the **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)**. The appeal must be submitted **within 10 working days** of the date of the letter outlining the **Stage 2 Formal Complaint Decision**.

The appeal should be made in writing and clearly addressed to the **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)**, who will review the matter at this final stage of the complaints and appeals process.

Appeals should be sent by email to the following addresses:

- For **UK applicants**: study@hud.ac.uk
- For **EU and International applicants**: international.office@hud.ac.uk

When submitting an appeal to the **Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)**, the applicant should include:

- **Copies of previous correspondence** and any **supporting documentation**.
- A clear explanation of why the outcome of **Stage 2** did not resolve the complaint or appeal.
- **new evidence cannot be introduced** at this stage.

The **Pro Vice-Chancellor** will review the case based on the substance of the complaint or appeal. A decision will be made about whether the matter should be referred to a **Review Panel**. However, there will be **no grounds for referral** if, in the reasonable judgment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, the admissions decision was made correctly and impartially in line with the published admissions criteria, and the appellant has not provided evidence of a material irregularity.

If the appeal is not referred to a Review Panel, the Pro Vice-Chancellor will notify the appellant of this decision in writing, normally within **10 working days** of receiving the appeal.

If a **Review Panel** is deemed necessary, it will be composed as follows:

- **The Pro Vice-Chancellor** (or **Dean of the Graduate School**) will serve as the **Chair**.
- Two **Heads of Department** or interviewers from departments unrelated to the applicant's area of application.
- The **Director of Marketing** or **Director of International Operations**, or their nominee, will act as a **technical adviser** and **note-taker**.

None of the **Review Panel members** will have had prior involvement in the case, ensuring impartiality.

Key Details of the Review Panel Process:

- The **Review Panel** will typically meet within **20 working days** of receiving the appeal letter, though this may be extended during university vacations.
- The Panel will communicate its conclusions to the applicant and the relevant department **within 20 working days** of the meeting.
- The **decision of the Review Panel** is **final** and cannot be appealed further.

If the complaint or appeal is upheld, the **Chair of the Review Panel** may make recommendations to the **Dean/Director** or **Head of the relevant Academic or Service department**. The Panel may also make recommendations to University committees regarding **quality assurance policies or procedures**.

If the complaint or appeal is not upheld, the applicant will be informed in writing with a clear explanation of the reasons for the rejection.

It is important to note that there is **no further appeal** allowed beyond the **Third Stage**. The decision of the Review Panel is conclusive.

Appendix A: Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form

Applicant Complaint/Appeal Form

Complaints or appeals against admissions decisions should normally be made by the applicant **only after** an applicant has received feedback under the feedback processes outlined in Section 4 of the [University's Admission Policy](#)

Applicants who are dissatisfied with feedback received should submit their complaint or appeal under **Stage 1 Informal Resolution** as outlined in the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Procedure. The procedure can be accessed [Applicant Complaint and Appeals Procedure](#)

General Information

Surname/Family Name	
First Name	
Applicant ID Number	
Name of Course applied to. For example; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA in Business Management • MSc in Computer Science 	
Have you read the Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you completed the Feedback process outlined in Section 4 of the Admissions Policy ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you submitting a complaint or appeal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal
Are you submitting a Stage 1 or Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2

Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal: Informal Stage

At **Stage 1**, you are in the **informal stage** of the complaints and appeals process.

To clearly explain your complaint or appeal, please use the following guidelines:

- State who or what your complaint/appeal is about
- Provide a chronological account of events
- Describe the actions you have taken
- List who you have spoken with

This information will help the University better understand your situation and ensure the matter is addressed appropriately.

Date(s)	Details

Please indicate the **outcome** or **further action** you are hoping for to resolve this issue. This could include:

- **Requesting a reconsideration** of the admissions decision
- **Seeking an apology** or acknowledgment of a procedural error.
- **Requesting feedback** on why a decision was made.
- **Asking for a review of a specific aspect** of the application process (e.g., fairness of criteria application).
- **Recommending specific changes** to the admissions process or handling of your application.

Being clear about the resolution you seek will help the University understand your expectations and facilitate a more focused and appropriate response.

Please include a **list of supporting evidence** that you believe is relevant to your case. For each piece of evidence, explain why it supports your complaint or appeal. For example:
Email correspondence with the admissions team to show previous attempts at resolving the issue

Application documents

Feedback from previous stages to show what feedback you received and why you believe it was insufficient

Record of communication with staff to show discussions you had with University staff about your complaint

Please submit supporting evidence as separate files and reference each one in your written complaint or appeal, explaining how each piece of evidence is relevant to your case. This will help the University assess your complaint or appeal more effectively.

Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal Submission and Declaration

Please ensure that you have completed all required sections of the form, including the General **Information** and **Stage 1** sections. By signing this form, you are declaring that the information you have provided is true and accurate.

Electronic signatures are accepted. You do not need to print, sign and scan your complaint/appeal form. Simply sign electronically when submitting the form. and evidence by email, as attachments to:

Submission Instructions:

- For **UK applicants**, please submit your form and evidence by email to: **study@hud.ac.uk**.
- For **EU and International applicants**, please submit your form and evidence by email to: **international.office@hud.ac.uk**.

You will normally receive a written response, including the reasons for the outcome, within **10 working days** of the date we receive your Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal.

Signed:

Date: Select Date.

Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal: Formal Stage

If you are proceeding to Stage 2 of the complaints and appeals process, this stage is for formally addressing your dissatisfaction with the outcome of **Stage 1**. To complete this stage, please ensure that you do the following:

1. **Stage 1 Complaint/Appeal Form:** Attach your completed Stage 1 form, including all relevant evidence, along with this Stage 2 form.
2. **Explanation of Dissatisfaction:** Clearly explain why you are unhappy with the outcome of **Stage 1**. This may include details such as:
 - Why you feel the response was inadequate or did not address your concerns.
 - Any specific aspects of the Stage 1 decision that you disagree with, or feel were not considered properly.

This will help the University understand your concerns and begin a thorough review at **Stage 2**.

Supporting Evidence

- Provide a list of any new or additional evidence you are submitting at Stage 2 that was **not included in Stage 1**.
- Explain why you think it is relevant to your complaint or appeal
- Ensure that each piece of evidence is referenced in your explanation and submitted as separate documents.

This will help the University understand how the evidence supports your case and why it should be considered.

Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal Submission and Declaration

When submitting your **Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal** form, please follow these key steps to ensure the process runs smoothly:

1. Complete All Relevant Sections

- Make sure all sections of the form, including **General Information, Stage 1, and Stage 2**, are fully completed. This includes providing a detailed explanation of why you are dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome and submitting any **additional supporting evidence** you may have.
- **Failure to complete the form correctly or submit evidence promptly** may result in delays in processing your complaint.

2. Declaration

- By signing the form (electronic signatures are accepted), you declare that the information provided is **true and accurate** to the best of your knowledge.

3. Submission Instructions

- Submit your completed **Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal Form** and any supporting evidence by email to:
 - **UK applicants: study@hud.ac.uk**
 - **EU and International applicants: international.office@hud.ac.uk**

4. Response Timeline

- You will **normally** receive a written response, including the reasons for the outcome, within **15 working days** of the date the University receives your Stage 2 Complaint/Appeal.

Ensuring that all sections are filled out correctly and that your evidence is submitted promptly will help ensure that your complaint or appeal is processed efficiently.

Signed:

Date: Select Date

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	Applicant Complaints and Appeals Policy (Taught Courses)
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Equality Impact Assessment:	January 2024
Privacy Impact Assessment:	PIA not applicable
Approved by:	University Teaching and Learning Committee
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Consulted with	Deputy Head of Marketing Director of Marketing, Communication and Student Recruitment Disability and Inclusion Manager Head of Schools and Colleges Liaison International Office Professional Course Student Recruitment Team School Admissions Contacts (Heads of Department and School Operation Managers) Student Records Team Student Recruitment and Admissions Team Registry UG and PGT Admissions Tutors
Author	Student Recruitment Manager
Owner (if different from above):	Director of Marketing Recruitment and Communications
Document Location:	https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/policydocuments/Applicant-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy.pdf
Compliance Checks:	Number of appeals/complaints received and investigated.
Related Policies/Procedures:	Admissions Policy (Taught Programmes); Interview Policy; Arrangements for the admission of applicants under the age of 18, ApplicantComplaintsandAppealsProcessFlowchart.pdf applicant-complaint-and-appeal-form.pdf Applicant Complaints and Appeals procedure - University of Huddersfield Student Complaints Procedure

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V3.0	January 2025	Major Review: Changes to text to improve clarity and understanding of the policy and procedures. Introduction summary has been added in line with policy framework requirements.	Student Recruitment Manager
V2.0	May 2021	Annual update, major amendments	Student Recruitment Manager
V1.1	Sept 2019	Annual update, minor amendments	Student Recruitment Manager
V1.0	May 2017	First draft of new policy	ASIS Director