

ADMISSIONS APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

REVISED January 2020

Introduction

The University is committed to the application of consistent, fair and professional practices in the admission of students. We recognise, however, that sometimes you may be disappointed with how you have been treated or feel that an admissions decision is unfair or otherwise unsound.

The procedure below describes how you may lodge a 'complaint' or an 'appeal' if you feel this is the case. The procedure applies to all prospective Northumbria students.

A 'complaint' is an expression of dissatisfaction with how you have been treated.

An 'appeal' is a challenge to an admissions decision. This may be a decision to reject your application or it may be conditions of an offer decision.

Both complaints and appeals are investigated according to the common procedure described below.

The University prefers, where possible, to resolve complaints and appeals informally in the first instance – please promptly contact us if you wish to discuss the reason for a decision or to query any aspect of the admissions process relating to the handling of your application.

1. General Principles

- 1.1 You will be treated courteously at all times. All decisions will be explained to you and relevant regulations complied with. The principles of natural justice will be adhered to and those considering your case at Stages 2 or 3 will have had no prior decision-making role in the case.
- 1.2 If you feel that you have not been treated courteously and professionally during the admissions process, you may lodge a complaint. Please note you will be required to provide evidence of this.
- 1.3 If you feel a decision to reject your application or the conditions of an offer are unfair or insecure, you may lodge an appeal.

Grounds for Appeal

You may lodge an appeal based on:

- 1.3.1 The applicant believes that they have received discriminatory treatment compared to other applicants for the same course with the same entry pre-

requisites. Please note, the University reserves the right to adjust entry pre-requisites based on specific phases of the recruitment cycle.

and/or

- 1.3.2 The applicant believes that the University has not adhered to its own stated procedures for the processing of applications.

and/or

- 1.3.3 The applicant has additional relevant information that was unavailable at the point of application.
(If this information was available at the point of application but was not included on any application form submitted to the University, this will not be accepted as enough grounds for appeal.
If additional information is provided at a time when the course applied for is already full, the University is under no obligation to re-consider the application.)

You may **not** base such an appeal on:

- 1.3.4 Questioning the academic judgement of the Admissions Selectors;
- 1.3.5 Failure on your part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission (for example, a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure or Medical Clearance);
- 1.3.6 Failure on your part to complete your application form correctly, including details of all qualifications you have achieved, or to supply to the University, when requested and within a reasonable timeframe, evidence of qualifications achieved;
- 1.3.7 Feedback from a third party, such as a referee;
- 1.3.8 The University's judgement on any activity carried out by you deemed to be inappropriate by the University whether that be in your work or social life or through social media. This includes, but is not limited to; bringing the University into disrepute, putting yourselves or others at risk of harm, and any other conduct or criminal convictions which breaches legal regulations;
- 1.4 Complaints/appeals should be lodged within 20 working days of date that the issue being complained about arose.
Complaints/appeals received after this will not be considered unless a good and valid reason is provided for why the delay.
Your complaint/appeal will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt
- 1.5 The University will only accept complaints/appeals from the applicant or from their nominated representative.
Express written consent must be provided by the applicant if they wish a third party

to act on their behalf. If written consent is not received, then the University can only deal with the applicant.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.

2. The Procedure

2.1 Stage 1: Informal

If you are dissatisfied with an admissions decision, or with the way you have been treated, in the first instance you should seek feedback from the University as soon as possible, by emailing:

bc.applicantservices@northumbria.ac.uk

If this informal stage does not resolve the matter and you remain dissatisfied you may follow Stage 2, the formal procedure, below.

2.2 Stage 2: Formal

- 2.2.1 You should submit your formal complaint/appeal in writing to the Applicant Services Manager using the Complaint/Appeal Form (which you can find at the end of this document).

Please provide:

- The nature of, and reasons for your complaint/appeal, giving as much detail as possible, including any steps you have already taken to resolve the matter;
- Details of any response you have received to date and a statement as to why you consider the response(s) unsatisfactory;
- An indication of the outcome you are seeking;
- Supporting documents whenever possible

Submission of the form will be taken as confirmation that you consent to the information provided being shared with relevant parties within the University.

- 2.2.2 The Applicant Services Manager (or nominee) will undertake an investigation to determine the merits of the complaint/appeal. A judgement will be provided in writing, along with an explanation of the reasons for that decision, normally within 15 working days of receiving the formal complaint/appeal.

Possible outcomes are:

- Uphold the complaint/appeal and take appropriate actions to correct errors and/or provide appropriate redress;
- Reject the complaint/appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

- The complaint/appeal was submitted later than is normally permitted without good reason;
- No basis for supporting the complaint/appeal has been established based on the information available

2.3 Stage 3: Review

2.3.1 If you remain dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may seek a review of this decision by writing to the University's Assistant Marketing Director. Such requests must be submitted within 10 working days of the Stage 2 outcome being issued.

2.3.2 The following are the only permitted grounds for a review:

- That there was a procedural irregularity in the consideration of your complaint/appeal at Stage 2
- That relevant evidence, that could not have not been previously been made available, has subsequently emerged

The judgement of the Assistant Marketing Director will be restricted to a consideration of the case as made in 2.3.1.

You will be notified of the outcome in writing, normally within 20 working days of receiving the request for review.

The possible outcomes are:

- Reject the request on the basis that the request for the review has not been based on either of:
 - The permitted grounds in 2.3.2
 - or**
 - That no basis for reconsidering the earlier decision has been established
- Uphold the request in which case the Applicant Services Manager will reconsider the case in the light of the report of the Assistant Marketing Director

The judgement of the Assistant Marketing Director in this matter is final.

Stage 3 is of the Admissions Complaints/Appeal Procedure is the endpoint of this process. There is no remaining avenue for complaint/appeal.

Contact Information

For Stage 1



Email:

bc.applicantservices@northumbria.ac.uk

For Stage 2



Write to:

Applicant Services Manager
Northumbria University
Marketing Department
Pandon Building
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST

OR



Email:

bc.applicantappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk
marked for the attention of the Applicant Services
Manager

For Stage 3



Write to:

Assistant Marketing Director
Northumbria University
Marketing Department
Pandon Building
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST

OR



Email:

bc.applicantappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk
marked for the attention of the Assistant Marketing
Director

This procedure is prepared by:

Jill Dunn
Head of Applicant Services

Reviewed in January 2020



ADMISSIONS APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS FORM for Stages 2 or 3

Introduction

This form is for the submission of complaints/appeals relating to admissions to Northumbria University. Your complaint/appeal should be submitted either:



By post:

Applicant Services Manager
Northumbria University
Marketing Department
Pandon Building
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8ST

OR



By email:

bc.applicantappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk
marked for the attention of the Applicant Services
Manager

Section 1: Personal Information

Personal Details:

Surname

Forename

UCAS/UTT/

University Personal ID

Contact Details:

Email address:

Mobile phone number:

Alternative phone number:

Address:

Please tick one only:

I am the applicant concerned in this complaint/appeal

I am not the applicant concerned in this complaint/appeal, but I have their written consent and this is enclosed with this form

Section 2: Details of complaint/appeal

Please provide details of your case. You can use additional sheets if necessary:

Please list any additional documents you have included in your complaint/appeal:

Have you already discussed your complaint or appeal informally with a member of Northumbria University staff?

No

Yes

If yes, please provide details:

If you have a specific outcome in mind, please indicate your desired outcome(s) below and why you believe this resolution is appropriate.

Any expression of a preferred outcome will not prejudice our consideration of your complaint/appeal.

Section 3: Declaration

I confirm that the above details and any attached documentation is a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information.

I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of Northumbria University sharing details of this case, including information from my application or interview, with other persons as part of any investigation and to retain a copy of that investigation.

I confirm that this signature is of the applicant making this complaint/appeal

Signature

Date