

# **Policy and Procedures for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints**

This document is available in Welsh and English

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. The University does not provide automatic feedback to every unsuccessful applicant, but written feedback can be provided upon request (see section 3).

1.2 Following the provision of feedback, an applicant will have the right to appeal the selection decision, providing that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal (see section 4). An applicant who wishes to make a complaint about the admissions policy and procedures may do so using the complaints procedure (see section 5). The complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge an academic decision to refuse an application.

1.3 Admission to the University is solely at the discretion of the University.

1.4 Applicants have the right to receive correspondence relating to admissions feedback, appeals and complaints through the medium of Welsh or English, according to personal language preference. The University will make the appropriate arrangements throughout the process to facilitate this.

The University will have a record of applicants who have indicated that they would like to receive correspondence in Welsh. The University will ensure that Welsh speaking staff are allocated to the process wherever possible, however, if during the appeals or complaints process an applicant is asked to participate in a meeting in which a non-Welsh speaking member of staff is required to provide input, a simultaneous translation service will be provided, and the applicant will be notified of this.

## 2. Purpose and scope of the policy

2.1 To clarify the arrangements for applicants to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application, to appeal a selection decision or to complain about the admissions process.

2.2 This Policy does not apply to applicants to the University's partner institutions. Partner institutions will have their own procedures in place to respond to such matters.

## 3. Feedback

3.1 Feedback in this context is defined as information about why an application was unsuccessful. Any unsuccessful applicant to the University may request feedback on an admissions decision.

3.2 Applicants should note that the most common reason for an application to be declined is that the applicant *either* does not meet a specific entry requirement *or* does not have (or is not likely to achieve) the required grades for admission (i.e. the University's standard offer level). Unsuccessful applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to check the University's website for details of both standard offer levels and any specific entry requirements before requesting feedback.

### 3.3 *Procedure for requesting feedback*

The following procedure should be used to request feedback regarding an unsuccessful application to the University.

3.3.1 Requests for feedback should be made via email to the Admissions Team at [admissions@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwtsd.ac.uk) within 20 working days following notification of the original admissions decision. Applicants should include their full name, UCAS number (if the application was made through UCAS) or UWTSD applicant number and the title of the programme applied to. It is not possible to provide detailed feedback by telephone.

3.3.2 The Registry will respond in writing to each request for feedback within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

3.3.3 Requests for feedback must come from the applicant. The University will not respond to requests for feedback from those advising applicants (whether parents, guardians, teachers, careers advisers, agents or solicitors).

#### **4. Appeal against an admission decision**

4.1 For the purposes of this procedure, an appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. Before an appeal can be considered, an applicant must first have requested and received formal feedback on the decision. An appeal will only be considered where there are adequate grounds, as set out below:

- Where there is substantial new information which, for good reason, was not made available either on the original application or during the selection procedure, and where that new information is significant and directly relevant to the original decision. Please note that the new information must relate directly to the original application and cannot include activities or achievements which have taken place or been ratified subsequently;
- Where there is evidence that the University's published Admissions Policy has not been followed. The University's Admissions Policy can be found at: [www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-quality-handbook](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-quality-handbook) and under the 'How to apply' pages of the University's website: [www.uwtsd.ac.uk/apply/admissions-policy-and-terms-and-conditions-applicants](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/apply/admissions-policy-and-terms-and-conditions-applicants);
- Where an applicant believes that they have been discriminated against in relation to a protected characteristic as defined under the Equality Act 2010 as the result of an Admissions decision. The University recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act and is committed to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, be it direct or indirect discrimination, whether by perception or by association with a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

4.2 An appeal against an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of University staff about an applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme or an appeal put forward on any grounds other than those specified above will not be considered.

4.3 The University will not consider appeals that are based on errors made by external organisations, agencies or individuals unless an agreement exists between the University and the third party that expressly permits them to act on the University's behalf in relation to the matter in question.

4.4 The University will not be able to consider appeals where a decision not to admit an applicant is based on restrictions imposed by, or requirements of external organisations or agencies – for example restrictions imposed by UK Visas and Immigration or the requirements of accrediting professional bodies.

#### **4.5 Procedure for appealing against an admissions decision**

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant wishes to appeal against an admissions decision.

4.5.1 An applicant should seek feedback from the University (see section 3 above) before deciding whether or not they have grounds to appeal the admissions decision. An appeal will not be considered until after an applicant has received formal feedback.

4.5.2 Appeals must be received within 20 working days following the provision of feedback from the Registry. Appeals received after 20 days will be deemed to be out of time and will not be considered unless the appellant has provided independent evidence to show compelling reasons as to why the appeal was not submitted within the appropriate timeframe.

4.5.3 An appeal should be submitted via email to the Academic Office at [aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk), stating clearly the grounds for appeal and outlining the case in full. Any supporting evidence should also be provided.

4.5.4 Appeals must be made by the applicant and not a third party. The University will not respond to requests from anyone other than the applicant (whether parents, guardians, teachers, careers advisers, agents or solicitors).

4.5.5 Once received, a Case Officer shall be appointed. The Case Officer will be a member of University staff. Care will be taken to ensure that the Case Officer appointed is impartial.

4.5.6 Appellants will be supplied with a copy of this policy and procedures and will be made aware of the identity of the Case Officer.

4.5.7 The University will ensure that all written records relating to the appeal case are clear, accurate and appropriate, and stored in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

4.5.8 The Case Officer shall undertake an initial evaluation to check that the appeal:

- is submitted under the correct procedures;
- falls within the grounds upon which an appeal can be made;
- is submitted within the required timeframe.

4.5.9 As a result of the initial evaluation, the Case Officer will make a determination as to whether there is a clear case for appeal. If the appeal is disallowed, the applicant will normally be informed in writing within 28 days of its receipt, noting the reason why the appeal was not considered.

4.5.10 Where the case proceeds to investigation, the Case Officer will ensure that the facts of the case are verified and, where appropriate, may request clarification from relevant members of staff or the applicant.

4.5.11 Where a case officer requests additional evidence from the appellant, and it is not provided within 7 days, the case officer will proceed with the investigation on the assumption that the requested evidence does not exist.

4.5.12 The Case Officer is required:

- To consider the evidence submitted in relation to the appeal;
- To determine whether the original admissions decision was appropriate in light of the evidence provided in the appeal;
- To determine an appropriate outcome.

4.5.13 The Case Officer shall be empowered to take one of the following decisions:

- To reject the appeal and to uphold the original admissions decision;
- To uphold the appeal and to instruct that appropriate action be taken to remedy the situation;
- To partially uphold the appeal, if aspects of the appeal are not made on permissible grounds, and to instruct that the appropriate action be taken to remedy the situation.

4.5.14 Remedies include:

- An apology;
- Referral of the application back to the relevant Admissions Tutor(s) for an appropriate decision to be made.

4.5.15 The Case Officer shall inform the applicant in writing within 14 days of the outcome of an appeal and will provide reason(s) for the decision.

4.5.16 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application to the University on the basis of having appealed a previous admissions decision.

## **5. Complaints**

5.1 For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the University's admissions policies and procedures which have been used to reach a selection decision or about the actions, or the lack of actions, by the University or its staff.

5.2 A complaint will not result in the amendment of an admissions decision. However, if in the course of investigating a complaint, the Case Officer believes that there are grounds for an appeal against the selection decision, they may advise the applicant to that effect.

### **5.3 *Procedure for complaints***

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant wishes to submit a complaint.

5.3.1 Complaints must be received within 20 working days of the conclusion of the admissions process against which the complaint is being made.

5.3.2 A complaint should be submitted in writing to [admissions@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@uwtsd.ac.uk) and should provide the following information:

- the nature of, and reasons for the complaint, giving as much detail as possible;
- any steps already taken to resolve the matter, if appropriate;
- details of any response received to date and a statement as to why the response is not satisfactory;
- an indication of the outcome which is sought.

5.3.3 The complaint must be made by the applicant and not a third party. The University will not respond to requests from anyone other than the applicant (whether parents, guardians, teachers, careers advisers, agents or solicitors), unless exceptional circumstances exist that prevent the applicant from making the complaint and providing that the third party has the explicit consent, in writing, from the applicant to act on their behalf.

5.3.4 Most complaints can be resolved simply and swiftly in an informal manner, at a local level, by discussing the issue or concern with the relevant person. For admissions related complaints, the relevant person will normally be the Executive Head of Registry.

At the informal level, remedies that may be offered include:

- An apology;
- Agreed remedy to review an aspect of the admissions policy and associated procedures, where appropriate.

5.3.5 If an issue or concern cannot be resolved through the informal complaints procedure, the applicant can raise a formal complaint.

5.3.6 Where a complaint has not been raised with the Executive Head of Registry at an informal level prior to the formal complaint being submitted and it would have been appropriate, the complaint may be referred back to that level.

5.3.7 A formal complaint should be submitted via email to the Academic Office at [aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:aocases@uwtsd.ac.uk), stating clearly the reason(s) for complaint and outlining the case in full (as per 5.3.2). Any supporting evidence should also be provided.

5.3.8 The University will treat any information and supporting evidence submitted as part of a complaint with sensitivity and in accordance with the University's Data Protection policies.

5.3.9 Formal complaints must be received within 20 working days after the informal complaint procedure has ended. Formal complaints received later than this will be deemed to be out of time and will not be considered unless there is independent evidence to show compelling reasons as to why the formal complaint was not raised in a timely manner.

5.3.10 On receipt of a complaint, a Case Officer shall be appointed. The Case Officer will be a member of University staff. Care will be taken to ensure that the Case Officer appointed is impartial.

5.3.11 An applicant who has submitted a complaint will be supplied with a copy of this policy and procedures and will be made aware of the identity of the Case Officer.

5.3.12 The Case Officer shall undertake an initial evaluation to check that the complaint:

- is submitted under the correct procedures;
- is submitted within the required timeframe.

5.3.13 As a result of the initial evaluation, the Case Officer will make a determination as to whether:

- the complaint should be referred back to the informal resolution procedure; or
- the complaint needs to be taken forward under the formal processes; or
- the complaint is deemed to lack evidence, be frivolous, vexatious or malicious and should not be taken forward; or
- the complaint is deemed to be out of time.

5.3.14 Where a complaint is deemed to be out of time, the applicant will be informed in writing within 28 days of its receipt, noting the reason why the complaint was not considered.

5.3.15 Where a complaint is found to be frivolous, vexatious or malicious in intent, the University will not consider the complaint further and will inform the applicant in writing within 28 days of its receipt, noting the reason why the complaint was not considered.

To decide whether a complaint should be dismissed, the Case Officer will take into account all the circumstances of the case and will consider both the contents of the complaint and the

applicant's behaviour in relation to the complaint before reaching a decision. Complaints that are frivolous, vexatious or malicious in intent could include:

- complaints which are harassing, repetitive or pursued in an unreasonable manner;
- complaints which pursue unrealistic or unreasonable outcomes;
- complaints designed to cause disruption or annoyance.

5.3.16 Where the case proceeds to investigation, the Case Officer will normally forward the complaint to relevant senior university officers for further information. On completion of the investigation, the Case Officer will produce a complaint investigation report.

5.3.17 If the complaint is not substantiated, the applicant will be informed in writing within 14 days of the outcome of the investigation, noting the reason(s) for the decision.

5.3.18 If the complaint is substantiated, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate to remedy the situation and the applicant will be informed in writing within 14 days of the outcome of the investigation.

5.3.19 Applicants who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process may wish to refer their case to Citizens Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

5.3.20 The University will ensure that all written records relating to any individual complaint are clear, accurate and appropriate, and stored in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

5.3.21 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application to the University on the basis of having previously submitted a complaint.

## **6. Monitoring**

6.1 The University Senate is responsible for ensuring that the University has and implements appropriate regulations, policies and procedures for the admission of students. The University's [Admissions Policy](#), this policy and any associated procedures are reviewed annually by the Senate. Advice on these matters is provided to Senate by the Student Experience Committee.

6.2 The Executive Head of Registry will review, on an annual basis, any appeals and complaints made and will recommend changes to procedures or systems in accordance with the nature and pattern of complaints received.



Policy author:

Elin Bishop.....**Job Title:** Executive Head of Registry.....

#### Document version control

Version No:	Reason for change:	Author:	Date of change:
0.1	Annual review – initial draft for consideration by the SEC.	Gemma Green, Senior Admissions Officer/ Elin Bishop, Executive Head of Registry	18/06/24
1.0	Final version approved by the SEC.	Gemma Green, Senior Admissions Officer/ Elin Bishop, Executive Head of Registry	15/10/24

Current status of Policy: Approved

Policy applicable to: HE

Date ratified: 15/10/24

Date effective from: 15/10/24

For publication: on UWTSD website

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#### Approval

*The policy will be formally considered and approved in accordance with Committee Terms of Reference outlined in the Academic Quality Handbook.*

*If the policy affects staff, advice should be sought from HR at the outset to ascertain if consultation is required at JCC. HR will also provide advice on the most appropriate stage to consult with JCC and on whether approval by Council is required*

*ALL policies submitted for approval must be accompanied by a completed:*

- *Equality Impact Assessment*
- *Institutional Impact Assessment*
- *Data Protection Impact Assessment*

*Prior to submission to committee, authors are asked to consult the Policy and Planning Team who will check that the document complies with University requirements. The Policy and Planning Team will complete the section below.*

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#### **For completion by the committee secretary**

*Please tick to confirm the following:*

*An institutional Impact Assessment has been completed* ☑

*An EIA has been completed* ☑

*A DPIA has been completed* ☑

*Matters requiring consideration by the approving committee:* None identified.



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