

Policy and Procedure for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

2. Introduction

2.1 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).

2.2 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 admission 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.

2.3 Admissions staff are given training to make them aware of their obligations under the policy and are committed to handling complaints and appeals in a professional manner in order to safeguard applicants' interests.

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

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 in writing to the Registry (contact details are given below), 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) and the name of the programme applied to. Postgraduate applicants should include their full name, applicant number and the name of the programme applied to. It is not possible to provide detailed feedback by telephone.

Requests should be made via email to the Admissions Team at: admissions@uwtsd.ac.uk

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, teacher, careers adviser, 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. 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/about/strategies-and-policies/ and under the 'How to apply' pages of the University's website: www.uwtsd.ac.uk/apply/;
- 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 or University policy. 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, sexual orientation).

4.2 Appeals against an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of University staff about an applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme or appeals 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 he/she has 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.

4.5.3 An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Executive Head of Registry, stating clearly the grounds for appeal (as above) and outlining the case in full. (See 3.3.1 above for contact details).

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, teacher, careers adviser, agents or solicitors).

4.5.5 Once received, the Executive Head of Registry will review the record of the application (normally in consultation with the relevant Admissions Tutor) and will respond in writing, normally within 20 working days.

4.5.6 If the appeal is upheld, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and the applicant will be informed of the outcome. If the appeal is not upheld, the University will communicate the reasons for the decision to the applicant in writing.

4.5.7 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of appealing 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 Executive Head of Registry believes there are grounds for an appeal against the selection decision, the Executive Head of Registry may advise the applicant to submit a formal appeal.

5.3 *Procedure for complaints*

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant wishes to submit a formal 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 the Executive Head of Registry, 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(s) 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, teacher, careers adviser, 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 his/her behalf.

5.3.4 Once received, the Executive Head of Registry will investigate the complaint and will seek to resolve the complaint or explain the situation and will respond in writing, normally within 20 working days.

5.3.5 If the complaint is substantiated, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and the applicant will be informed of the outcome. If the complaint is not substantiated, the University will communicate the reasons for the decision to the applicant in writing.

5.3.6 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/.

5.3.7 The record of any individual complaint or appeal will be kept on file for as long as the dispute continues and should not be needed beyond the end of the admissions cycle concerned. It shall thereafter be confidentially destroyed.

5.3.8 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of submitting a complaint.

5.3.9 The Executive Head of Registry will review, on an annual basis, any complaints and appeals which have been referred to her and will recommend changes to procedures or systems in accordance with the nature and pattern of complaints received.