



Admission to Higher Education Appeals and Complaints Procedure

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Revision history

| Version | Type (e.g. replacement, revision etc...) | Date | History (reason for changes) |
|---------|--|----------------|---|
| V1 | New | Sept 2016 | Specification of a separate procedure for admissions complaints and appeals |
| V2 | Revision | Sept 2018 | Revision due to College restructure and GDPR |
| V3 | Revision | Jan 2020 | Revision due to College restructure |
| V4 | Revision | September 2021 | Revision due to changes in staff structures |
| V5 | Annual Review | August 2023 | Change in ownership |

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed by the Academic Board and SLT at least every 2 years.

Admission to Higher Education Appeals and Complaints Procedures

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1. Executive Summary

This document outlines the processes that the College has in place to manage an appeal or complaint made by an applicant to a higher education programme. This document should be read alongside the College's "Admission to Higher Education Appeals and Complaints Policy".

2. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- Understanding the Admission to Higher Education Appeals and Complaints Policy
- Their authority to attempt to resolve any appeals or complaints that they may be called upon to deal with
- The need to resolve appeals and complaints in a timely fashion.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the College discharge their responsibilities relating to applicant appeals and complaints in line with the policy and procedures
- Overall responsibility and accountability for the management and governance of appeals and complaints handling within the College
- Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to verify a consistent approach to the way appeals and complaints handling information is managed, monitored, reviewed and reported
- Ensuring that appeals and complaints information is effectively used to drive continuous improvement of the Student Experience

The Quality Department are responsible for:

- Discharging efficient and effective administrative processes to support the College in handling applicant appeals and complaints
- Recording accurate information regarding appeals and complaints and adhering to GDPR guidance in the storage and retention of associated documentation
- Liaising efficiently with external bodies, including Awarding Organisations and the OIA in relation to appeals and complaints
- Offering training, procedural guidance and development to appeal and complaint investigators
- Producing management information associated with the volume, characteristics and equality impacts of appeals and complaints for the consideration of governance and management bodies in the College.

3. The Appeals Procedure

3.1. Initial Contact

Applicants who are dissatisfied with an admissions decision may submit an appeal in writing to the Head of Governance and Operations at appeals@bradfordcollege.ac.uk . The Appeals procedure can only be used where there are adequate grounds for doing so and may not be used simply because a candidate has been unsuccessful with his or her application.

There is no provision for appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on applications (see grounds for appeal section 3.3).

3.2. Information required

The appeal must include the following information:

- applicant's name
- applicant's address
- UCAS or other application reference number where applicable
- the programme applied for
- the information they have already received.

3.3. Grounds for Appeal

There are a number of grounds for making an appeal and at least one must be specified in the appeal letter. The grounds for appeal are as follows:

- There is evidence that procedure was not followed correctly;
- There is new evidence which the applicant can provide, and valid reasons for not having provided it previously are stated. (If no good reason is given as to why this information was not previously available then it will not be considered);
- There is evidence that the College has demonstrated bias or prejudice in the treatment of the application.

Please note that all relevant information should be submitted at this time and that it is not possible to consider information which is submitted at a later point in the appeals process without good reason. Appeals can only be considered if received within 10 working days of the original despatch of information about an interview, offer or rejection decision.

Verbal discussions regarding the details of the appeal will not be entered into.

3.4. Stage 1 – Receipt of Appeal

Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged in writing normally within 5 working days of the date of receipt. The Head of Governance and Operations will assess the grounds on which the appeal is based to determine whether they are valid.

If it is found that there are no valid grounds for appeal, the appeal will not be progressed any further and the applicant will be informed of this in writing and within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Head of Governance and Operations is final and the applicant does not have further recourse under these procedures.

3.5. Stage 2 – Investigation of Appeal

If the grounds stated are assessed as valid, the appeal will be passed to both the appropriate Admissions Tutor and the Admissions and Student Outreach Manager for consideration. A formal response will be issued by letter normally within 10 working days. This response will have one of the following outcomes:

- The decision under appeal will be reviewed and the same decision will be arrived at.
- The decision under appeal will be reviewed and a different decision will be arrived at.

3.6. Stage 3 – Unsatisfactory resolution

If the appeal is not resolved to the satisfaction of the applicant s/he may write to the Head of Governance and Operations within 10 working days of dispatch of the formal response stating the reason for their dissatisfaction.

Appeals at this stage will only be considered valid on the grounds that the College has failed to follow the procedure as stated in this document.

The Director of Quality and Information Services will assess the validity of any appeals at this stage and will respond within 10 working days by letter to inform the applicant whether the appeal was successful or not. The decision of the Director of Quality and Information Services is final and the applicant does not have further recourse under these procedures.

3.7. Timescales

The time scales for the process are stated above. All relevant information should be submitted at the point of contact with the college to begin the procedures. It is not possible to consider information which is submitted at a later point in the complaints process unless new evidence has come to light which shows this could not reasonably have been expected to be produced at the submission of the complaint.

4. The Complaints Procedure

There are two routes for complaints:

- i. **Informal (verbal)**
- ii. **Formal (written)**

4.1. Informal – Stage 1

Informal complaints may be made verbally to the Head of Student Recruitment, normally within 2 working days of the event or incident to which they relate and no more than 5 working days. This would enable the admissions staff to gather information about the event or incident in a timely manner.

4.2. Formal – Stage 2

Applicants who remain dissatisfied or have a more serious complaint may make a formal complaint in writing. This complaint should be addressed to the Head of Governance and Operations at complaints@bradfordcollege.ac.uk and be submitted no later than 10 working days after the event or incident. The complaint must include the following information:

- applicant's name
- applicant's address and contact details
- applicant's UCAS/GTRR number where applicable
- the programme applied for
- the information they have already received
- the nature of their complaint and any supporting evidence
- a reasonable outcome which the applicant feels would be an appropriate response.

The complaint will be investigated by the Head of Governance and Operations (or nominee) who will reply to the applicant in writing, normally within 10 working days.

4.3. Formal – Stage 3

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision s/he may write to the Director of Quality and Information Services explaining why they remain dissatisfied and, in respect of the complaint, what they would have hoped the outcome would have been.

The Director of Quality and Information Services will normally respond within 10 working days. This decision is final and the applicant does not have further recourse under these procedures.

5. Retention of Information and records relating to Appeals and Complaints

By signing a letter of Appeal or Complaint an applicant is agreeing that the College can process the information it contains for all purposes relating to the Appeal and Complaints Admissions to Higher Education Procedure. This information and records will be kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation Act (2018) and the College's "Information and Records Management Policy".

6. Monitoring of Appeals and Complaints

The College reviews the number and outcomes of Admissions Appeals and Complaints and may report on this to its formal committees.

Related Polices/Procedures/Regulations

- Higher Education Admissions Policy
- Admission to HE Appeals and Complaints Policy
- Information and Records Management Policy
- Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning Procedures