

Partner Institution Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Appeals and Complaints

Policy and Procedure for Partner Institutions

2023/24

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Partner Institution Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Appeals and Complaints

- 1.1 We recognise applicants may wish to ask why their application has not been successful or believe they have cause for complaint. Due to the level of competition for places there will inevitably be occasions where an applicant is disappointed with an admissions decision.
- 1.2 This procedure is the way partner institutions (Appendix A) handle recruitment, selection and admissions appeals and complaints for applicants applying for UEA validated programmes.
- 1.3 Students studying at City College Norwich or Colchester Institute should refer to the equivalent policy and procedure at their institution. Students should speak with the HE office or equivalent for details on where this can be found.
- 1.4 Applicants will not be discriminated against in any further application should they make an appeal or complaint.
- 1.5 Appendix A outlines those staff responsible for roles within the procedure at each partner institution.
- 1.6 **Appeals Procedure**
 - 1.6.1 An appeal is defined as request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. An appeal should normally be raised in writing with the Appeal/Complaint Reviewer outlining the nature and detail of the appeal.
 - 1.6.2. The Appeal/Complaint Reviewer will check that all information on the application had been taken into account, that there was no misinterpretation of the information and that procedures were followed correctly.
 - 1.6.3 The Appeal/Complaint Reviewer will review the application and confirm within 10 working days whether the appeal has been rejected or upheld. Applicants should note that if the appeal has been rejected on academic grounds they cannot appeal the decision.
- 1.7 **Complaints Procedure**
 - 1.7.1 The following procedure exists in order that applicants rejected by the partner institution can challenge an admissions decision if they have reason to believe that the decision was subject to procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or that extenuating circumstances should be, and have not already been, taken into account. The challenge would be dealt with as a form of complaint.
 - 1.7.2 The Appeals and Complaints Procedure cannot be used where our decision resulted from:
 - (i) A failure on your part to fulfil academic requirements.
 - (ii) A failure on your part to fulfil non-academic requirements. For example an unsatisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure or an unsatisfactory health check
 - (iii) A Reference from a third party, such as a provider of a work or training placement which forms an integral part of the course to which you have applied
- 1.8 **Stage 1 Complaints Procedure**

- 1.8.1 The initial complaint should normally be raised in writing with the Appeal/Complaint Reviewer outlining the nature and detail of the complaint.
- 1.8.2 If the complaint is regarding a decision it should normally be made within 10 working days of the action. If no action has been taken by the partner institution on your application, the complainant can write in at any time.
- 1.8.3 The Appeal/Complaint Reviewer office will contact the complainant initially to acknowledge receipt. Partner institutions aims to respond within 15 working days of the acknowledgement. If it proves impossible to respond within 15 working days, the complainant shall be informed of the time scale for the receipt of a full response.

As part of this procedure the Appeal/Complaint Reviewer may request additional information or seek clarification by email.

When the Appeal/Complaint Reviewer responds they must confirm whether the correctly applied. The response will explain the context in which the decision has made. In the event that the complaint is upheld the admissions Appeal/Complaint Administrator will confirm this along with a proposed remedy.

1.9 **Stage 2 Complaints Procedure**

- 1.9.1 The formal Admissions Complaints Procedure follows the stage one process. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, the formal process will commence.

1.10 **Making a Formal Complaint**

- 1.10.1 Any applicant who wishes to make a formal complaint about an admissions decision shall be referred to the Appeal/Complaint Administrator or equivalent from where the Complaints Procedure will be coordinated.
- 1.10.2 The applicant must write to the Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer requesting the Admissions Complaints Form. Partner institutions will not accept complaints from third party or anonymous sources.
- 1.10.3 Once the form has been received by the applicant they should complete it and return it to the Appeal/Complaint Administrator within 10 working days from receipt, including supporting evidence where necessary.
- 1.10.4 All complaints that are received from applicants, are treated confidentially within the partner institution and monitored as appropriate. As part of any investigation, information may need to be shared with other persons or organisations whilst adhering to partner institution Data Protection Policies.
- 1.10.5 Failure on the part of the applicant to produce the requested documentation within a 10 working day period would result in the closure of the case by the Appeal/Complaint Administrator.

1.11 **Initial Assessment of Complaint**

- 1.11.1 On receipt of the written details from the complainant by the Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer, an initial assessment of the complaint shall be made. If the matters raised by the complainant concern an academic decision then action will be taken according to paragraphs 1.12.1 -1.12.3. If the matters raised, concern a

decision relating to an applicant's criminal conviction then action will be taken according to paragraph 1.13. If the matters raised concern a decision relating to an applicant's special educational needs then action will be taken according to paragraph 1.14.

1.11.2 The Appeal/Complaint Administrator will contact the complainant to acknowledge the receipt, confirm who will be dealing with the assessment and when the complainant can expect to hear from the outcome. Investigations are undertaken and completed within 15 working days of the receipt. If it is not possible to complete the investigation within 15 working days, you will be contacted giving the reasons why and if possible, a date when we expect the investigation to be completed by.

1.11.3 In certain circumstances further information may be requested in order that a decision can be reached and which may result in extending the timeframe outlined above.

1.12 Academic decisions

1.12.1 On receipt of the written details from the applicant by the Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer, an initial assessment of the complaint shall be made. The assessment will be conducted by the Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer supported by the Appeal/Complaint Administrator. An initial decision will be taken on whether the complainant has a substantive case that should be progressed through investigation. If the initial assessment finds that there is no substantive case then the complaint should be rejected and the complainant informed of the decision with reasons for the judgment, which shall be final.

1.12.2 If the initial assessment determines that there is a substantive case to be investigated then the Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer will be required to produce a written response to the complaint with supporting evidence.

1.12.3 The Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer will respond to the complainant in writing with details of the findings indicating the outcome, and if the complaint is upheld, what the remedy will be. The decision will be final.

1.13 Decisions Concerning Criminal Convictions

1.13.1 In the case where a decision to reject an applicant has concerned a criminal conviction, a formal route exists whereby an applicant rejected following an assessment of their convictions can apply to the Head of the Institution for a review on the grounds of procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or extenuating circumstances. The decision of the Head of the Institution is final.

1.14 Decisions Concerning Disability or Special Educational Needs

1.14.1 In the case where the partner institution has not been able to offer a place to an applicant following an assessment of support needs, a formal route exists whereby an applicant can apply to the Head of the Institution for a review on the grounds of procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias, or extenuating circumstances. The decision of the Head of the Institution is final.

Staff at Partner Institutions involved in Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Appeals and Complaints

SMB Group (Brooksby Melton College)

Head of the Institution: Principal
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer: Director of Higher Education and Access
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer: Section Manager
Appeal/Complaint Administrator: Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning

East Sussex College Group

Head of the Institution: CEO & Principal
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer: Vice Principal Student Experience
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer: Head of HE & Partnership Manager
Appeal/Complaint Administrator: HE Administrator

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Head of the Institution – Centre Director
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Academic Director
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Head of Student Services
Appeal/Complaint Administrator – Admissions Officer

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts

Head of the Institution – Principal
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Principal
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Registry Manager
Appeal/Complaint Administrator – Academic Quality and Compliance Manager

Royal Marsden School

Head of the Institution – Director of School
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Course Leader
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Member of Academic Clearance Team
Appeal/Complaint Administrator – Student Support Services Manager

South Essex College

Head of the Institution – Principal
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Dean of HE
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Programme Partnership Manager
Appeal/Complaint Administrator – CMA Compliance & Information Manager

West Suffolk College

Head of Institution – Principal
Stage Two Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Executive Dean of Higher Education
Appeal/Complaint Reviewer – Vice Dean of Higher Education
Appeal/Complaint Administrator – Head of Academic Services