

ADMISSIONS APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The University of Liverpool welcomes applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed in higher education. In line with the University's commitment to a policy of equal opportunities, no student will be subjected to less favourable treatment on the grounds of their sex, age, disability, religion, marital or parental status, social background, sexual orientation, or ethnic or national origin.
- 1.2 Our admissions practices are designed to ensure that applicants are treated wholly on the basis of their aptitudes, skills and abilities in relation to their programmes of study, and we are committed to operating admissions procedures that are fair, efficient and transparent.
- 1.3 We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when applicants will feel that the University has not adhered to the high standards it sets itself. This Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure tells applicants what to do if they feel that they have grounds for either an appeal or a complaint.
- 1.4 The University's Admissions Policies describe the general principles that we apply to admissions and outline the admissions process. There are several policy statements that govern admissions, depending on the type of programme for which the applicant is applying. The admissions policies may be found at:

[Undergraduate Admissions Policy](#)
[Postgraduate Taught Admissions Policy](#)
[Postgraduate Research Admissions Policy](#)
- 1.5 If an applicant believes that they have legitimate grounds for an appeal or complaint, they should refer in the first instance to the relevant admissions policy to clarify what it is reasonable for them to expect from the University. If, having consulted the relevant admissions policy, the applicant wishes to proceed with their complaint or appeal, they may invoke the Appeals and Complaints Procedure set out in the remainder of this document.
- 1.6 The University will seek to ensure that all appeals and complaints from applicants are treated seriously, positively and constructively. It will also seek to ensure that appeals and complaints are dealt with promptly, with fairness and consistency and with due regard to the University's Diversity and Equality of Opportunity Policy. If an appeal or complaint is found to be justified, the University will take such action

or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If an appeal or complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the complainant.

- 1.7 Applicants making an appeal or complaint will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of doing so.
- 1.8 Applicants and any individual against whom complaints might be made may expect complaints to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.
- 1.9 Appeals and complaints may be submitted by an individual but not by a third party (school, parent or other representative), unless the third party has the explicit consent, in writing, from the applicant to act on their behalf. Please see our third party consent form [here](#).
- 1.10 Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure. If a member of staff receives an anonymous complaint, they will be expected to seek advice from their line manager as to how the complaint should be dealt with.
- 1.11 The University believes that any complaints should be resolved as near to their source as possible. For this reason, this Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure provides for there to be a number of stages in the handling of an appeal or a complaint. Appeals and complaints will not be rejected solely on the grounds of minor procedural deficiencies on the part of the complainant. At each stage of the process, the person to whom an appeal or complaint has been referred shall, if it is upheld, apply such appropriate remedies as are within their power. If they consider that the remedy is outside their power they shall refer the matter to the appropriate authority.
- 1.12 The University of Liverpool is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant or their representative, is conducted in a professional manner and it expects that any communication from an applicant or their representative is conducted in the same way.

Applicants and their representatives should note that the University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees during the admissions process or the appeals and complaints process. Hostile, or otherwise inappropriate behaviour or language, whether expressed verbally or in writing, including excessive levels of contact, will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an application, appeal or complaint. The University will normally alert an applicant or their representative that their behaviour or language is inappropriate and that action is being considered, but where the behaviour or language is particularly inappropriate no warning need be given before action is taken. Such action may include discontinuation of correspondence with the applicant or their representative from the staff involved in the appeal or complaint. This would then require the appeal or complaint to be dealt with by alternative staff which may instil delays.

2 SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

2.1 This procedure applies to applicants seeking entry to courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level where selection is carried out solely by the University of Liverpool. It does **not** apply to applicants who are applying for courses offered by, or in conjunction with:

- University of Liverpool International College (UoLIC)
- Xi'an Jiaotong – Liverpool University (XJTLU)
- Applicants for the Psychology programme offered in conjunction with Wirral Metropolitan College; these applicants are covered by Wirral Metropolitan College's policies.

3 DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purposes of this document, the definitions used shall be as follows:

Appeals

An appeal is a formal request for reconsideration of a decision on an application, usually, but not exclusively, where the decision has been to decline to offer a place.

Appeals will normally be allowed only if there is evidence of a material irregularity in the decision-making process.

Complaints

A complaint is defined by this procedure as an expression of dissatisfaction with admissions procedures and their implementation or about actions or lack of actions by the University or its staff relating to an application.

3.2 Applicants may **not** make an Appeal or Complaint about a selection decision which seeks to dispute the academic or professional judgement of admissions staff regarding their suitability for entry to a particular programme of study.

3.3 The Appeals and Complaints Procedure may **not** be used where the decision not to offer a place arises from a failure on the applicant's part to fulfil any academic (eg, specific achievement in examination results, English language requirements) or non-academic requirements for admission (eg, enhanced DBS check, provide suitable references or medical screening).

4 PROCEDURE

Appeals

- 4.1 Applicants should normally make an appeal within one month of receiving the decision on their application or where they haven't been allowed to apply. If the appeal is received after a one-month period, the University may not be able to consider it.
- 4.2 Each year, the University of Liverpool receives many more applications for its on-campus programmes than it has places available, and many well-qualified applicants may be left feeling disappointed with the outcome of their application. In the first instance, we encourage applicants to contact the member of admissions staff dealing with their application to request feedback so as to understand why their application did not meet our criteria for entry. At this stage, applicants may also informally request that the decision be reviewed, as it is possible that an error may have occurred.
- 4.3 If the applicant remains dissatisfied and believes that they still have grounds to appeal after seeking feedback and asking for an informal review of the decision, they should complete the [Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form](#) and send it to:

Ms Judith King
Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment
Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation
University of Liverpool
judeking@liverpool.ac.uk

- 4.4 Applicants should ensure that they provide details of the circumstances of their case, give an indication of the actions they have already taken to try to resolve it, and state clearly the remedy that they are seeking.
- 4.5 On receipt of the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form, the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquires and Fulfilment will review the application with the relevant member of admissions staff and the Head of the relevant academic Department and School. In the case of appeals or complaints relating to the University's online provision, the appeal or complaint will be reviewed by the relevant Director of Studies or nominated representative. We will inform applicants of the outcome of the appeal in writing within fifteen working days of receipt and acknowledgement (typically two days after receipt) of the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form. If, for any reason, it is not possible to review the application within fifteen days, we will write to inform the applicant of the expected timescale for a full response.
- 4.6 The decision of the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment, Head of Department/School or Director of Studies will be **final** and there is no further right of appeal.

Complaints

- 4.6 Complaints must normally be made within one month of the actions (or lack of actions) which prompted the complaint.

- 4.7 The University believes that in most cases complaints are best dealt with informally between the applicant and the person whose actions or lack of actions have given rise to the complaint. Applicants are therefore encouraged to contact admissions staff directly if they have a grievance, and to discuss the circumstances leading to their dissatisfaction.
- 4.8 If it does not prove possible to satisfactorily deal with the complaint on an informal basis, or if the applicant feels unable to approach directly the person against whom they are making a complaint, the applicant should complete the [Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form](#) and send it to:

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Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment
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- 4.9 Applicants should ensure that they provide details of the circumstances of their case, give an indication of the actions they have already taken to try to resolve it, and state clearly the remedy that they are seeking.
- 4.10 On receipt, the complaint form will be forwarded to the Dean of the relevant academic School, the Head of Operations or nominated representative, or the Head of Admissions/Head of International Admissions as appropriate. If the Dean of the relevant academic School, or the Head of Operations is the subject of the complaint, the written complaint will be forwarded to a suitable alternative senior member of the Faculty. If the Head of Admissions/Head of International/EU Admissions is the subject of the complaint, the matter will be considered by the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment in the first instance.
- 4.11 The Dean of the relevant academic School, the Head of Operations or nominated representative or Head of Admissions/Head of International Admissions will investigate the complaint and will submit a written response to the complainant, copied to the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment normally within fifteen working days of the receipt of the complaint. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within fifteen working days, we will write to inform the applicant of the timescale for a full response. If appropriate, a face-to-face meeting (in person or via a video conferencing method) may be held between the Head of School, Director of Studies or the Head of Admissions/Head of International Admissions and the complainant and/or person against whom a complaint has been made, and if this is the case the latter two will both be entitled to be accompanied by a friend or colleague or other member of the University. If the complaint is not upheld, the reasons for this decision will be stated in writing to the complainant and to any person against whom a complaint has been made.
- 4.12 If, following the response from the Dean of the relevant academic School/the Head of Operations/Head of Admissions/Head of International Admissions, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the written response they should advise the Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment that this is the case, and state the reasons why they remain dissatisfied. The Associate Director, Admissions, Enquiries and Fulfilment will then refer the matter to the Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the relevant Faculty.

- 4.13 The Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within ten working days, and will appoint a person or persons within the University, having no material interest in the complaint, to carry out an investigation.
- 4.14 After investigation of the complaint the investigator(s) will decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will submit a report to the Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor, containing their recommendations. Following completion of the investigation, the Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor will ensure that any appropriate action arising from the report and its recommendations is taken and will inform the complainant accordingly.
- 4.15 If, in exceptional circumstances, the investigation of a complaint requires a complainant's attendance in the University, reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred by the complainant in attending the University will be reimbursed by the University.
- 4.16 The decision of the Executive Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be final and there is no further right of appeal.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 The Associate Director, Admissions Enquiries and Fulfilment will monitor, on an annual basis, complaints which have been referred to her and will be responsible for implementing, or recommending to the appropriate authority, changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints received. The outcome of such monitoring may also be used to inform other processes or activities. All complaints and appeals that are received will be reported on a yearly basis to the Consumer Protection Law Compliance Working Group and then reported up to Senate.

Judith King
Associate Director, Admissions Enquiries and Fulfilment
Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation
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