

## ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

<b>Operational owner:</b>	Head of Admissions
<b>Executive owner:</b>	Director of UK Recruitment & Admissions
<b>Effective date:</b>	October 2024
<b>Next review date:</b>	August 2025
<b>Related documents:</b>	UG, PGT, PGR Admissions Codes of Practice Terms & Conditions

Version	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date
1	Laura Wright (Head of Admissions)	ASG	October 2024

### 1. Introduction

The University of Surrey is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and fair admissions service in line with its selection criteria and policy. In the event that an applicant wishes to make a formal complaint, the University will follow this procedure to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, consistently and with due regard to the Equalities Act.

### 2. Scope

These procedures set out how an applicant may raise a complaint about the admission process.

The Complaints Procedure may be invoked by any individual who has submitted an application either via UCAS or through the University's online application system for an integrated foundation year, or an undergraduate, postgraduate taught, or postgraduate research degree.

### 3. General principles

1. An applicant does not have the right to appeal against an academic decision not to offer them a place at the University, as long as the decision can be shown to have been reached fairly and in accordance with the University's published entry requirement and selection criteria.
2. In the vast majority of cases an applicant's complaint can be handled fairly, amicably and to the satisfaction of all concerned without the necessity of a formal complaint.
3. The University will ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly and with fairness and with consistency. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who makes a complaint.

4. If a complaint is upheld, the University will take the appropriate action and will do so promptly. If the complaint is not upheld, the reason for the decision will be communicated in a timely manner to the applicant.
5. An applicant making a complaint, and those whom the complaint is made about, can expect the complaint to be dealt with confidentially. It may be necessary however, 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.
6. A complaint should be made by the applicant. Complaints made on behalf of the applicant by parents, representatives, school or another third party will only be considered in exceptional cases where there are clear reasons for doing so. Complaints that are made anonymously cannot be dealt with under this Complaints Procedure.
7. This Complaints Procedure covers both the informal and formal stages in handling a complaint.

### **3. Informal complaint**

1. Most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage.
2. The applicant should first raise their complaint in writing with an Admissions Officer. In most cases this should be the member of staff who processed the application, unless the complaint is about that individual. In those cases, the complaint should be addressed to the Admissions Pre-enrolment Manager or Admissions Senior Officer.
3. A complaint must be made within 14 days of the admissions decision or any other action of which the applicant wishes to complain. Complaints made outside of this timeframe will not be considered, unless there are valid reasons why the complaint could not be made within the time scale. The Admissions Officer will respond to the complaint within 10 working days of the complaint being made and shall retain a record of the correspondence and any action taken. If it is not possible to fully respond within the 10 days, the complainant will be advised of the timescale for a full response.
4. Where the complaint concerns non-selection and the Admissions Officer is satisfied that the application was considered fairly and that the decision complies with the selection procedure, they will respond explaining the context of the decision and any selection processes that were applied. The Admissions Officer will also at this stage draw to the attention of the complainant the Complaints Procedures, should they wish to pursue the matter further.
5. In relation to complaints about all other matters relating to the admissions process, the Admissions Officer will provide written reasons for their decision.
6. If the Admissions Officer concludes that the decision was unfair and/or not in accordance with the Admissions Procedure; they will refer the complaint to the Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions in accordance with paragraph 9.

### **3. Formal complaint**

7. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the response received from the Admissions Officer or Admissions Pre-enrolment Manager, they should submit, within 10 working days of receiving the response from the Admissions Officer or Admissions Pre-enrolment Manager, a written complaint to the Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions. Any complaints received out of the timeframe will not be considered.
8. The complaint should be set out to include the informal steps that have already been taken and details of any response received, a statement as to why the applicant remains dissatisfied and the outcome the applicant is seeking.
9. The Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions will acknowledge in writing a receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. The Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions will then investigate the complaint and submit a written response to the complainant within 14 working days from acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint.
10. The Head/ Deputy of Admissions' decision following completion of this process will be considered as final.
11. During the main results period or where the Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions is not available through absence a member of the Senior Management Team for UK Recruitment will handle the complaint. Their decision following completion of this process will be considered as final.
12. If the Head/ Deputy Head of Admissions has had previous involvement in the applicant's admissions process or complaints procedure for an individual, he/she will refer the complaint to the Director of UK Recruitment & Admissions. The Director of UK Recruitment & Admissions' decision will then be considered as final.

#### **4. Monitoring and review**

This procedure is reviewed annually by the University's Admissions Steering Group and the Senior Management Team for UK Recruitment and Admissions.