

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (APPLICANTS)

1. Principles

- 1.1 At Cardiff University we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair, and transparent admissions processes for all our applicants that are free from bias and prejudice. Staff aim to work efficiently and courteously, operating under the principles and guidance of our published [admissions policies](#) and entry requirements. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when an applicant will feel dissatisfied with the conduct of the University's admissions process or its outcome.
- 1.2 We make a significant effort to ensure that minimum entry requirements (including non-academic requirements) and the selection processes/criteria for our programmes are accessible. For the majority of our programmes this will be via the course information provided on the Study pages of the Cardiff University website (via the Coursefinder tool) and for undergraduate programmes via UCAS course search.
- 1.3. We encourage applicants who experience a problem with the service to initially raise the matter informally with the Admissions Team via admissions@cardiff.ac.uk. Should you then wish to formally appeal the decision made on your application, or wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the admissions process (having first contacted the Admissions Team on an informal basis), a formal complaints and appeals procedure is available as detailed in this document (section 4).
- 1.4. Appeals and complaints are only considered on permitted grounds, which will be managed through consistent, fair, and transparent procedures in a timely way.
- 1.5. You will not be disadvantaged in any way because you have used the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
- 1.6. This policy should be read in association with:
 - [Cardiff University Academic Regulations](#)
 - [Cardiff University Admissions Policies including English language requirements.](#)

2. Definitions and grounds

- 2.1. An appeal is defined as a request for the review of a selection decision and/or the outcome of an application and asks for the University to check that the decision was made fairly on the basis of all the evidence submitted at the time of the original decision.
 - 2.1.1. You may appeal against the handling of your application if there is reason to believe that:
 - the decision made contradicts the published entry criteria
 - the decision made contradicts the University's published admissions processes or procedures
 - there was an administrative error in the handling of the application

2.1.2. There is no right of appeal for applications where:

- the appeal is from a third party (unless the third party has written consent from the applicant to act on their behalf)
- the dispute concerns professional or academic judgement. Examples may include disputes around the equivalency/suitability of particular qualifications for entry to the University, the appropriateness of the content of a personal statement or the assessment of a candidate's interview performance
- the dispute concerns a decision already accepted by the applicant
- the request would contravene government regulations or any contract with external organisations, such as UCAS, Research Councils, or the UKVI
- the application was for a previous academic year or, in the case of postgraduate research programmes, a previous entry point within the academic year.

2.1.3. You can use this procedure to appeal up to 28 calendar days following receipt of the University's decision.

2.1.4. You must provide a good reason or extenuating circumstances for submitting your appeal outside of the 28 calendar days in order for the appeal to be considered. The Head of Admissions or nominee shall consider the reason for lateness and confirm whether the appeal will be accepted for consideration; this decision will be final.

2.2. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct of any aspect of the University's recruitment or admission process (for example, a concern about a procedural error, irregularity, or maladministration in the admissions procedure or policies).

2.2.1. This includes complaints about staff behaviours and information provided to applicants.

2.2.2. Complaints about external bodies (such as UCAS, UCAT, Research Councils, funding bodies, etc.) cannot be accepted and must be submitted to the relevant organisation.

2.2.3. You can use this procedure to complain within the same admissions cycle that complaint has arisen in.

3. Who can use the Appeals and Complaints Procedure?

3.1. This procedure is for anyone who has encountered an issue at any stage of the Cardiff University application process*.

* A complaints and appeals policy is available for current students of Cardiff University at intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students (Cardiff University login required).

3.1.1. Separate policies exist for students, accommodation provision, fee status appeals, and complaints about an academic School not relating to the admissions process.

3.2. The procedure applies to all applicants, whether submitting their application directly to the University or via a third party such as UCAS.

3.2.1. Current students applying/requesting an internal transfer within the University should follow the procedures for student complaints.

- 3.3. Appeals which are submitted by third parties without the consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will complaints which are submitted anonymously be investigated.
- 3.3.1. You can nominate a representative to manage your complaint or appeal on your behalf. To do this you (the applicant) must email applicantappeals@cardiff.ac.uk using the email address supplied on your application form to confirm the name and email address of the person they wish to act on their behalf, and their relationship to you.
- 3.4. We will not enter into discussions or disputes on matters we regard as those of academic judgement. We will make every effort to explain how selection criteria work, why they are appropriate for a particular course, and which admissions policies apply to the decision taken, but we will not review an admissions decision simply because an applicant disagrees with or wishes to challenge the advertised criteria.
- 3.4.1. Appeals based on challenges to the judgement of selectors in relation to the academic and non-academic selection criteria for its programmes will not be considered unless there is evidence that an application has not been treated consistently with other applications for the same programme of study during the decision making process.
- 3.5. All complaints and appeals dealt with under this procedure should be evidence-based. Vexatious or unsubstantiated complaints and appeals will not be considered.

4. Process and procedures

We operate a three-stage process for complaints and appeals:

4.1. Stage 1a – Feedback on a rejection decision

- 4.1.1. Applicants may only request feedback about the first selection decision sent to them by the University.
- 4.1.2. Requests for feedback must:
- be submitted by the applicant to Admissions as data protection legislation means that the University is unable to respond to requests for feedback submitted by third parties
 - provide their application reference number, their full name and the programme of study applied for in their written request.
- 4.1.3. We will provide feedback about the application in a single written response. We regret that we are unable to enter into a dialogue with applicants in the provision of feedback, given the large number of applications received each year.
- 4.1.4. Feedback must be requested in writing to the Admissions team:

[Ask a question](#)

admissions@cardiff.ac.uk

We aim to provide a response to you, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of your request.

4.2. Stage 1b – Reconsideration request

- 4.2.1. We will not usually consider new information about an applicant's qualifications or circumstances if this information should have been made available as part of the original application.
- 4.2.2. New information may be accepted in cases such as where a third party has made an error affecting the University's judgement of the applicant's suitability or where there has been a misinterpretation of the information/data contained within the original application. The University reserves the right to decide whether new evidence can be considered on these grounds.
- 4.2.3. If you have additional information which was not previously available at the time of your original application, you may request for your application to be reconsidered. The request should be submitted in writing to applicantappeals@cardiff.ac.uk with copies of the additional information supplied as attachments. We aim to provide a response to you, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of your request.

4.3. Stage 2 – Formal Complaint or Appeal

- 4.3.1. Whilst most cases are resolved by the provision of feedback or reconsideration, if you believe the decision contained any element of unfairness or error then a formal complaint or appeal can be submitted. This should be submitted in writing to the following address:

For the attention of: The Head of University Admissions

Email: applicantappeals@cardiff.ac.uk

Post (*only if unable to contact us via email*):

Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0DE

- 4.3.2. A complaint should be submitted in writing within the same admissions cycle that complaint has arisen in. Your complaint should include all the following information:
- Your name, email address, postal address, and (if appropriate) your application number;
 - Details of the programme you have applied for;
 - The nature of the complaint, giving as much detail as possible;
 - Any steps that have already been taken to resolve the matter;
 - Details of any responses you have received and a statement of why you feel that response is unsatisfactory;
 - Any evidence to support your complaint;
 - An indication of the outcome you are seeking.

If you fail to supply any of the above information your case will not be investigated.

4.3.3. An appeal should be submitted in writing within 28 calendar days of the University's decision. Your appeal should include all the following information:

- Your name, email address, postal address, and application number;
- Details of the programme you have applied for;
- Specific details of the ground(s) for the appeal;
- Any evidence to support your appeal;
- An indication of the outcome you are seeking.

If you fail to supply any of the above information your case will not be investigated.

4.3.4. You will normally be informed within 10 working days in writing whether the appeal or complaint will be considered under the formal procedure.

4.3.5. If the appeal or complaint is accepted, an investigation will take place, led by the Head of University Admissions or nominee, with input from the Admissions Team, Academic School, or other parts of the University as appropriate. If we require further information from you, or anticipate a delay in responding, we will write to you by email advise you.

4.3.6. We aim to respond to your complaint or appeal in writing within 28 working days of receipt of all information. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within the timeframe, you will be informed in writing of the timescale for the receipt of a full response. The response will include details of the investigation which has taken place, will outline the response to the investigation from areas of the University involved, and will detail the findings of the investigation.

4.3.7. If your complaint or appeal is upheld, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and you will be informed of the outcome in writing. If your appeal is not upheld, we will communicate the reasons for this decision in writing.

4.3.8. Reasonable action resulting from an appeal which is upheld would be to reconsider the application. In such circumstances, the University may not be able to guarantee admission in the academic session initially requested; admission at an alternative point of entry may be offered.

4.3.9. Reasonable action to remedy a complaint which is upheld could, for example, include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedure.

4.4. Stage 3 – Independent review

4.4.1. If you are not satisfied with the way the investigation at Stage 2 was conducted in respect of your appeal or complaint, you can request an independent review. The University's independent reviewer is the Academic Registrar or their nominee.

4.4.2. Such a request must meet one of the following criteria:

- Procedural irregularity, i.e. the process described to reach the original decision or as part of the investigation into the complaint/appeal was not followed
- The decision and/or remedy was unreasonable and not supported by the facts of the case.

- 4.4.3. A request for a case to be reviewed must be made within 7 calendar days of the date of the written outcome of Stage 2, and submitted in writing to the following address:

For the attention of: The Academic Registrar

Email: applicantappeals@cardiff.ac.uk

Post (*only if unable to contact us via email*):

Admissions Support Team
Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0DE

- 4.4.4. In your request, you should clearly explain the reasons why you are unsatisfied with the investigation at Stage 2. The Academic Registrar or nominee will carry out a review of the Stage 2 investigation, taking all relevant facts into consideration. The Academic Registrar may decide to:

- Uphold the complaint or appeal, either in full or partially;
- Or conclude that there are insufficient grounds to take any further action and conclude the matter under this process.

- 4.4.5. We aim to notify you of the decision of the Academic Registrar or nominee in writing within 28 working days of receipt of the request. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within the timeframe, you will be informed in writing of the timescale for the receipt of a full response. The decision of the Academic Registrar will be final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.

5. Storage and Processing of Complaints and Appeals Information

- 5.1. All complaints and appeals will be dealt with confidentially and with due regard for privacy. Information may be disclosed to members of the University who have a need to see it to investigate the appeal or complaint.
- 5.2. The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). The record of the complaint/appeal and any supporting papers will be destroyed two calendar years following resolution of the case.

6. Contact Details

For further information about this procedure please contact the Admissions Support Team:

Email: applicantappeals@cardiff.ac.uk

Post: Admissions Support Team
Cardiff University
McKenzie House
30-36 Newport Road
Cardiff
CF24 0DE