

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

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Overview

1. The University aims to ensure that all applicants have a fair and positive experience throughout the admissions process. However, it is recognised that issues may arise. This procedure therefore outlines the steps applicants should take if they wish to raise a complaint and explains how the University will respond to such matters.
2. The University is committed to ensuring that Complaints are handled fairly, impartially and without discrimination and no applicant is disadvantaged for raising a complaint. The University will seek to ensure that complaints are responded to promptly and that any outcomes issued are explained clearly and recorded appropriately.
3. This chapter applies to all applicants to a Ravensbourne University London course of Study regardless of their Fee Status or method of application. Applicants who withdraw their application to the University may use this procedure for up to 3 months from the date of the withdrawal of their application.
4. This chapter does not apply to members of the public unless they have submitted an application for a course of study at the University or members of staff unless they have applied for a course of study using the University's admissions process, applications for the PGCERT via People and Culture are not covered by this chapter.
5. This chapter applies where an applicant raises a complaint regarding any matter prior to their Enrolment at the University. It aims to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, consistently, transparently, and in a timely manner.
6. Complaints about any matter that occurred after Enrolment should be made pursuant to Section 10, Chapter 2.
7. Disagreements with academic judgement are excluded from review under this procedure. Complaints received that are deemed to be a disagreement with Academic judgement will be summarily dismissed.
8. This process retains the definitions set out in Section 10, Chapter 2 GARs. A complaint is defined as the notification by a student to the University of their dissatisfaction with an aspect of service (including inaction) [the admissions process] or treatment that they have received from the University. A complaint should usually include an indication as to what resolution is being sought.

Timescales

9. The primary purpose of this procedure is to address and, where possible, resolve concerns relating to the admissions process. Accordingly, complaints should be raised as promptly as possible following the matter giving rise to the concern. This ensures the University has the best opportunity to review the circumstances fully and take appropriate action where necessary.

10. Formal complaints should be made as soon as possible after informal efforts to resolve the issue have been concluded and in any event within 40 calendar days of the issue occurring which has given rise to the complaint. Complaints submitted after this period must satisfy one of the grounds found in Section 10, Chapter 2, Para 14a or b.
11. For the avoidance of doubt, where an applicant complains of an issue that occurred more than 40 calendar days from the date complaint is submitted, it will not be deemed to be out of time where there is evidence to show that the issue has continued to occur from the day it arose.
12. Without prejudice to paragraph 11 above, the 40 calendar days will not begin to run until the issue has ceased to exist or has been resolved
13. A complaint that begins under this procedure must conclude under this procedure. A complaint will not be transferred to Section 10, Chapter 2 of these Regulations where a student's status changes from Applicant to Enrolled Student

Informal Resolution

14. The University encourages applicants to seek informal resolution in the first instance, where appropriate by emailing admissions@rave.ac.uk, as issues can sometimes be resolved quicker with clarification or correction from the University. The matter will refer the matter to the staff member they feel is best placed to respond.
15. Informal queries or concerns should be raised as soon as they arise for the best chance of the matter being resolved in a manner that corrects the issue.
16. The University aims to respond to informal complaints or queries within 5 working days of the date of the notification. Where the matter has been referred outside of the admissions department, this may delay the length of time it takes to respond. In this case, the University will provide an adjusted timeline within which you can a response.
17. Where an applicant is not satisfied with the resolution proposed by the University, they may escalate the matter to Stage 2 of this procedure.
18. In limited circumstances it may be appropriate to refer the complaint to the formal complaints process without first undertaking the informal stage, for instance where a conflict of interest arises. Advice should be sought from the Head of Admissions or Head of Student Casework in these circumstances.
19. If an applicant is not satisfied that the complaint has been satisfactorily resolved by the informal process or does not get a response within the 10-working daytime period, the complaint can be referred to stage 2 of this procedure.

Formal Complaints

20. A formal complaint must be submitted by email with the subject "Stage 2 Admissions Complaint" including any evidence relied upon and indicating which remedy is sought.

21. The formal complaint should be made as soon as possible after informal efforts to resolve the issue have been concluded and in any event within 40 calendar days of the issue occurring which has given rise to the complaint.
22. Once received, the complaint will be assessed to ensure it meets the definition of a complaint as set out above, whether it is excluded from consideration or whether it should be considered under a different procedure i.e. appeals procedure. Where the complaint is out of time for no good reason supported by evidence or it is excluded from review the complaint will be summarily dismissed in the outcome letter and instructions for escalating to Stage 3 will be provided.
23. Where the complaint is determined to be eligible and in time, an investigating officer will be appointed who will have 25 working days to consider the complaint. Where necessary, the Investigating Officer may seek additional information from the applicant. Where an investigation meeting is required, the XX working day period will begin on the day of the meeting. If it becomes apparent that it will take longer to investigate or resolve the complaint, the student will be advised of this and the new timescales and the reasons for this.
24. Applicants are welcome to be accompanied, or represented, at any meetings held about the complaint. Whoever is accompanying the applicant may make representations on their behalf, where that is requested but they may not answer questions on the applicant's behalf.
25. At the end of their investigation, and within 25 working days of the complaint, the Investigating Officer will write a complaint outcome letter detailing the investigation conducted and the outcome, including reasons behind the outcome. The complaint may be:
 - a. upheld in whole with a statement as to remedy;
 - b. upheld in part with a statement as to remedy and an explanation regarding those parts dismissed;
 - c. dismissed with a statement as to the reasons.
26. The Investigating Officer may decide that it is appropriate to communicate the outcome initially by way of a meeting followed up in writing.
27. If the applicant is satisfied with the outcome and they do not wish to take the matter further, they may request a Completion of Procedures letter from the University to signify the end of the process.

Complaint Review (Stage 3)

28. If the applicant remains dissatisfied following the outcome issued at Stage 2, they may request a review of how the complaint was handled. This request for a review must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome.
29. A complaint review is not a reconsideration of the substantive elements of the original complaint and will only be considered under one of the following grounds:

- a) there is new evidence that could not be provided earlier in the procedure (providing objective and authoritative evidence of why it could not be provided earlier);
- b) there is evidence that the correct process was not followed at stage 2 of the process;
or
- c) the outcome at stage 2 is not reasonable given the evidence.

30. Complaint reviews will be considered by the University Secretary or nominee and an applicant can expect a response within 25 working days. Where more time is needed, students will be informed about the new timescales and the reasons for this
31. Following consideration of the review application, the University Secretary or nominee will write to the applicant indicating either:
- a. that the review is rejected as out of time (giving reasons why if evidence was provided as to why the application was submitted out of time);
 - b. confirming the outcome of the formal complaint;
 - c. substituting their own decision (on either the substantive matter and/or the remedy) for that of the original investigator; or
 - d. instructing a new investigation.
32. The complaint review outcome letter exhausts the University's internal procedures. Applicants will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter. This may enable the applicant to refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) where they are still not happy with the outcome at this stage

Group Complaints

33. In the unlikely event that a group of applicants are seeking to submit a group complaint, the provisions in Section 10, Chapter 2 Para 43 shall be applied where possible.

Frivolous and Vexatious Complaints

34. Provisions in relation to complaints that appear to be vexatious or frivolous can be found in Section 10, Chapter 2, Para 50 onwards.

Appeals

35. An **appeal** is a written request by an applicant for a formal review of an admission decision or the wording, terms or conditions of an offer.
36. An appeal will be considered where there is:

- a. objective and authoritative evidence of improper conduct or administration or procedural error in the consideration of the application;
 - b. significant evidence comes to light which is relevant to the admissions decision, but, for good cause, was not available at the point of the original application.
37. Decisions against academic judgment or from applicants who do not meet the published minimum admissions criteria will be dismissed at the preliminary stage.
38. Appeals should be lodged within 10 working days decision and will be considered by the Admissions team.