

Policy regarding Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

Purpose of Policy

To outline the University's arrangements for applicants to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application, to appeal an admissions decision or to complain about the admissions process.

Overview

Applicants to the University of Edinburgh are entitled to received feedback on an unsuccessful application. Applicants may also appeal an admissions decision where admissions policies and processes have not been followed, or to submit a complaint about the admissions service.

This policy sets out the process by which an applicant may submit a feedback request, or an appeal or complaint, and the actions the University will take.

Scope: Mandatory policy

This policy applies University-wide and to all applicants; undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, online learning, and visiting students.

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Document control

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Approving authority

Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group (now Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group)

Consultation undertaken

College admissions practitioners, Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group

Section responsible for policy maintenance and review

Student Recruitment and Admissions

Related policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations

University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy
UK Quality Code - Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access

UK Quality Code 2018

Core practices: *The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.*

Policies superseded by this policy

None

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email SRA.Adteam@ed.ac.uk

Keywords

Admissions, feedback, appeals, complaints

The University of Edinburgh Policy and Procedure for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

1. Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 To clarify the arrangements for applicants to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application, to appeal an admissions decision or to complain about the admissions process.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies University-wide and to all applicants; undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research, online learning, and visiting students.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Feedback: The University is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices, and believes that providing constructive feedback about an unsuccessful application will help an applicant to achieve a successful outcome in the future. The University will therefore provide feedback, when requested, to anyone whose application to study at undergraduate or postgraduate level has been unsuccessful (see section 5).
- 3.2 Appeals: Following the provision of feedback, an applicant will have the right to appeal the selection decision, providing that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal (see section 6).
- 3.3 Complaints: An applicant who wishes to make a complaint about the application process may do so using the University's complaints handling procedure (see section 7). Please note that the complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge an academic decision to refuse an application.

4. Data protection

- 4.1 The University prefers to deal directly with applicants, and where possible, a request for feedback or the submission of an appeal should be made by the applicant, not by a third party.
- 4.2 In cases where a request is submitted by a third party, data protection legislation may prevent the University from releasing information relating to an individual's application unless the University receives specific written permission from the applicant allowing them to deal with the third party. Should an applicant wish a third party to act on their behalf, for example because the applicant is under 16, or has disabilities which would make it difficult for them to submit an appeal or complaint directly, the applicant must provide written authorisation, including the name and contact details of the relevant third party.

5. Feedback

5.1 Feedback in this context is defined as information about why an application was unsuccessful. Any unsuccessful applicant to the University may request feedback on an admissions decision.

5.2 Each College is responsible for making selection decisions on all applications to its programmes. Each College provides information on the University website relating to its selection criteria and procedures and this information, together with the information given in the decision notice sent to the applicant, will be helpful to many candidates in explaining why their application has been unsuccessful. Applicants are therefore advised to read this information *prior* to approaching the College or School admissions office with a formal request for feedback.

5.3 Procedure for Requesting Feedback

The following procedure should be used to request feedback regarding an unsuccessful application to the University.

5.3.1 Requests for feedback should be made by email to futurestudents@ed.ac.uk within 20 working days following notification of the original admissions decision.

5.3.2 "Feedback request" should be included in the subject line of the email.

5.3.3 Applicants should include their full name, UCAS number (if applicable) and University of Edinburgh UUN (a 7 digit number, preceded by the letter "s") and the name of the programme of study they have applied to.

5.3.4 The relevant admissions team will respond in writing to each request for feedback.

5.3.5 Feedback will normally be provided within 20 working days of receipt of the request. However, it may not be possible to provide feedback to unsuccessful undergraduate applicants between 1 January and 31 March due to the volume of admissions work being carried out at this time. Therefore, in these situations, feedback will be provided within 20 working days of the 31st March.

6. Appeals

6.1 An appeal is defined as a formal request for an admissions decision to be reviewed. An appeal will only be considered where there are adequate grounds, as set out below.

- Where there is substantial new information which, for good reason, was not made available either on the original application or during the selection procedure, and where that new information is significant and directly relevant to the original decision. Please note that the new information must relate directly to the original application and cannot include activities or achievements which have taken place or been ratified subsequently.

- Where there is evidence that the University's published Admissions Policy has not been followed.

6.2 Appeals put forward on any other grounds will not be considered.

6.3 Please note that the University will not consider appeals that are based on errors made by external organisations, agencies or individuals. For example, inaccurate predictions of future grades; disputes about the grading of formal examinations; comments made by referees or agents.

6.4 **Special Circumstances**

6.4.1 The University is not best placed to fairly and consistently take account of any special circumstance affecting an applicant's performance in pre-entry qualifications, and will not consider appeals based on such circumstances. Examples of special circumstances include personal or family illness during or shortly before exams take place. The University expects applicants to have taken appropriate action to ensure that the relevant examination bodies have allowed for such circumstances prior to the announcement of results or following an appeal to the examination body.

6.4.2 The University will consider the impact that longer term difficulties such as illness, disability, mental health challenges or caring responsibilities have had on an applicant's education in accordance with its [Challenging Circumstances Policy](#). Please note that information about challenging circumstances must be provided by the relevant application deadline, and cannot subsequently be taken into account as grounds for an appeal.

6.5 **Procedure for Appealing an Admissions Decision**

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant believes, in line with the above guidance, they have grounds for appeal against an admissions decision.

6.5.1 An applicant should seek feedback from the relevant admissions team before deciding whether or not they have grounds to appeal the admissions decision. Feedback often provides sufficient explanation of the admissions decision, and applicants may find they do not wish to appeal once this has been received. An appeal will not be considered until after an applicant has received formal feedback.

6.5.2 Appeals must be received within 20 working days following the provision of feedback from the relevant admissions team.

6.5.3 An appeal should be submitted by email to sra-appeals@ed.ac.uk, stating clearly the grounds for appeal (as above) and outlining the case in full.

6.5.4 Student Recruitment & Admissions will screen each submission in the first instance to determine if there are sufficient grounds for appeal, as set out above. If there are no grounds for appeal, the applicant will be informed of this by email.

6.5.5 If it is judged that there may be grounds for appeal, Student Recruitment & Admissions will contact the relevant admissions team and make arrangements for the

appeal to be considered in full by that College. In these circumstances, Student Recruitment & Admissions will inform the applicant of the outcome of initial screening and the anticipated timescale for consideration of the appeal.

6.5.6 If an appeal is to be heard and additional information is required, the applicant will be informed by email and provided with an appropriate deadline by which to submit the information.

6.5.7 An Appeals Panel convened at School or College-level will consider appeals as appropriate. The Head of College will decide the membership of the Appeals Panel, and will authorise that Panel to act in the name of the Head of College. Membership of the Appeals Panel will vary but may include a senior academic from the College/School, and an experienced member of admissions staff who was not involved with making the original decision.

6.5.8 The applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal and given an explanation for the decision which has been reached. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and there is no further right of appeal.

6.5.9 No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of appealing a previous admissions decision.

6.5.10 Student Recruitment & Admissions will collate annual statistics relating to the number of formal appeals received and the outcomes.

7. Complaints

7.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with an action or lack of action taken by the University, or with the standard of the service provided.

7.2 Complaints relating to admissions will be managed in accordance with the University of Edinburgh's complaints handling procedure which can be found at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/complaint-handling-procedure>. This procedure should be used when an applicant (or the applicant's representative) is dissatisfied with the service they have received from the University with regard to an application.

7.3 The complaints handling procedure cannot be used as a means to change an admissions decision. However, if in the course of investigating a complaint the investigator believes there are grounds for an appeal against the admissions decision, the investigator may advise the applicant to submit a formal appeal.

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November 2019, no changes made

December 2022, changes made