

# COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY FOR ENQUIRERS & APPLICANTS

| Title: Complaint and Appeals Policy for Enquirers and Applicants |            |                      |            |                             |                  |
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| 1.0                                                              | 01/09/2022 |                      | N Zobole   |                             |                  |
| 1.1                                                              | 11/12/2024 | Policy update        | S Evans    | Donal O'Connor,<br>Dec 2024 | August 2025      |
| 1.2                                                              | 01/07/2026 | Policy Update        | C Woodward | Lisa Davies                 | July 2026        |
|                                                                  |            |                      |            |                             |                  |

## Complaints and Appeals Policy for Enquirers and Applicants

### 1. Introduction

This Policy applies to enquirers and applicants only and is applicable to anyone who contacts Enquiries and Admissions with an admissions-related query or who submits an application to study a course delivered at University of South Wales campuses. It does not apply to Partner Colleges, which operate their own procedures for enquiries and admissions, including the handling of any related complaints or appeals.

- 1.1 The University of South Wales is committed to providing excellent customer service and the Enquiries and Admissions Team continually monitors feedback and addresses concerns brought to their attention by staff, students, applicants or enquirers. The University of South Wales has a duty of care to its applicants and enquirers and this includes the provision of fair and transparent admissions procedures, as detailed in the University's Admissions Policy, for all applicants, those who apply via UCAS and those who apply directly via the online application form.
- 1.2 The Enquiries and Admissions Team recognises, however, that there may be occasions when an enquirer or applicant is dissatisfied with the service provided, the procedures which are part of the enquiry and admissions process, and/or outcomes of any of these processes. It will usually be the responsibility of the Enquiries and Admissions Managers to lead the investigation following the submission of a formal complaint or appeal.
- 1.3 The Enquiries and Admissions Team encourages enquirers and applicants who have a complaint, or wish to appeal an admissions decision, to initially raise the matter informally under the Early Resolution Stage described in section 4.1 of this policy, either by emailing:  
[admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (UK applicants and enquirers)  
 Or [International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (EU and international applicants and enquirers)  
 Please note that due to GDPR regulations, the team is unable to accept emails from third parties unless an authorisation email from the applicant is received.
- 1.4 If an enquirer or applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome under the Early Resolution stage, a formal complaint can be made. The formal Complaints and Appeals Procedure is detailed below in section 4.2 below.
- 1.5 An enquirer or applicant will not be disadvantaged in any way because they have used the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.
- 1.6 Complaints and appeals can be submitted in Welsh and will not be treated any less favourably than complaints and appeals made in English.
- 1.7 Enquirers or applicants requiring reasonable adjustments to submit a complaint or appeal are encouraged to contact the Enquiries and Admissions Team by emailing:  
[admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (UK applicants and enquirers)  
 Or [International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (EU and international applicants and enquirers)  
 or by telephoning:  
  
 +44 (0)1443 654450 (UK applicants and enquirers)  
 Or +44 (0) 1443 654450 (EU and international applicants and enquirers)

- 1.8 The contact details in 1.7 above can also be used for any queries or questions about this policy.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 A complaint is defined as a specific concern related to an alleged procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the enquiry or admissions procedures or our defined policies.
- 2.2 An appeal is a request for the review of an admissions decision and/or the outcome of an application or interview, or the wording or terms and conditions of an offer.

## **3. Guidance**

- 3.1 Complaints and appeals must normally be made by the enquirer or applicant themselves. A complaint or appeal from a third party will only be investigated in exceptional circumstances, where an applicant has provided a valid reason for the request, together with written authorisation that they wish the third party to act on their behalf.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstances, the Admissions Managers may recommend that a complaint progresses directly to the formal stage, for example, where there is a serious allegation of discrimination.
- 3.3 Complaints which are submitted anonymously will not be investigated.
- 3.4 The University will not enter into discussions or disputes on matters it considers to be issues of academic judgement. Enquiries and Admissions staff will make every effort to explain entry requirements, how selection criteria are applied, and the reasons for a decision; however, unless there has been a processing error, the University will not change an admissions decision because an applicant disagrees with, or wishes to challenge, the criteria used.
- 3.5 The University must adhere to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations and must ensure that admissions decisions (including the issuance of a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies or CAS) minimise the risk of visa refusal. While Enquiries and Admissions staff will make every effort to explain how immigration regulations, requirements and expectations have been applied and the reasons for any decision, the University will not uphold appeals that seek to challenge decisions made on the basis of UKVI compliance, risk assessment, or potential increased visa refusal likelihood. Admissions decisions will not be reviewed solely on the grounds that an applicant disagrees with the University's interpretation or application of UKVI requirements necessary to protect its UKVI licence.
- 3.6 Applications need to be as complete as possible at the point of submission in order to support the Enquiries and Admissions team in making an accurate and fair decision on the application. If new evidence is supplied following submission of the original application, such as additional qualifications that weren't mentioned, or details of personal mitigating circumstances that have impacted the applicant, then the University reserves the right to decide whether the new evidence can be considered for the intake date in question and the admissions outcome reviewed. The team may

ask why the information was not included with the original application so that this can be taken into consideration.

#### 4. Procedure

The University operates a two-stage process for Enquiries and Admissions complaints and appeals.

##### 4.1 Early Resolution Stage

If an enquirer or applicant is unhappy with any aspect of the enquiry or admissions process, they are asked to email:

[admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (UK applicants and enquirers)

Or [International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk](mailto:International.admissions@southwales.ac.uk) (EU and international applicants and enquirers)

within 14 days of the incident or decision that has caused concern. The Enquiries and Admissions team will make every reasonable effort to explain procedures, address concerns, and respond to any queries raised. These communications must take place via email to ensure that a written record is available, should it be required as evidence if the complaint or appeal progresses to the formal stage.

The Enquiries and Admissions team will respond to an informal request within 14 working days under Early Resolution.

##### 4.2 Formal Stage

Whilst most cases can be resolved under Early Resolution, if an enquirer or applicant remains unsatisfied, then a formal complaint or appeal can be submitted via this [Microsoft Form](#).

4.3 The formal complaint should be submitted using the Microsoft form referenced above within 28 days of the alleged incident or action (this timeframe includes the 14-day Early Resolution period). The submission should include as much relevant detail and supporting information as possible.

4.4 Appeals requesting a review of an admissions decision should be submitted in writing within 28 working days of the University's decision (this timeframe includes the 14-day Early Resolution period). Appeals must be made by completing the [Microsoft Form](#) and should include as much relevant detail and supporting information as possible.

Appeals can only be considered if:

- a) There has been an administrative error;
- b) Due process has not been followed;
- c) There were documented errors or omissions in the advice provided to the enquirer or applicant;

4.5 The Admissions Managers (or nominee) will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint or appeal within 5 working days.

4.6 An investigation will take place, led by the Admissions Managers (or nominee), with input from the Enquiries and Admissions Team and/or staff from other areas of the

University as appropriate. If the complaint or appeal relates to the conduct of a member of the Enquiries and Admissions Team, then the investigation may be led by another Senior Manager within the wider Future Students team. If the University requires further information, or if we anticipate a delay due to the complexity of the formal complaint or appeal, the Admissions Managers will contact you by email to advise.

- 4.7 Face-to-face meetings and interviews with the enquirer or applicant will not usually be required. Should a meeting or interview be required, the Admissions Managers will contact you by email to advise.
- 4.8 The Admissions Managers (or nominee) will respond via email to a formal complaint or appeal within 20 working days of receiving all relevant information. The response will outline the investigation undertaken, include input from the relevant University departments, and clearly set out the findings.
- 4.9 If a complaint or appeal is upheld, the University will take appropriate and reasonable action and will notify the enquirer or applicant of the outcome.
- 4.10 Where an appeal is upheld, reasonable action may include reconsidering the application or the conditions of the offer. In some cases, it may not be possible to offer admission for the originally requested academic session; instead, an alternative start date may be offered.
- 4.11 Reasonable action to address a complaint that is upheld may include issuing an apology or committing to review and improve an existing procedure.
- 4.12 If the appeal or complaint is not upheld, the Admissions Managers (or nominee) will communicate the reasons for the decision via email.
- 4.13 The decision will be final, and there will be no further right of appeal.

## **5. Storage and Processing of Complaints and Appeals Information**

- 5.1 All complaints and appeals will be handled confidentially and with due regard for privacy. Information may be shared, where necessary, with relevant members of the University who need it to investigate and resolve the matter.
- 5.2 The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the University's registration under the Data Protection Act 1998 and its data retention schedule, as set out in the GDPR Privacy Policy. Records of the complaint or appeal, along with any supporting documentation, will be retained for one calendar year after the applicant's relationship with the University has ended, after which they will be securely destroyed.

## **6. Monitoring**

- 6.1 Enquiries and Admissions Managers will monitor, on an annual basis, all formal complaints and appeals which have been received and will produce an Annual Report for consideration by the University's Student Casework Committee. They will also be responsible for implementing, or recommending to the appropriate authority, changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints or appeals

received. The outcome of such monitoring may also be used to inform other processes or activities within the University.