



Complaints and Appeals Policy for Applicants

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Swansea University we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants according to the principles and procedures set out in the University's Admissions Policy (<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Overarching-Admissions-Policy-2020.pdf>)
- 1.2 The University ensures that staff involved with admissions, interviews, decision making etc are professional and receive appropriate training and development in admissions and related areas. Ongoing staff development is offered to staff involved in admissions in order to ensure compliance with regulations and consistency of procedures. For example these training sessions include workshops about recruitment strategy, qualifications, interviews and entry requirements as well as technical training for staff involved in recording offers. In addition, the University holds annual workshops for staff involved in Clearing and other specific events that occur during the applications cycle. Guidance and best practice is also provided by professional bodies.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 A separate complaints policy exists for students who are studying or have studied at Swansea University, relating to matters such as a University service (academic or non-academic), teaching or supervision, facilities, the behaviour of a member of staff, the behaviour of another student, academic appeals etc. <https://myuni.swansea.ac.uk/academic-life/academic-regulations/conduct-and-complaints/complaints-procedure/>
- 1.5 A separate complaints policy also exists for Fee Assessment decisions. Please see our separate [Fee Assessment Policy](#).
- 1.6 We encourage applicants who experience a problem with the service to initially raise the matter informally with staff in the Admissions Office or relevant University section. 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



Office on an informal basis), a formal complaints and appeals procedure is available as detailed in this document.

- 1.7 You will not be disadvantaged in any way because you have used the Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

2. Definitions

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

For example a complaint may concern the process or information provided regarding admissions decisions, the allocation of bursaries or scholarships, or the behaviour of a staff member involved in one of these.

3 General Principles

- 3.1 This policy is for anyone who has encountered an issue at any stage of the Swansea University application process.
- 3.2 The policy applies to all modes and levels of study (full and part-time) for all credit-bearing programmes and to applicants for visiting and exchange programmes.
- 3.3 Appeals and complaints must be made by the applicant to the University. Appeals which are submitted by third parties without the written consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will complaints which are submitted anonymously be investigated.
- 3.4 Applicants and any individual against whom complaints are made may expect complaints to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint.
- 3.5 Formal complaints or appeals should be submitted as soon as an applicant believes there is a



concern. This should normally be within 28 days of any specific alleged incident or action.

- 3.6 The University will not usually consider new information about an applicant's qualifications or circumstances if this should have been made available as part of the original application. 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, where there has been a misinterpretation of the information/data contained within the original application or where medical or other mitigating circumstances can be shown to have affected the quality of the original application. The University reserves the right to decide whether new evidence can be considered on these grounds.
- 3.7 The University will not enter into discussions or disputes on matters it regards as those of academic judgement. Admissions staff will make every effort to explain how selection criteria work, and why they are appropriate for a particular programme, but the University will not review an admissions decision simply because an applicant disagrees with or wishes to challenge the criteria set. Further information relating to our selection process can be found in our Admissions Policy (<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Overarching-Admissions-Policy-2020.pdf>)

4. Procedure

The University operates a two stage process for complaints and appeals:

4.1 Stage 1 – Informal Feedback

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the admissions, fee waiver, bursary or scholarship scheme process please make contact on an informal basis with a member of the Admissions Office (study@swansea.ac.uk) or with a member of staff in an academic department, College or School (such as an admissions tutor or interviewer). Staff will make every reasonable effort to explain procedures, allay concerns or otherwise respond to the issue raised. These discussions may be by telephone, email or other contact and, as appropriate to an informal process, a written record will not necessarily be kept.

4.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint or Appeal

- i. Whilst most cases are resolved by the provision of informal feedback, if you remain unsatisfied with the informal feedback you have received then a formal complaint or appeal can be



submitted for the attention of: the Head of Undergraduate Admissions or Head of Postgraduate Admissions

- ii. Email: admissions-complaints@swansea.ac.uk
- iii. A complaint should be submitted in writing, normally within 28 days of any specific alleged incident or action . As part of a complaint submission you should include:
 - Your name, address, and (if appropriate) your application number and the 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;
 - An indication of the outcome you are seeking.
- iv. An appeal should be submitted in writing within 28 working days of the University's decision. Your appeal should include the following information:
 - a. Your name, address and application number;
 - b. The programme you have applied for;
 - c. Specific details of the ground(s) for the appeal, in particular medical or other evidence to support a claim for mitigation.
 - d. An indication of the outcome you are seeking.
- v. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint or appeal within 5 working days. An investigation will take place, led by the Academic Lead of Admissions (or nominee), with input from the Admissions Office, Academic department 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 advise you. Face-to-face meetings will not normally be part of any investigation.
- vi. We will respond to your complaint or appeal in writing within 15 working days of receipt of all information. The response will include details of the investigation which has taken place, and will outline the response to the investigation from areas of the University involved and will detail the findings of the investigation.
- vii. 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.

- viii. Reasonable action resulting from an appeal which is upheld would be to reconsider the application or conditions of offer. 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.
- ix. Reasonable action to remedy a complaint which is upheld could, for example, include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedure.
- x. The decision of the Academic Lead of Admissions will be final, and there is no further right to appeal.

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 in order to investigate the appeal or complaint.
- 5.2 The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the University's registration under the Data Protection Act (1998) and retention schedule as defined by the GDPR privacy policy. The record of the complaint/appeal and any supporting papers will be destroyed one calendar year after the applicant's relationship with University has ended.

6. Monitoring

The Academic Lead of Admissions will monitor, on an annual basis, all formal complaints and appeals which have been received and will 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

7 Contact Details

For further information please contact the Admissions Office:

Telephone +44 (0)1792 295111

Email: study@Swansea.ac.uk.