

# Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants

## 1. Principles and Definitions

- 1.1 The University is committed to delivering an Admissions service which is customer focused, fair, transparent, and is in accordance with its Admissions Policy, relevant legislation and best practice guidance.
- 1.2 We encourage applicants who experience a problem with the service provided by the Admissions Service to initially raise the matter informally with the Admissions Team directly. Please note applicants may not raise concerns about academic judgement.
- 1.3 Should an applicant wish to request a review of the decision made on their application or wish to make a complaint about the admissions process having first contacted the Admissions Team on an informal basis, a formal Complaints and Appeals Process is available as detailed in this document.
- 1.4 Appeals and complaints are handled separately from the application for entry. An appeal or complaint made in good faith will not prejudice current or future applications. It is important to note most issues are resolved amicably and without recourse to the formal stage of this process.
- 1.5 Appeals or complaints must be submitted by the applicant themselves and not a third party (school, parent or other representative). In cases where an applicant wishes a third party to act on their behalf, then the University must receive explicit written consent from the applicant that this is the case.
- 1.6 **Appeals**
  - 1.6.1 An appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.
  - 1.6.2 Applicants may appeal an admissions decision by the University if they feel that the University did not appropriately consider their application in accordance with the Admissions Policy or other published procedures, or that they did not take account of all the information provided.
  - 1.6.3 Applicants may not appeal an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of a member of academic staff about their suitability for entry onto that course.

## 1.7 **Complaints**

- 1.7.1 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the University's admissions policies or procedures which have been used to make a decision and/or the actions or lack of action of University staff.
- 1.7.2 A complaint will not result in the amendment of an admissions decision – applicants should request an appeal if this is the desired outcome.
- 1.7.3 The Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants cannot be used in the following circumstances:
- Where a decision was taken as a result of failure to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission (for example a satisfactory DBS disclosure or medical clearance)
  - Where a decision was taken as a result of feedback provided to the University from a third party such as a provider of a work or training placement which forms an integral part of the course which the application has been made.

## **2. Process for Handling an Appeal or Complaint**

### **2.1 Stage 1 – Informal feedback**

- 2.1.1 If applicants are unhappy with an admissions decision, or with the way the application has been handled then they are encouraged to initially raise the matter with the Admissions Team directly or speak to the Admissions Tutor for that particular course.
- 2.1.2 The University will provide feedback to unsuccessful applications in response to a request in writing by email or letter to the Admissions Team:

All Home/International/Medicine/Dentistry/Apprenticeship Applicants:

[admissions-team@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-team@bolton.ac.uk)

Postgraduate Research Applicants:

[research-admin@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:research-admin@bolton.ac.uk)

We aim to respond to requests for feedback within 28 working days of receipt of the request. The response will be in writing.

### **2.2 Stage 2 – Formal Appeal**

- 2.2.1 A request for a formal appeal should be submitted on the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Form at the end of this document or by stating in writing that you are appealing under Stage 2 of the Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants.
- 2.2.2 We will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 5 working days.
- 2.2.3 Your appeal will be led by a Senior Manager within the relevant Admissions Team responsible for your application as follows:

Home applications: Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Team  
International applications: International Team  
Postgraduate Research applications: Research and Doctoral College  
Medicine applications: School of Medicine  
Dentistry applications: Queens Dental Sciences Centre  
Apprenticeship applications: Apprenticeship Team

They will review the application and other relevant information with the academic department.

- 2.2.4 We will respond to your appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal. If we require further information from you or anticipate a delay in responding we will write to you.
- 2.2.5 If your 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.

### 2.3 Stage 2 – Formal Complaints

- 2.3.1 A request for a formal complaint should be submitted on the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Form at the end of this document or by stating in writing that you are complaining under Stage 2 of the Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants.
- 2.3.2 We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.
- 2.3.3 If you submit a complaint, a Senior Manager within the relevant Admissions Team responsible for your application (see below) will investigate the complaint with input from the academic department or other parts of the University as appropriate:

Home applications: Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Team  
International applications: International Team  
Postgraduate Research applications: Research and Doctoral College  
Medicine applications: School of Medicine  
Dentistry applications: Queens Dental Sciences Centre  
Apprenticeship applications: Apprenticeship Team

- 2.3.4 As part of your complaint submission applicants should include:
- a) The nature of the complaint, giving as much detail as possible
  - b) Any steps that have already been taken to resolve the matter
  - c) Details of any responses you have received and a statement of why you feel that response is unsatisfactory
  - d) An indication of the outcome you are seeking
- 2.3.5 We will respond to your complaint within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal. If we require further information from you or anticipate a delay in responding we will write to you.
- 2.3.6 If your complaint is upheld, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and you will be informed of the outcome in writing. If your complaint is not upheld, we will communicate the reasons for this decision in writing.

## 2.4 Stage 3 – Review by an Appeals Officer

- 2.4.1 Applicants who are not satisfied with the decision taken in respect of an appeal or complaint may request that their case be heard by an Appeals Officer. The Appeals Officer will be an external person nominated by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 2.4.2 A request for a case to be heard by an Appeals Officer must be made within 3 months of the date of the written outcome of Stage 2 stating that a review is requested under Stage 3 of the Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants.
- 2.4.3 The Appeals Officer will carry out the review in private and all relevant facts will be taken into consideration. Applicants may attend the review and be accompanied by a nominated representative who may speak or act on their behalf. Notes of the review will be taken.
- 2.4.4 The Appeals Officer may decide to:
  - a) Uphold the complaint
  - b) Refer the matter for consideration under another University policy or procedure
  - c) Conclude that there are insufficient grounds to take any further action and concluding the matter under this process
- 2.4.5 Applicants will be notified by the Appeals Officer in writing within 28 working days of receipt of the request.
- 2.4.6 If your complaint is upheld, the University will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and you will be informed of the outcome in writing. If your complaint is not upheld, we will communicate the reasons for this decision in writing.

<b>TITLE OF POLICY:</b> Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants	
Policy ref:	
Version number	4
Version date	March 2025
Name of Developer/Reviewer	Paul Starkey
Policy Owner (Group/Centre/Unit)	Marketing, Recruitment & Admissions and Research and Doctoral College
Person responsible for implementation (postholder)	Executive Director, Strategy, Brand and Future Students and Assistant Vice Chancellor, Postgraduate Developments
Approving committee/board	Education Committee/Senate
Date approved	6 August 2021
Effective from	2025/26
Dissemination method e.g. website	Website, via Student Admissions Policy
Review frequency	When required
Reviewing committee	Education Committee, Senate
Consultation history (individuals/group consulted and dates)	
Document history (e.g. rationale for and dates of previous amendments)	Changes to account for new admissions structure

# Complaints and Appeals Form for Applicants

This form is for the submission of complaints and appeals relating to the admission of students to the University of Bolton. This form should be submitted in accordance with the Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants which should be consulted along with the Student Admissions Policy before completion. These documents may be found at <https://www.bolton.ac.uk/student-policy-zone/>

Please submit this form to the relevant Admissions Team:

All Home/International/Medicine/Dentistry/Apprenticeship Applicants:  
Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions 01204 903394  
[admissions-team@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:admissions-team@bolton.ac.uk)

Postgraduate Research applications:  
Research and Graduate School 01204 903883  
[RDC@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:RDC@bolton.ac.uk)

## 1. Personal Information

Title	
Forename/Given Name	
Surname/Family Name	
Date of birth	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone number	
Email Address	

## 2. Application Information

Provisional student number issued by the University	
UCAS ID (if relevant)	
Course applied for	

Year of application	
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### 3. Nature of Request

**I wish to make a formal appeal.** An appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.

**I wish to make a formal complaint.** A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the University's admissions policies or procedures which have been used to make a decision and/or the actions or lack of action of University staff.

### 4. Details of Appeal/Complaint

Please provide details of your case. You may submit additional sheets if necessary

**5. Desired Resolution**

Please tell us how you would like the University to resolve your appeal/complaint

**6. Supporting Information**

Please list any documents you have provided with this form in support of your request.

**7. Previous Action**

Please provide details of any action you have already taken to resolve this matter informally. You should have sought feedback in accordance with point 2.1 of this process before submitting this form.



**8. Declaration**

**I believe that the information provided in this form is accurate. I consent for the details of this appeal/complaint to be passed on to relevant members of University staff for consideration.**

**I confirm that I am the applicant concerned in this appeal/complaint**

Signed .....

Name.....

Date.....

**OR**

**I am not the applicant concerned in this appeal/complaint but I have their written permission which is enclosed with this form.**

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....