

Admissions Complaints Policy & Procedure

INTRODUCTION

1. A complaint, in this context, is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the way in which the College's admissions policies and procedures have been used to reach a selection decision; or the means by which a decision has been reached; or the actions, or lack of actions, by the College or its staff.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, the Admissions Complaints Policy and Procedure outlined here relates only to complaints associated with admissions and no other College Policy.
3. The Complaints Procedure may be taken up by any individual who has submitted an application to study an undergraduate or postgraduate degree at the College.
4. The Admissions Complaints Policy and Procedure is informed by the Quality Assurance Agency, UK Quality Code Theme: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access and Concerns; Complaints and Appeals.

GENERAL

5. Applicants should note that they have no right to challenge or complain about decisions that are based on academic grounds. Applicants have no right of appeal against a decision not to offer them a place at the College, unless it can be shown that the College's admissions procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied.
6. Complaints may be made by individual applicants or by groups of applicants. Complaints may not be lodged by a representative, a parent, or any other third party unless it can be shown that there are exceptional grounds why the student cannot make a complaint.
7. In the first instance, applicants with a complaint should raise it informally with the relevant member of staff. If this course of action proves unsatisfactory, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.
8. At any informal or formal stage of the complaint, the member of staff to whom the complaint has been referred shall apply such remedy as within their authorisation. If they consider the remedy is beyond their remit, they will refer the matter to an appropriate member of staff.
9. All complaints will be dealt with confidentially. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others so that the complaint can be

dealt with. In these circumstances, all parties concerned will be informed of the disclosure.

10. The College will seek to ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who has made a complaint.
11. Anonymous complaints cannot be dealt with.
12. The Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Marketing will monitor, on an annual basis, formal complaints which have been referred, and will be responsible for implementing or recommending changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints received. Such records will contain name (anonymised), age, gender and ethnicity (if known) of complainant, programme of study applied for, summary of complaint and summary of outcome. The monitoring of the Admissions Complaints Policy and Procedure and summary of outcomes is the responsibility of Academic Board.
13. The Admissions Complaints Policy and Procedure is approved by Academic Board and forms part of the College's overall quality assurance framework.
14. With fairness and consistency, and in line with equal opportunities; if a complaint is upheld, the College will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If a complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.

PROCEDURE

STAGE ONE: INFORMAL COMPLAINT

15. Most complaints can be resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis.
16. The applicant should, normally, raise his/her complaint in writing with the member of NCH staff that they have been in contact with, either electronically (via email) or with a hard copy, via post.
17. The complaint must normally be made within 14 days of the actions or lack of actions that prompted the complaint. The member of staff to whom the complaint has been submitted shall respond to the complainant within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint and shall keep a record of the correspondence and any action taken. If it will not be possible to respond within 10 working days, the complainant shall be informed of the intended timescale for a response.
18. If the complaint is about non-selection, the relevant staff member must satisfy her/himself that the application was considered fairly and that the decision did comply with the College's Admissions Policy. If he/she is satisfied that this is the case, then an acceptable response at this stage is to explain the context of the decision and that the College's selection policy has been applied. The applicant's attention should be drawn to the Formal Complaints Procedure (stage 2), in case he/she wishes to pursue the matter further. If the complaint is rejected, the relevant staff member must state the precise reasons.

19. If an informal complaint is of a general rather than specific nature, it may be more appropriately addressed in writing to the Head of Admissions.
20. If the complaint is about the Head of Admissions, the written complaint should be addressed to the Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Marketing.

STAGE TWO: FORMAL COMPLAINT

21. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received at Stage One, he/she should submit, within 10 working days of receiving the response, a written complaint to the Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Marketing.
22. The written complaint should state: the nature of the complaint, the informal steps already taken, details of the response received, a statement as to why the complainant is dissatisfied, and, without prejudice to any formal remedy which might be determined, an indication of the outcome sought.
23. The Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Marketing shall acknowledge in writing receipt of the complaint within five working days; and normally within 15 working days of receiving the written complaint, investigate the complaint and submit a written response to the complainant. If it will not be possible to respond within 15 working days, the complainant shall be informed of the intended timescale for a response.
24. The Director of Admissions, Recruitment & Marketing’s decision following completion of this process will be considered as final.

Title: Admissions Complaints Policy and Procedure					
Approved by: Academic Board					
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3.1	June 2018	June 2018	Executive Dean	Academic Handbook, Admissions	June 2020
Referenced documents	Admissions Policy				
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access; Concerns, Complaints and Appeals				