



Application Appeals and Complaints Policy

Introduction

1. This policy is informed by the UK Quality Code's Core Practices for quality – “The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system” and “The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students”. Appeals and complaints procedures are conducted expeditiously and in accordance with a published timescale.
2. Norland College is dedicated to operating a fair and consistent admissions process that safeguards the interests of the applicants. Where disputes arise it is anticipated that most of these will be successfully resolved informally by discussion with the admissions staff. Where this is not possible, more formal procedures can be taken through the Appeals and Complaints Policy.
3. Applicants can be assured that formal submission of an appeal or complaint will not prejudice any opinion of the applicant, or be used to adversely affect any later dealings with the applicant including any future applications.

Scope

4. This policy and procedure applies to all applicants to the College applying for a College award and to staff administering them. All necessary information for applicants and College staff relating to appeals and complaints is contained within this document.
5. Appeals and/or complaints should be submitted by the applicants themselves and letters and other correspondence from other parties will not be considered unless the College has received written and signed authorisation from the applicant that the third party acts on their behalf, unless the applicant is under 18 years of age in which case a parent or legal guardian may act as a representative. All written correspondence should always include the applicant's full details including; name, address, contact details and UCAS or other application reference number where applicable.
6. Applicants will not be disadvantaged in any way because they have used these procedures. Applicants are expected to treat all members of College staff with respect. Applicants who abuse, threaten or mistreat members of staff either verbally, in writing or physically will not be tolerated and will have their application and appeal/complaint automatically rejected.

Appeals

7. An appeal is defined as a request for the reconsideration of an admissions decision on an application or the wording or terms and conditions of an offer.
8. The outcome of a successful request to appeal would be to reconsider the candidate's application with a view to changing or upholding the original decision.
9. An appeal may relate to the following decisions within the application process:
 - the decision to interview
 - the decision to make an offer
 - the content of the offer
 - the decision to reject on exam results
10. The Appeals Procedure may only be used where there are adequate grounds for doing so and may not be used simply because a candidate has been unsuccessful with his or her application. Appeals against decisions may be made on one of the following grounds:
 - There is evidence that the admissions procedure was not followed
 - There is new evidence which has come to light, and the student has valid reasons for not previously stating it. If no good reason is given as to why this information was not previously available then it will not be considered
 - There is evidence that the College has demonstrated bias or prejudice in the treatment of the application.
 - There is no provision for appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on applications.
11. The decision of the Principal on completion of the internal procedure is final.

The Application Appeals Procedure

12. Applicants who are dissatisfied with an admissions decision may submit an informal request for a review of the decision to the Vice Principal & Registrar. The request must include the following information:
 - Applicant's name
 - Applicant's address
 - UCAS or other application reference number where applicable
 - The information they have already received
13. The Vice Principal/Registrar will review all application paperwork relevant to the decision and will inform the applicant within 10 working days of the outcome of the review.
14. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, s/he may progress to a formal appeal by writing to the Principal, outlining the grounds for the appeal.
15. There are a number of grounds for making an appeal and at least one must be specified in the letter. The grounds for appeal are indicated above in paragraph 10. Please note that all relevant

information should be submitted at this time and that it is not possible to consider information which is submitted at a later point in the appeals process without good reason. Appeals can only be considered if received within 10 working days of the original dispatch of information about an interview, offer or rejection decision.

16. Verbal discussions regarding the details of the appeal will not be entered into.
17. Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged in writing normally within 5 working days of the date of receipt.
18. The Principal will assess the grounds on which the appeal is based to determine whether they are valid and where appropriate will consult academic staff for academic guidance if the appeal is in relation to an interview.
19. If it is found that there are no valid grounds for appeal, the appeal will not be progressed any further and the applicant will be informed of this in writing, normally within 10 working days.
20. If the grounds stated are assessed as valid a formal response will be issued by letter normally within 10 working days. This response will have one of the following outcomes:
 - The decision under appeal has been reviewed and the same made.
 - The decision under appeal has been reviewed and a different decision has been made.
21. The decision at this stage is final and the applicant does not have further recourse under these procedures.
22. The time scales for the process are stated above. Applicants are requested not to contact the College in these time periods and are advised that no additional correspondence either by telephone, email or letter or any other medium will be entered into.

Complaints

23. Complaints are defined as relating to the services offered by the College or the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the admissions process. This could involve concerns around a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions process.
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25. A complaint may be made about any stage of the admissions process, where there are adequate grounds for doing so. The Procedure may not be used simply because a candidate has been unsuccessful with his or her application at any of the stages.
26. Complaints will only be considered valid if they relate to the following:
 - The actions of a member of staff
 - The conduct of a member of staff
 - The services offered by the College.

27. Claims for financial compensation will not be entered into.
28. The decision of the Principal on completion of the internal procedure is final.

The Application Complaints Procedure

29. Informal complaints may be made verbally to the Admissions Manager, normally within 5 working days of the event or incident to which they relate and no more than 10 working days. This would enable the Admissions staff to gather information about the event or incident quickly.
30. Applicants who remain dissatisfied or have a more serious complaint may make a formal complaint in writing. This complaint should be addressed to the Vice Principal and be submitted no later than 10 working days after the event or incident. The complaint must include the following information:
 - Applicant's name
 - Applicant's address and contact details
 - Applicant's UCAS number where applicable
 - The information they have already received
 - The nature of their complaint and any supporting evidence
 - A reasonable outcome which the applicant feels would be an appropriate response.

31. Please note that all relevant information should be submitted at this time and that it is not possible to consider information which is submitted at a later point in the complaints process without good reason.

32. The complaint will be investigated by the Vice Principal who will reply to the applicant in writing, normally within 10 working days.
33. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome they may write to the Principal explaining why the applicant remains dissatisfied and, in respect of the complaint, what they would have hoped the outcome would have been.
34. The Principal will normally respond within 10 working days. This decision is final and the applicant does not have further recourse under these procedures.

Storage of information relating to Application Appeals and Complaints

35. By signing a letter of Appeal or Complaint, the Applicant agrees that the College can process information it contains for all the purposes relating to the Appeal and Complaints procedure for applicants and to your application to the College.
36. Information will be stored and processed in accordance with the College's

registration under the Data Protection Act (2018). It may be disclosed to members of the College who have a need to see it and will be stored as part of your application to the College.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

36. Students who have exhausted the College's internal appeals procedures and the University's complaints procedures but remain aggrieved may be able to make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Further information about the OIA is available on the OIA website: www.oiahe.org.uk.