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# Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Applicants



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bath Spa University is committed to good practice in admissions and to ensuring that its processes are fair, consistent and transparent. 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.
- 1.2 The University's Admissions Policy describe the general principles that we apply to admissions and outline the admissions process. The admissions policy may be found at: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/>
- 1.3 We encourage applicants who experience a problem with the service to initially raise the matter informally with the Admissions and Applicant Support Team. 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, a formal complaints and appeals procedure is available as detailed in section 3. It should be recognised that the vast majority of applicant complaints can be handled fairly, amicably and to the satisfaction of all concerned without recourse to the formal stage.
- 1.4 You will not be disadvantaged in any way because you have used the Complaints and Appeals Procedure. The University aims to handle complaints and appeals so that a resolution can be found and in a way that is sensitive to the concerns of the applicant, only involving those who need to be a part of the resolution process.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 An appeal is defined by Bath Spa University as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.
- 2.2 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct of any aspect of the University's recruitment or admissions process.

## 3. Scope of the Procedure

- 3.1 This procedure is for anyone who has encountered an issue at any stage of the application process at Bath Spa University.
- 3.2 This procedure applies to all applicants for courses delivered by Bath Spa University. (If an applicant for a course offered at one of the University's Educational Partners is dissatisfied with the way their application has been handled, they should follow the Educational Partner's applicant complaints and appeals procedures. If, after this, applicants are still concerned they should write to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Support, who will seek to reply to the complaint within 14 days.)

- 3.3 Complaints or appeals submitted by third parties without the consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will complaints submitted anonymously.
- 3.4 Applicants are encouraged to discuss their issue with friends, parents, advisors or teachers, as separate and independent advice will help applicants reach an informed opinion.
- 3.5 Applicants may appeal against an admissions decision by Bath Spa University on the following grounds:
- Where an applicant feels that their application was not considered in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy or other published procedures; and/or
  - Where an applicant was unable to provide relevant information during the application process for valid reasons.
- 3.6 Applicants may not appeal against the quality of the academic or professional judgement of the Bath Spa University staff who are responsible for making the decision on an applicant's suitability for the course.
- 3.7 A separate complaints policy exists for current and previous students of Bath Spa University: [www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/complaints-policy/](http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/complaints-policy/)

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Stage One – Informal Feedback

If an applicant is unhappy with an admissions decision, they are encouraged to initially raise the matter with the Admissions and Applicant Support Team by sending an email to [admissions@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bathspa.ac.uk).

We will provide a response to you in writing within 14 working days

### 4.2 Stage Two – Formal Complaint or Appeal

- i. Whilst most cases are resolved by the provision of informal feedback, if an applicant remains unsatisfied with the feedback they have received then a formal complaint or appeal can be submitted. This should be submitted in writing within 28 days to

The Head of Admissions and Applicant Support

email: [admissions@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bathspa.ac.uk)

address: Admissions and Applicant Support  
Newton St Loe  
Bath  
BA2 9BN

- ii. The University will seek to ensure that all appeals and complaints from applicants are treated seriously, positively and constructively. It will also seek to ensure that appeals and complaints are dealt with promptly, with fairness and consistency and with due regard to the University's Equality Policy: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/equality-policy/>.  
If an appeal or complaint is found to be justified, the University will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If an appeal or complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.
- iii. The written complaint should include:
  - Name, address and application number
  - Name of the course applied for
  - The nature of the complaint, giving as much detail as possible. This is the most critical section of the complaint as any investigation will focus on the main issues raised here
  - Any steps that have already been taken to try to resolve the matter
  - Details of any responses you have received and why you feel that the response was unsatisfactory
  - An indication of the outcome you are seeking
- iv. The written appeal should include:
  - Name, address and application number
  - Name of the course applied for
  - Specific details of the ground(s) for the appeal including any evidence to support a claim for mitigation. This is the most critical section of the appeal as any investigation will focus on the main issues raised here;
  - 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 Director of Student Recruitment (or nominee), with input from the Admissions and Applicant Services Team, 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.
- vi. Face-to-face meetings will not normally be part of any investigations

### 4.3 Stage Three – Outcome

- i. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their complaint or appeal in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of all pertinent information. The response will include details of the investigation which has taken place and the findings of the investigation.
- ii. The outcome of an appeal may result in:

- An amended decision
  - The offer of a second interview or audition with different members of staff
  - Confirmation that the original decision will stand
- iii. The outcome of a complaint may include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedures.
- iv. The decision of the Director of Student Recruitment will then be considered as final, and there is no further right to appeal.

## 5. Monitoring

- 5.1 The Recruitment and Admissions Planning Group will monitor, on an annual basis, the number and nature of all formal complaints and appeals received under the processes outlined above and will consider any necessary changes to policies, systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints and appeals received.

## 6. Processing of Information

- 6.1 By submitting a signed letter of complaint or appeal (or authorising a third party to do so on their behalf) an applicant agrees that the University may process all the information that it contains, together with any supporting documentation, for all purposes relating to that complaint. The information may be disclosed to those members of the University who have a need to see it for the purpose of considering and seeking a resolution of the matter. The data will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and it will be stored as part of the University's record of that applicant's record.

## 7. Contact

- 7.1 For further information please contact the Admissions and Applicant Support Team:

Email: [admissions@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@bathspa.ac.uk)

This procedure is based on good practice in the UK University sector.

## Document Details

**Responsible Office:** Admissions and Applicant Support

**Responsible Officer:** Head of Admissions and Applicant Support

**Approving Authority:** Academic Board

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**Related Policies and Procedures:** Admissions Policy

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/>

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