

Complaints and Appeals Process for Applicants

- 1.1 The University of Chester is committed to a fair and consistent admissions process and considers all applications on an individual basis, taking into account all of the information presented in the application form. We are also committed to providing the highest possible standard of service for all applicants.
- 1.2 The University recognises that there may be occasions or circumstances in which an applicant feels that their application has not been dealt with properly or they may be unhappy with an admissions decision, and our complaints and appeals procedure is outlined in this document.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or specific concern relating to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions process. If a complaint were upheld the likely outcome could be a formal or informal apology or a decision to review processes.
- 1.4 An appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision or the terms/conditions of an offer. 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.
- 1.5 The Complaints and Appeals procedure cannot be used where the decision resulted from a failure on your part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission (for example a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure or occupational health check clearance). Additionally, complaints will not be accepted from applicants from outside the UK who do not follow the University's processes and timescales as required by the UK Borders Agency.
- 1.6 The complaint or appeal must be submitted by an individual applicant and not by a third party (school, parent or other representative), unless the third party has the explicit consent from the applicant to act on their behalf.
- 1.7 An appeal or complaint will not adversely affect any future applications made to the University.
- 1.8 *Complaints*
 - 1.8.1 Applicants who have a query or complaint regarding the admissions process should, in the first instance, refer it to the relevant Admissions section for discussion (Undergraduate Admissions, Health & Social Care Admissions, Postgraduate Admissions or International Admissions). Complaints must be made within 7 days after the occurrence. The relevant staff member will respond to the complaint in a timely manner, and will retain a record of the correspondence/conversation and any action taken. If this informal route proves unsatisfactory, then the formal complaints procedure outlined below should be followed.
 - 1.8.2 The applicant must provide the following information in writing to the Head of Admissions or Director of the International Centre within 10 working days of receiving the response:

- Name and address
- UCAS Personal ID number (where applicable)
- The nature of the complaint
- The informal steps already taken to resolve the matter, including details of the response received
- Reasons as to why the applicant remains dissatisfied
- The remedy which the applicant considers appropriate

Complaints received after this time will not normally be investigated.

1.8.3 The complaint will be investigated by the Head of Admissions, Director of the International Centre, or delegated authority, and a written response will be sent within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within 20 working days, the applicant will be informed in writing of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.

1.8.4 Should the applicant wish to pursue the complaint after the full response is received, the matter will be referred to the relevant Executive Dean(s) of Faculty and/or appropriate Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University. In some instances, the decision to refer the complaint directly to the Executive Dean may be made.

1.8.5 The decision of the Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellor is final and will be communicated in writing to the applicant.

1.9 *Appeals*

1.9.1 Applicants may appeal against an admissions decision only if the appeal relates to:

- Procedural discrepancy i.e. the University is considered not to have adhered to its own admissions procedures
- New information i.e. information that was not available at the time of application and which may alter the decision. The reasons why this information was not available at the time of application must be given. If no good reason is given as to why this information was not previously available then it will not be considered.
- Evidence that the University has demonstrated bias or prejudice in the treatment of the application.

Applicants may not appeal against an admissions decision based on academic or professional judgement.

1.9.2 Applicants wishing to appeal against an admissions decision must do so in writing to the Head of Admissions or the Director of the International Centre within 10 working days of receiving the admissions decision. The applicant must provide the following information:

- Name and address
- UCAS Personal ID number (where applicable)

- Grounds for appeal
- How procedures were not followed; what new information should be considered and the reasons why this was not available at the time of the application; or details of discrimination or bias at the time of application

- 1.9.3 The appeal will be considered by the Head of Admissions, Director of the International Centre, or delegated authority. If the Head of Admissions, Director of the International Centre, or delegated authority considers there are no grounds for appeal the applicant will be informed of this decision in writing within 10 working days.
- 1.9.4 If the Head of Admissions, Director of the International Centre, or delegated authority, considers there are valid grounds for appeal, this will be investigated and may involve Admissions Tutors, and/or Admissions Officers as appropriate, particularly if the appeal is in relation to an interview. The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the investigation in writing within 20 working days. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within 20 working days, the applicant will be informed in writing of the timescale for the receipt of a full response. In some instances, the decision to refer the complaint directly to the Executive Dean may be made.
- 1.9.5 For Postgraduate Research (PGR) applicants the appeal will be investigated by the relevant Senior PGR Tutor in the Faculty and/or Head of Department, supported by Admissions.
- 1.9.6 Should the applicant wish to pursue the appeal after the written response is received, the matter will be referred to the relevant Executive Dean(s) of Faculty and/or appropriate Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University.
- 1.9.7 The decision of the Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellor is final and will be communicated in writing to the applicant.

2. Contact details

Head of Admissions
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 E: enquiries@chester.ac.uk

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For courses that are validated by the University of Chester and the admissions process is undertaken by a Partner University/College or Associate College, please refer to the Partner / Associate College's complaints and appeals procedure.

All information relating to the complaint or appeal is stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.