

Applicant Complaints Policy (Student Admissions)

Policy Category:	Academic
Subject:	This policy outlines how applicants to the university can make a complaint regarding the university's admissions process and/or service.
Approving Authority:	Academic Board
Responsible Officer:	Vice-Principal (Education) and the Executive Director, Students & Education
Delegated Authority:	King's Admissions Office
Related College Policies:	<u>Fair Admissions Policy</u> , <u>Mitigating Circumstances and Examination Remarks (Admissions)</u> , <u>Applicant Misconduct Policy Statement</u>
Effective Date:	October 2022
Supersedes:	Admissions Appeals Procedure (2013), Admissions Complaints Procedure (2016)
Next review:	October 2025

PURPOSE & SCOPE

King's College London is a world-class institution, attracting applications from highly qualified applicants from across the globe every year. The university is committed to providing a high-quality admissions process in line with our admissions policies for all applicants. However, the university recognises that there may be occasions when applicants to the university may have cause for complaint.

This policy outlines how applicants can submit a complaint and in what circumstances these will be investigated. The policy applies to those who have made a formal application to study at the university (for example, through UCAS, King's Apply, DfE Apply) and applies to all programmes of study, at all levels.

POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy explains how applicants to the university can seek to have a complaint addressed by the admissions team. It outlines the circumstances in which a complaint will be investigated.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Applicants are permitted to make a complaint at any stage in the application process.
- 2.2 Third parties can act on behalf of the applicant if the applicant provides explicit written permission via a King's Apply portal message that they are permitted to do so. For undergraduate programmes, if the third party is the UCAS proxy, it will be assumed that permission has already been granted to act on behalf of the applicant.
- 2.3 Anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- 2.4 Applicants will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination in the admissions process as the result of making a complaint in good faith. This will not have any ramifications to any existing or future applications.
- 2.5 The university will endeavour to respond in the timeframes outlined below. However, during busy times of the year, there may be delays in the response.

3. Informal complaints

- 3.1 At any stage in the admissions process, applicants can express a dissatisfaction with an aspect of the admissions process. Applicants should message the King's Admissions Office (KAO) via a King's Apply message to inform the admissions team of their complaint. These complaints will be investigated by the KAO according to university's

admissions policies and procedures and a response will be provided within 15 working days of receipt.

3.2 Where a mistake or error in process has been identified, the KAO will seek to provide a remedy. Where a remedy is not possible, an explanation will be provided in writing to the applicant via King's Apply.

4. Formal, Stage One Complaint

4.1 Where an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint or wishes to formalise their grievance with the university, the applicant can complete and submit a Stage One Complaint form which is available via King's Apply. This form must be submitted no later than 10 working days after the incident has occurred. If submitted after this time, the KAO does not have an obligation to investigate.

4.2 Once an application has been made unsuccessful, the applicant has 30 days to make their complaint to the KAO. After this time, the submission of a complaint will not be permitted nor investigated.

4.3 Once the complaint form is received, the KAO will examine the evidence that the applicant has submitted and investigate the grievance in line with the university's admissions policies. The KAO has 30 working days to complete its investigation and provide a response.

4.4 Where a mistake or error in process has been identified, the KAO will seek to provide a remedy. If a remedy is not possible, an explanation will be provided in writing to the applicant via King's Apply.

4.5 The following complaints will not be considered and will be rebuked:

i. Vexatious

Complaints made without foundation or in bad faith will not be considered. These include but are not limited to:

- i. complaints which are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive;
- ii. insistence on pursuing complaints without merit and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes;
- iii. complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;

ii. Reconsideration of an unsuccessful decision

This may include but is not limited to the request to review an unsuccessful decision based on competition or failure to demonstrate the meeting entry criteria.

Unless substantive evidence is provided by the applicant that demonstrates there were irregularities in the admissions procedure, these complaints will be revoked. There is no provision for appeal against the academic or professional judgement of the KAO and admissions selectors.

iii. Complaints regarding performance on Admissions Tests.

As the administration of Admissions Tests is outside of the responsibilities of the KAO, these complaints will not be investigated.

5. Formal, Stage Two Complaint

- 5.1 Applicants can only make a Stage Two complaint via King's Apply once a response has been received from the completion of a Stage One complaint investigation. There will be a window of 10 working days in which an applicant can submit a Stage Two Complaint once the outcome of Stage One has been received. Complaints made after 10 working days of receiving a stage one outcome will not be considered.
- 5.2 The Stage Two complaint process is triggered by the completion and submission of a Stage Two complaint form. The form is available through and must be submitted via King's Apply. Upon receipt, the KAO has 30 working days to consider the evidence submitted by the applicant, review the Stage One complaint process/outcome and consider the complaint in line with its admissions policies.
- 5.3 The Stage Two Complaint process can be used in the following circumstances:
 - i. To express dissatisfaction regarding a significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage One complaint investigation.
 - ii. Where there is substantive new evidence which the applicant was unable to provide as part of the Stage One complaint, and sufficient evidence remains that the Stage One complaint warrants reconsideration.
- 5.4 Where a mistake or error in process has been identified, the KAO will seek to provide a remedy. Where a remedy is not possible, an explanation will be provided in writing to the applicant via King's Apply.
- 5.5 Using the Stage Two process to express unsubstantiated disagreement or dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage One will not be investigated and will be rebuked.

6. Enrolled students

- 6.1 Once an applicant completes the online enrolment task, they will be considered as a student at the university. At this stage, students must follow the [Student Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

7. Policy Implementation, Review and Reporting

- 7.1. Heads of Admissions and Admissions Managers will have responsibility for ensuring that expected response times are met.
- 7.2. Admissions Managers and Admissions Operations will have overview of response times and outcomes of the complaints process. They will review this information to ensure consistency in the application of the policy and to develop and implement improvements in the admissions process for future cycles.
- 7.3. The Admissions Operations team will have responsibility for updating this policy and will review this once every three years, unless there are governmental, legal or regulatory changes that will mean a review will be required at an earlier date.