

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

Admissions – Applicant Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Norwich University of the Arts (the University) is committed to good practice in admissions and to ensuring applicants are provided with a fair, transparent and inclusive admissions process.
- 1.2 These guidelines explain how the University deals with complaints about procedures involved in the admissions process.
- 1.3 Applicants who believe that they have reason to appeal a decision made on their application should refer to the Applicant Appeals Procedure.
- 1.4 We aim to handle complaints in a way that:
 - encourages informal conciliation
 - is fair and efficient
 - treats complaints with appropriate seriousness, sympathy and confidentiality
 - facilitates early resolution
 - allows the University or a particular section to benefit from the experience
 - is in compliance with the University's Single Equality Scheme.
- 1.5 The University is committed to resolving complaints as promptly as possible. However, an applicant making a complaint should be aware of his/her responsibilities in responding in a timely fashion to University communications about the complaint, and of the possible delays in processing complaints submitted during or near University vacation time when relevant members of staff may not be available.

2. Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure outlines a number of simple routes to be used by any applicant depending on the seriousness of the complaint. A complaint is defined as relating to the services offered by the University, the administrative or interview process, or actions or behaviour of a member of staff involved in the admissions process.
- 2.2 Please note applicants cannot complain against the following:
 - An academic judgment, ie an applicant's academic suitability to study a course at the University.
 - If an applicant fails to fulfil additional non-academic requirements requested by external agencies, eg criminal convictions, medical etc.
- 2.3 Claims for financial compensation will not be considered.

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2.4 Complaints should be made in writing to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the actions prompting the complaint. Complaints should be made directly by the applicant and should clearly state the nature of the complaint and what resolution the applicant is seeking. The applicant should quote their UCAS identification number (where applicable) on all correspondence, and include details of the course applied for, date of interview, and any other information that they consider pertinent to the complaint.

2.5 Where possible, the University will seek to resolve the complaint through the informal procedure (see 2.6 below).

2.6 **Informal Procedure**

2.6.1 The informal procedure will normally involve direct communication between the applicant and the relevant Course Leader and/or the Academic Registry as appropriate. A note of relevant details and dates will be made. Applicants can expect a verbal response from the University within 10 working days. Any staff involved will be encouraged to share the experience where the effectiveness of their course could benefit.

2.6.2 Where the applicant is not satisfied with the response to the complaint, the applicant may refer to the Formal Procedure outlined below.

2.7 **Formal Procedure**

2.7.1 Where an applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Informal Procedure, the applicant may pursue the matter through the University's Formal Procedure by writing to the Academic Registrar.

2.7.2 The complaint will be forwarded to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who will take action within **10 working days** of receipt of the complaint. Applicants will be informed if there is likely to be any delay in the process.

2.7.3 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may seek to resolve the issue on the basis of the documentation provided, after having sought further information, or may at her/his discretion, convene a meeting at which the applicant and any other persons involved may submit their respective cases.

2.7.4 Complaints will not always produce the outcome preferred by a complainant. For instance, policy decisions or resourcing beyond the University's control may affect the level of service provided. However, whatever the decision, we undertake to communicate the result of a complaint and the reasons for it.

2.7.5 The Academic Registrar will formally notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of the complaint and the reasons for the decision.

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- 2.7.6 Where it has not been possible to resolve matters and the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the process, the applicant may write to the Vice-Chancellor stating the reasons that the outcome or resolution offered is not satisfactory. The Vice-Chancellor will review the complaint and decide whether the outcome is appropriate or whether further action is required.
- 2.7.7 The Vice-Chancellor's decision will be communicated in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written communication.
- 2.7.8 The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final and represents the completion of the complaints procedure.

3. Anonymity

- 3.1 Anonymous complaints will not be considered. In general, those about whom complaints are made have a right to know what is being claimed and who is making a complaint.
- 3.2 Where a complaint is made in writing, a copy will normally be supplied to any person or persons who are named in the complaint.
- 3.3 Applicants will not be discriminated against or suffer recrimination as a result of making a complaint unless it is found to be vexatious or malicious.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1 It is the University's expectation that the confidentiality of the documentation generated by a complaint will be respected by all parties.

5. Complaints about immigration advice

- 5.1 Applicants who have been given advice on immigration matters as part of their application to study at the University, and who wish to complain about the service provided, may complain either via this procedure or directly to the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). Details of the OISC's complaints scheme can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oisc-complaints-scheme-2012>