

**1. Principles**

- 1.1. We receive applications to study from talented and diversely qualified individuals using a range of processes. In considering all applications, we do our best to see the potential to benefit from studying with us using robust academic admissions criteria. This Policy allows us to ensure we have listened to any concerns you have about the fairness of our decision on your application to study and to respond in a timely and proportionate way.
- 1.2. Our approach to admissions complaints is:
  - a. Clear and accessible. This means this Policy is widely available and written in such a way that you should not need additional support in understanding what a complaint is, how to make a complaint, your responsibilities, and our responsibilities.
  - b. Confidential, impartial, and fair. This means that we will treat concerns raised using this Policy as being serious and ensure that those considering complaints have no reasonable perception of bias or conflict of interest. We will not share your complaint with anyone unless there is a good reason to do so. You will not be treated less favourably as a result of making a complaint.
  - c. Timely, flexible, and proportionate. This means that we will work as quickly as we can to investigate complaints as far as is reasonably possible. We will follow the process outlined below unless we think there is a better way of handling your complaint. If this is the case, we will tell you that we intend to use a different process, and the reason why. We aim to complete both formal complaint stages within ninety days of a Formal Admissions Complaint being received.
  - d. Embedded and informative. This means we will use the complaints we receive to inform enhancements and improvements to our admissions process. We do this through our formal committees.
- 1.3. We understand that complaints can highlight strong emotional reactions. However, we reserve the right to close – without further action - complaints that are deemed to be malicious or vexatious (as defined below).
- 1.4. The applicability of this Policy under the University's Collaborative Provision arrangements is detailed in Schedule A.
- 1.5. Any designated role (e.g. Head of School or Director of Programme) will be taken to include 'or nominee'.
- 1.6. If you have a disability, you may make a request for a reasonable adjustment to the process of handling a complaint set out below. This may include requesting additional time to make or respond to a complaint.
- 1.7. Unless because of an agreed reasonable adjustment due to a disability, or being part of a group complaint, we expect you to act on your own behalf in making a complaint. This means we will normally communicate only with you, and not a representative. However, we may allow you to nominate a representative to act on your behalf: in such circumstances we require your express permission to communicate with your named representative and, thereafter, will communicate only with them, not with you directly.

- 1.8. In accordance with UK legislation (Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023), we protect the right to free speech. We take as a starting point that all speech is lawful, i.e. 'within the law', unless restricted by law. This includes provisions of the Equality Act 2010 prohibiting discrimination. It also includes common law on confidentiality and privacy. Therefore, whilst freedom of speech within the law is protected, unlawful speech is not. Free speech includes lawful speech that may be offensive or hurtful to some. Speech that amounts to unlawful harassment or unlawful incitement to hatred or violence (for instance) does not constitute free speech within the law and is not protected. This means that we will not refuse admission based on the exercising of lawful free speech.
- 1.9. You are allowed to have one companion with you at any meeting you are invited to attend related to your complaint. Normally, your companion cannot be someone acting in a legal capacity. This is because this Policy is clear and easy to follow, and we expect you to speak for yourself in any meeting. At our discretion, your companion may help you if you have trouble engaging. However, you are responsible for the conduct of your companion at all times. If your companion's conduct is abusive or threatening, they will be excluded from the meeting and all future meetings. In such cases, we may continue with the meeting or reschedule. If the meeting is rescheduled, we will expect you to identify a new companion.
- 1.10. We normally expect you to provide evidence in support of your complaint. Evidence must be in English (or a certified translation), and we reserve the right to request originals of all evidence you provide and to undertake reasonable checks to authenticate evidence. You are responsible for obtaining certified translations.
- 1.11. We do not routinely record complaint meetings. However, meetings are attended by a notetaker, and you will receive a copy of these notes. If you have agreed reasonable adjustments in place and require a meeting to be recorded, you must tell us at least three working days before any meeting. Where we decide to make an audio recording of a meeting, you will be provided with a copy of the recording for your own personal use.
- 1.12. You are required to read and understand this Policy.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1. We define an admissions complaint as: *dissatisfaction about how we have handled your admissions query or application to study with us and/or the conduct of a member of University staff involved in the handling of your admissions query or application*. This means that the remedies you may ask for include: an apology and/or a practical remedy.
- 2.2. You may only make a complaint using this Policy if you have made a formal request for information about studying with us or have submitted a complete application to study with us. Specifically:
- '*made a formal request for information*' means that you have contacted a designated representative of the University (in writing or by telephone) to ask for specific information about a course or courses of study that we offer.
  - '*submitted a complete application to study with us*' means that you have submitted a completed application form and all supporting evidence.
  - '*On a course of study*' means any module or modules, whether credit-bearing or not, at any level of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. This includes inbound Study Abroad students that are primarily registered with one of our partner organisations.

- d. *'With the University'* means any course or module that is validated or conferred by the University, whether study is directly at Regent's University London or through one of our partner organisations.
- e. *'Recently completed a course of study'* means anyone that has been withdrawn from the University within the previous twenty working days (whether or not having been granted an award) or within twenty working days following graduation (whether or not attended).

2.3. *'No reasonable perception of bias'* means that anyone making a decision about your complaint will have no previous involvement in the complaint or have been the subject of a formal complaint you have made. They will also not have any close personal connection to you or anyone involved in your complaint.

2.4. *'No conflict of interest'* means that anyone making a decision about your complaint will have no personal interest in the outcome of any decision being made.

2.5. A complaint may be deemed vexatious or malicious as follows:

- a. A vexatious complaint is one where we believe you are doing so primarily to cause harassment; or makes repeated complaints related to a matter that we have formally concluded. This may include making unreasonable and/or unrealistic demands of an individual.
- b. A malicious complaint is one where we believe you are attempting to insult, offend or make a false statement about a member of the University or its representatives; or where the remedy requested is disproportionate or not possible.

Vexatious and/or malicious complaints will be closed and any right of escalation or appeal removed.

### **3. Responsibilities**

3.1. We will:

- a. Give you clear information about the Policy, the stage your complaint is at, who is handling your complaint, the timescales relevant to each stage and required actions, and the sources of support available to you.
- b. Handle your complaint at a local level. This means that the person/ department/ organisation responsible for delivery of a service will be expected to handle the complaint at the informal stage. This ensures effective service delivery that embraces continuous improvement.
- c. Investigate, as far as possible, all complaints. If we cannot investigate your complaint, we will tell you this and tell you why. For example, we cannot investigate complaints about the conduct of staff at other organisations (e.g. partner staff), but we may request a response on your behalf.
- d. Attempt to put in place a practical remedy if we find we have not met our usual high standards of delivery.

3.2. We expect you to:

- a. Be familiar with this Policy, including understanding and meeting the timescales and deadlines set out below. If, for good reason, you cannot meet the timescales set out below, we expect you to provide a comprehensive explanation and independent evidence covering the period of the delay.
- b. Be respectful and courteous, and to respond to requests for information promptly and accurately.
- c. Let us know as soon as possible if you require any reasonable adjustments to be made because of a disability to the way we process or handle your complaint under this Policy. If required, you should provide evidence to support any request

for reasonable adjustments that you have made.

- d. Attend all meetings you are invited to in connection with your complaint.
- e. Tell us in advance of all meetings the name and their relationship to you of your companion.

3.3. There are a total of three stages to this Policy, one Informal and two Formal: Informal Stage (Admissions Concern)> First Formal Stage (Formal Admissions Complaint)>Second Formal Stage (Admissions Complaint Appeal).

#### **4. Informal Stage (Admissions Concern)**

- 4.1. At the informal stage, complaints are referred to as 'admissions concerns' and must be made informally and within fifteen working days of a single incident or the communication of our decision on your admission application.
- 4.2. Your admissions concern should be raised directly with the Admissions Office.
- 4.3. The person responding to an admissions concern should do so within fifteen working days. The admissions concern outcome should be copied to Registry to facilitate monitoring and to determine eligibility to move to the next stage.
- 4.4. The Informal Stage ends when an outcome is issued or if you have not received an outcome within fifteen working days of raising your admissions concern.
- 4.5. If you have not received the outcome to your concern within fifteen working days or you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may be able to make a Formal Admissions Complaint.

#### **5. First Formal Stage (Formal Admissions Complaint)**

- 5.1. Formal Admissions Complaints must be made within ten working days of the end of the Informal Stage.
- 5.2. All Formal Admissions Complaints must be made using the form provided (unless a reasonable adjustment has been agreed). You should provide all evidence relevant to your complaint when you submit your completed complaint form.
- 5.3. All Formal Admissions Complaints are subject to an initial assessment by the Head of Admissions (or their nominee). Initial assessment includes consideration of:
  - a. Whether the Formal Admissions Complaint is eligible (received in time, using the appropriate form, has completed the Informal Stage, is supported by evidence, is seeking a reasonable remedy).
- 5.4. Within five working days of receiving a Formal Admissions Complaint, Admissions Office staff will contact you either:
  - a. To confirm receipt and eligibility of your Formal Admissions Complaint and to confirm next steps. This receipt will include who your complaint is being considered by, and the deadline for them to issue an outcome on your complaint. The person identified as being responsible for considering your complaint may request a meeting with you (see below).  
or
  - b. To confirm that your Formal Admissions Complaint is ineligible for any consideration. If this happens, we will tell you the reason why and tell you if you can make an appeal.

- 5.5. Eligible Formal Admissions Complaints must be completed within twenty working days of confirmation of receipt.
- 5.6. In considering your Formal Admissions Complaint, the Head of Admissions (or nominee) may invite you to a meeting to discuss your complaint in more detail. However, it may be possible to conclude consideration of your Formal Complaint without such a meeting: it is the decision and discretion of the Head of Admissions (or nominee) to determine.
- 5.7. If an Admissions Complaint meeting is to be held, you will be given:
- The date, time, location of the meeting, and your right to bring a companion with you. If to be held online, you will be given a link to the meeting.
  - Instructions on what to do if you cannot attend the meeting on the set date and time.
  - The names of all those attending the meeting, including their purpose at the meeting (e.g. notetaker, observer).
  - Information about how to alert the University to any potential bias in relation to the meeting attendees.
  - An outline agenda for the meeting.
  - Copies of (or access to) all documents being considered during the meeting.
- 5.8. Within five working days following an Admissions Complaint meeting you will be provided with a copy of the meeting notes. You will be asked to confirm the notes as an accurate reflection of the Admissions Complaint meeting.
- 5.9. The First Formal Stage ends when an outcome is issued or if you have not received an outcome within twenty working days of confirmation of receipt of your Formal Admissions Complaint.
- 5.10. Your Formal Admissions Complaint outcome will explain:
- Our understanding of your complaint.
  - Who considered your Formal Admissions Complaint.
  - What evidence was considered and if relevant, any weight given to that evidence.
  - Whether your Formal Admissions Complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. Different decisions may be reached for each aspect of your complaint. For example, we may uphold one aspect but not others. If all aspects of complaint have been upheld the outcome of your Formal Complaint will be Upheld. If no aspects of your complaint have been upheld the outcome of your Formal Admissions Complaint will be Not Upheld. If at least one aspect of complaint has been upheld, and at least one aspect is not upheld the outcome of your Formal Complaint will be Partially Upheld.
  - The reason for the outcome on your Formal Admissions Complaint.
  - Any remedy being offered, and how you can accept that offer. Even if your Formal Admissions Complaint is Not Upheld, we can make an offer to put things right.
  - Your right to escalate your complaint to the Second Formal Stage (Admissions Complaint Appeal) and the timescale for doing so.
- 5.11. If you have not received the outcome to your Formal Admissions Complaint within twenty working days or you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Formal Stage Complaint, you may submit an Admissions Complaint Appeal.

## **6. Second Formal Stage (Admissions Complaint Appeal)**

- 6.1. Admissions Complaint Appeals must be made within ten working days of the end of the First Formal Stage.

- 6.2. Admissions Complaint Appeals will not normally consider the matter afresh or involve an investigation. To be eligible, your Admissions Complaint Appeal must demonstrate any one of the following grounds:
- a. There is evidence of a mistake at an earlier stage of the complaint that – if it had not occurred – would have resulted in a different, more favourable outcome.  
or
  - b. There is new evidence that was not reasonably available at an earlier stage and which would have made a difference to the outcome reached.  
or
  - c. The outcome of an earlier stage was not reasonable.
- 6.3. All Admissions Complaint Appeals must be made using the form provided (unless a reasonable adjustment has been agreed). You should provide all evidence relevant to your complaint when you submit your completed complaint appeal form.
- 6.4. All Admissions Complaint Appeals are subject to an initial assessment by Registry. Initial assessment includes consideration of:
- a. Whether the Admissions Complaint Appeal is eligible (received in time, using the appropriate form, has completed the First Formal Stage, is supported by evidence, is seeking a reasonable remedy, has established any of the chosen appeal grounds).
- 6.5. Within five working days of receiving an Admissions Complaint Appeal, Registry staff will contact you either:
- a. To confirm receipt and eligibility of your Admission Complaint Appeal and to confirm next steps. This receipt will include who your complaint appeal is being considered by, and the deadline for them to issue an outcome on your complaint appeal.  
or
  - b. To confirm that your Admissions Complaint Appeal is ineligible for any consideration. If this happens, we will tell you the reason why.
- 6.6. Admissions Complaint Appeals will normally be considered by the Head of Registry (or their nominee) and be completed within twenty working days following confirmation of receipt. If eligible, we may hold an Admissions Complaint Appeal Panel to hear your Complaint Appeal.
- 6.7. If a Complaint Appeal Panel is to be held, you will be given:
- a. The date, time, location of the meeting, and your right to bring a companion with you. If to be held online, you will be given a link to the meeting.
  - b. Instructions on what to do if you cannot attend the meeting on the set date and time.
  - c. The names of all those attending the meeting, including their purpose at the meeting (e.g. notetaker, observer).
  - d. How to alert the University to any potential bias in relation to the meeting attendees.
  - e. An outline agenda for the meeting.
  - f. Copies of (or access to) all documents being considered during the meeting.
- 6.8. Within five working days following an Admissions Complaint Appeal Panel you will be provided with the outcome of the Admissions Complaint Appeal Panel.
- 6.9. The Admissions Complaint Appeal Stage ends when an outcome is issued or if you have not received an outcome within twenty working days of confirmation of receipt

of your Admissions Complaint Appeal.

6.10. Your Complaint Appeal outcome will explain:

- a. Our understanding of your complaint.
- b. Who considered your Admissions Complaint Appeal.
- c. What evidence was considered and if relevant, any weight given to that evidence.
- d. Whether your Admissions Complaint Appeal has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. Different decisions may be reached for each aspect of your complaint.
- e. The reason for the outcome.
- f. Any remedy being offered, and how you accept that offer. Even if your Admissions Complaint Appeal is Not Upheld, we can make an offer to put things right.
- g. The outcome of the Complaint Appeal is final.

## **7. Schedule A**

The applicability of this Policy under the University's Collaborative Provision arrangements is detailed below.

Where the Regent's University London Policy applies, collaborative partners may use different terminology, e.g. 'programmes' and 'units' instead of 'courses' and 'modules'.

### **Cours Florent**

- 7.1. This policy is not applicable to applicants of Cours Florent. Applicants should refer to Cours Florent's Admissions Complaints Policy.

### **DOMUS Academy**

- 7.2. This policy is not applicable to Domus Academy applicants. Applicants should refer to Domus Academy's policies for applicable policy.

### **Istituto Marangoni (London)**

- 7.3. This Policy is not applicable to Istituto Marangoni London applicants. Applicants should refer to Istituto Marangoni London's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy.

### **Istituto Marangoni (Paris)**

- 7.4. This Policy is not applicable to Istituto Marangoni Paris applicants. Applicants should refer to Istituto Marangoni Paris' Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy.

### **Liverpool Media Academy (LMA)**

- 7.5. This policy is not applicable to LMA applicants. LMA applicants should refer to LMA's Complaints and Appeals Policy.

### **MACROMEDIA**

- 7.6. This policy is not applicable to Macromedia applicants. Applicants should refer to Macromedia's policies for applicable policy.

### **Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (NABA) London**

- 7.7. This policy is not applicable to applicants of NABA London. Applicants should refer to NABA London's Admissions Appeals and Complaints policy.