



# Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy

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# Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy

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## Introduction

The Admissions Appeals and Complaints policy provides information to applicants about how they can appeal an admissions decision made by Queen Mary University of London. The aim is to provide a clear procedure that encompasses both appeals and complaints about admissions services. Queen Mary seeks to resolve appeals and complaints at an early stage where possible; many problems can be solved informally, without the need for formal procedures. The emphasis of this policy is on handling appeals and complaints in a timely and effective manner as Queen Mary strives to provide an excellent applicant service in every stage of admissions.

## Scope

Applicants who have applied to study an undergraduate or postgraduate taught and research programme that is awarded by Queen Mary, and not by a partner institution, are eligible to use this procedure, inclusive of Associate and short-term study students. Programmes administered by Queen Mary's partner universities in China, Paris and by Queen Mary Academic Development are not included in the scope of this policy.

Applicants with appeals or complaints about university fee status assessment can find further information about the process on the admissions webpages. <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/offerholder/policies/feestatus/>.

The Admissions Appeals and Complaints policy is only applicable to applicants to a programme of study; once a student has enrolled at Queen Mary, the admissions policy is no longer applicable. Current students should refer to the student appeals, complaints and conduct office for further information: <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/students/student-appeals/index.html>

All appeals and complaints made to Queen Mary will be handled confidentially and only shared with relevant staff where necessary for the purpose of these procedures.

Appeals and complaints will be considered when made by the individual applicant but not third-party representatives, such as parents, school representatives, or other third parties, unless the applicant gives explicit permission for a third-party representative to support them with their appeal. Anonymous complaints will be acknowledged but will not be considered under the complaints process

## Definitions

*Admissions appeal:* An appeal is referring to the admissions decision on an application to study a programme at Queen Mary, either at the offer stage or confirmation of results.

*Admissions complaint:* A complaint is regarding a specific concern about the admissions service provided in the course of making an application to study, which could be unrelated to the decision on the application.

## Grounds for appeals

Applicants should note that the most common reason for unsuccessful application for admission to a programme is that the applicant does not meet the entry requirements either in terms of the subject(s) required or achievement of the required grades. Applications may also be declined where the programme is full for the period for which the application is made.

An applicant may only appeal on the following ground<sup>1</sup>:

- i. Procedural error where the process leading to the decision being appealed against was not conducted in accordance with Queen Mary's procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error not occurred.

All appeals will be considered on their merit, however appeals that are based exclusively on one or more of the grounds below will be rejected automatically by the Director of Admissions or designated nominee who has not dealt with the case or been involved in any way:

- i. Appeals against the academic judgement of selectors.
- ii. Appeals where the application was received after the published deadline.
- iii. The retrospective reporting of additional information that might have been reasonably made known at the time of application.
- iv. Failure by the applicant to attain the entry qualifications specified as conditions of the offer.

In such cases, the decision of the Director of Admissions or his designated nominee on the case is final.

## Appeals Process

The appeals process has two stages:

### *Informal*

- i. Queen Mary is committed to resolving appeals informally where possible and encourages applicants to engage with this approach as many issues can be resolved without recourse to formal measures.

<sup>1</sup>Update and clarification of Queen Mary Admission longstanding position on Extenuating Circumstances can be found on <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/postgraduate/taught/applyfortaughtprogrammes/> and <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/how-to-apply/>

- ii. Applicants are encouraged to get in touch with Queen Mary for clarification and feedback regarding an admissions decision, and for further guidance about what actions the applicant can take to resolve the issue.
- iii. The first stage of the appeals process may happen with either the Admissions Office or <sup>2</sup>academic School/Institute, both of which comprise the informal stage.
- iv. If after feedback and discussion with the relevant Admissions Officer or in liaison with the academic School a satisfactory outcome is not reached, the applicant is welcome to make a formal appeal.

### *Formal*

- i. A formal appeal should normally only be submitted after the informal appeal measures have been pursued.
- ii. An applicant must submit a written, formal appeal within 14 working days of the decision on the application in order to be considered. The appeal should outline the grounds under which the decision is being appealed, any evidence to back up this claim, the informal appeal measures already taken, and the reason why the informal appeal discussions were not satisfactory. All formal appeals should be sent to [adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk) within this time.
- iii. Any appeal that is submitted outside of the 14 working days since a decision was made on the application will only be considered at the discretion of the Director of Admissions or delegated authority.
- iv. If the Director of Admissions or delegated authority have had prior involvement with an applicant or case which may influence the appeal outcome, they may refer the appeal to a senior colleague within the External Relations Directorate.
- v. The Director of Admissions or delegated authority will consider all Formal appeals and will inform the applicant of the appeal outcome in writing within 20 working days of receipt of appeal.
- vi. appeals with relevant documents and previous correspondence may be sent to the nominated contact within the School/Institute of the application for which an appeal is lodged. The nominated contact will ordinarily be the Head of School/Institute, or delegated authority, and should be someone who has not had prior involvement with admissions work in the current academic cycle.

An applicant who submits an appeal will not be discriminated against in any stage of the admissions process, no matter the outcome of the appeal.

## **Confirmation and late appeals**

During the main undergraduate Confirmation and Clearing period, defined as when the UK A levels are released in mid-August through to the end of August, and late postgraduate application or confirmation decisions, defined as applications or results received 2-6 weeks before the start date of the course, there is a modified appeals process in effect.

- i. Applicants are still encouraged to contact Queen Mary for feedback and clarification on the application decision in the first instance and where time permits, to resolve an appeal informally.

- ii. If the informal stage does not resolve the appeal, the applicant can submit a formal, written appeal within four working days of the decision on the application in order to be considered. The appeal should outline the grounds under which the decision is being appealed, any evidence of the grounds for appeal, such as medical certificates, the informal appeal measures already taken (if any), and the reason why the informal appeal discussions were not satisfactory. All formal appeals should be sent to [adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk)
- iii. The Director of Admissions or delegated authority may liaise with the academic School as necessary as part of the appeal consideration.
- iv. The Director of Admissions or delegated authority will endeavour to inform the applicant of the appeal outcome or next steps in the appeal process in writing within 48 hours of receipt of appeal.

Due to the period in the admissions cycle and the short timeframe before the start of the course, confirmation and late appeal decisions made by the Director of Admissions or delegated authority are final.

## Complaints

Complaints must be made in writing and within 14 days of the action or lack of action that was the basis of the complaint to the following email address: [adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:adm-mgrs@qmul.ac.uk)

Once submitted, Queen Mary will acknowledge receipt and provide a response within 20 days. If any complaints take the shape of an admissions appeal, it will be at the discretion of the Director of Admissions to address these complaints under the formal appeals procedure above.

Any complaints logged will be monitored by the Director of Admissions, who is responsible for recommending changes or taking other action in light of the nature of complaints received. A report on the number of complaints received and the outcomes will be considered by the Education Quality and Standards Board as the delegated authority on behalf of the Senate on an annual basis.

An applicant who submits a complaint will not be discriminated against in any stage of the admissions process, no matter the outcome or nature of the complaint.

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