



## Appendix A:

October 2015

## Checklist: Summary applicant complaints and appeals policy

This checklist provides issues to consider, either within a separate applicant complaints and appeals policy, or as a section within an overarching admissions policy, or embedded within a student complaints and appeals policy. It is not necessary to include every aspect listed, but HE providers need to be clear about why something is not included. The list is not intended to be wholly exhaustive and providers should include any other aspects they feel would be supportive, particularly in reference to any uncommon or institution-specific admissions practices.

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|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | An opening statement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> general statement of principles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> dedication to consistent, fair and professional practice in order to safeguard applicants' interests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> links to any related policies (e.g. admissions; equality)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> reference to any external sources used (e.g. QAA; SPA; CMA HE advice)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> statement that most disputes are successfully resolved informally</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> reassurance that there will be no discrimination/prejudice as a result of submitting a complaint or appeal</li> </ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clear definitions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> complaint</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> appeal</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A statement of the types of applicant covered by or excluded from the policy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The grounds for considering a complaint or appeal request   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Who may submit a complaint or appeal and who may represent the applicant  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Clearly set procedures in plain language that are easy to follow  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deadline for submitting a complaint or appeal (e.g. 28 days after incident) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any variations/exceptions to the standard deadline</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Named individual/post for considering exceptions</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deadline for receiving a response to any submission (e.g. 5 days after submission) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement of submission with further timelines and steps to be taken</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Encouragement for applicant to seek feedback on an admissions decision before lodging an appeal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details and contact information on how to obtain feedback</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Detailed information on the informal stage, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identified contacts directly concerned with issue</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative contact (e.g. Head of Admissions)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notification that the informal stage is advised but not compulsory</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clarity on right to progress to formal stage if dissatisfied or if staff contact is unable to resolve the dispute</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice of any record kept</li> </ul>  |

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|--------------------------|--|
|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Possibility of mediation services</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Detailed information on the formal stage, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of how to proceed and what information is required</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Method for submitting additional documentation, evidence or testimony</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Method for obtaining consent to share applicant's information in the course of investigation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Submission form or separate clear checklist of required information and declaration/disclaimer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identified primary contact for considering grounds to investigate and an alternative contact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identified primary contact for investigating an eligible dispute and an alternative contact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any additional panellists/adjudicators and their specific responsibilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Any option, but not obligation, for applicant to speak with adjudicators</li> </ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Explanation of how outcomes will be reached and communicated to applicant, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reasons behind decision reached</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to reverse a decision wherever possible in cases finding in favour of the appellant</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details of likely alternative solutions should reversal prove impossible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Possible inclusion of a further review stage for unsuccessful outcomes, setting out the grounds for eligibility (e.g. new evidence; procedural mishandling of case)</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Specific identification of the point at which no further continuance of a complaint or appeal would be considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Details of SPSO for Scottish providers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recourse to advice e.g. <a href="#">Citizens Advice (England, Wales and Scotland)</a> consumer helpline on 03454 04 05 06 or <a href="#">Consumerline (Northern Ireland)</a> on 0300 123 6262.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recourse to other sources e.g. dispute resolution services, legal advice, Trading Standards Services (or in Northern Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment), CMA</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Contact details at relevant points in the policy and listed at end</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide contacts for advice and support during complaint/dispute</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Summary checklist for applicants, showing key points for each stage, timetable and contacts</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Statement on the handling, recording and destruction of information gathered by the institution as part of the complaint or appeal investigation</p>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Statement concerning any monitoring or review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Possible link to any publicly available data</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Affirmation of staff awareness and understanding of the policy and rigour of training related complaints and appeals and consumer protection awareness issues and any specific responsibilities</p>   |