

Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Applicants



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bath Spa University (BSU) is committed to good practice in admissions and to ensure that its processes are fair, consistent and transparent. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when an applicant will feel dissatisfied with the conduct of the University's admissions process or its outcome.
- 1.2 The University's [Admissions Policy](#) describes the general principles that we apply to admissions and outline the admissions process.
- 1.3 We encourage applicants who experience a problem with the service to initially raise the matter informally with the Admissions and Applicant Support Team. Should you then wish to formally appeal the decision made on your application or wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the admissions process, a formal complaints and appeals procedure is available as detailed in section 3. It should be recognised that the vast majority of applicant complaints can be handled fairly, amicably and to the satisfaction of all concerned without recourse to the formal stage.
- 1.4 You will not be disadvantaged in any way because you have used this Complaints and Appeals Procedure. The University aims to handle complaints and appeals so that a resolution can be found and in a way that is sensitive to the concerns of the applicant, only involving those who need to be a part of the resolution process.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 An appeal is defined by Bath Spa University as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.
- 2.2 A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the conduct of any aspect of the University's admissions process.
- 2.3 An Educational Partner is an institution which Bath Spa University works with for the delivery, validation or quality assurance of our courses.
- 2.4 A Direct Delivery location is a campus operated by Bath Spa University but outside of the city of Bath.
- 2.5 For the purposes of this procedure, an application means the submission of applicant data via a completed application form to BSU through UCAS, the official BSU direct application system or via a data transfer from one of our educational partners. We do not consider participation in recruitment and selection activities with a recruitment agent or educational partner as an application until the formal application has been submitted to and received by the BSU student record system.

3. Scope of the Procedure

- 3.1 This procedure is for anyone who has encountered an issue at any stage of the application process at Bath Spa University. A complaint/appeal should be submitted at Stage One within three months of the matter occurring which the applicant wishes to lodge a complaint about, or before the course has started.
- 3.2 This procedure applies to all applicants for courses delivered by Bath Spa University. (If an applicant for a course offered at one of the University's Educational Partners is dissatisfied with the way their application has been handled by the partner or by their agent, they should follow the Educational Partner's applicant complaints and appeals procedures. If, after this, the matter has not been resolved, applicants should write to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Support (Partnerships), who will seek to reply to the complaint within 14 days.
- 3.3 Complaints or appeals submitted by third parties without the consent of the applicant will not be considered, nor will complaints submitted anonymously. If the applicant is under 18 years of age, we will allow parents, guardians and those with caring responsibilities to act on the applicant's behalf.
- 3.4 Applicants are encouraged to discuss their issue with friends, parents, advisors or teachers, as separate and independent advice will help applicants reach an informed opinion.
- 3.5 Applicants may appeal against an admissions decision by Bath Spa University on the following grounds:
- Where an applicant feels that their application was not considered in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy or other published procedures and guidance; and/or
 - Where an applicant was unable to provide relevant information during the application process for valid reasons.
- 3.6 Applicants may not appeal against the quality of the academic or professional judgement of the Bath Spa University staff who are responsible for making the decision on an applicant's suitability for the course.
- 3.7 A separate complaints policy exists for current and previous students of Bath Spa University: www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/complaints_policy/

4. Procedure

- 4.1 Stage One – Informal Feedback

If an applicant is unhappy with an admissions decision, they are encouraged to initially raise the matter with the Admissions and Applicant Support Team by sending an email to admissions@bathspa.ac.uk.

We will provide a response to you in writing within 14 working days.

4.2 Stage Two – Formal Complaint or Appeal

i. Whilst most cases are resolved by the provision of informal feedback, if an applicant remains unsatisfied with the feedback they have received then a formal complaint or appeal can be submitted. This should be submitted in writing within 28 days of the completion of Stage One to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Support email: admissions@bathspa.ac.uk

ii. The University will ensure that all appeals and complaints from applicants are treated seriously, positively and constructively. It will also seek to ensure that appeals and complaints are dealt with promptly, with fairness and consistency and with due regard to the University's Equality Policy: <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/equality-policy/>. If an appeal or complaint is found to be justified, the University will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If an appeal or complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.

iii. The **complaint** should include:

- Name, address and application number
- Name of the course applied for
- The location of the course, in not in Bath, and the name of the partner delivery institution if there is one
- The nature of the complaint, giving as much detail as possible. This is the most critical section of the complaint as any investigation will focus on the main issues raised here
- Any steps that have already been taken to try to resolve the matter • Details of any responses you have received and why you feel that the response was unsatisfactory
- An indication of the outcome you are seeking

iv. The **appeal** should include:

- Name, address and application number
- Name of the course applied for
- The location of the course, in not in Bath, and the name of the partner delivery institution if there is one
- Specific details of the ground(s) for the appeal including any evidence to support a claim for mitigation. This is the most critical section of the appeal as any investigation will focus on the main issues raised here;
- An indication of the outcome you are seeking

v. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint or appeal within 5 working days. An investigation will take place, led by the Director of Student Recruitment and Marketing (or nominee), with input from the Admissions and Applicant Support Team, academic department or other parts of the University as appropriate. If we require further information from you or anticipate a delay in responding, we will write to advise you.

vi. Face-to-face meetings will not normally be part of any investigations

4.3 Stage Three – Outcome

i. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their complaint or appeal in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of all pertinent information. The response will include details of the investigation which has taken place and the findings of the investigation.

ii. The outcome of an appeal may result in:

- An amended admissions decision
- A recommendation for consideration for an alternative course
- The offer of a second interview or audition with different members of staff
- Confirmation that the original decision stands

iii. The decision of the Director of Student Recruitment and Marketing will then be considered final, and there is no further right to appeal.

5. Monitoring

5.1 The Director of Student Recruitment and Marketing will monitor, on an annual basis, the number and nature of all formal complaints and appeals received under the processes outlined above and will consider any necessary changes to policies, systems or procedures suggested by the nature and pattern of the complaints and appeals received.

6. Processing of Information

6.1 By submitting a complaint or appeal by email from a personal email address (or authorising a third party to do so on their behalf) an applicant agrees that the University may process all the information that it contains, together with any supporting documentation, for all purposes relating to that complaint. The information may be disclosed to those members of the University who have a need to see it for the purpose of considering and seeking a resolution of the matter. The data will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and our [Privacy Notice](#), and it will be stored as part of the University's record of that applicant's record.

7. Contact

7.1 For further information please contact the Admissions and Applicant Support Team:

Email: admissions@bathspa.ac.uk

This procedure is based on good practice in the UK University sector.

Document Details

Responsible Office: Admissions and Applicant Support

Responsible Officer: Head of Admissions and Applicant Support

Approving Authority: Academic Board

Date of latest approval: 21 April 2026

Effective Date: 28 April 2026

Related Policies and Procedures: Admissions Policy

<https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/>

Supersedes: Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Applicants, January 2023

Next review due: April 2028