Oxford International Pathway Colleges Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Summary description	
Process for International Pathway College applicant admission appeals and student complaints on admission experience.	

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Oxford International (OIEG) are committed to ensure that all decisions concerning admissions prior to student enrolment are clear, transparent, and consistent. But we understand that there may be reasons why an applicant may wish to challenge a decision that has been made in relation to an application or are unhappy with how an application has been managed or processed. OIEG welcomes complaints as an invaluable source of student feedback and a mechanism to remedy student dissatisfaction at the earliest possible opportunity. OIEG supports the rights of applicants and students to raise complaints without disadvantage, and undertakes to deal with them in a thorough, transparent, timely and impartial manner.

2. Definition and Scope

2.1 The following procedure relates solely to how an applicant can make a complaint against an aspect or a decision regarding their application to study on an OIEG International College programme, including undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

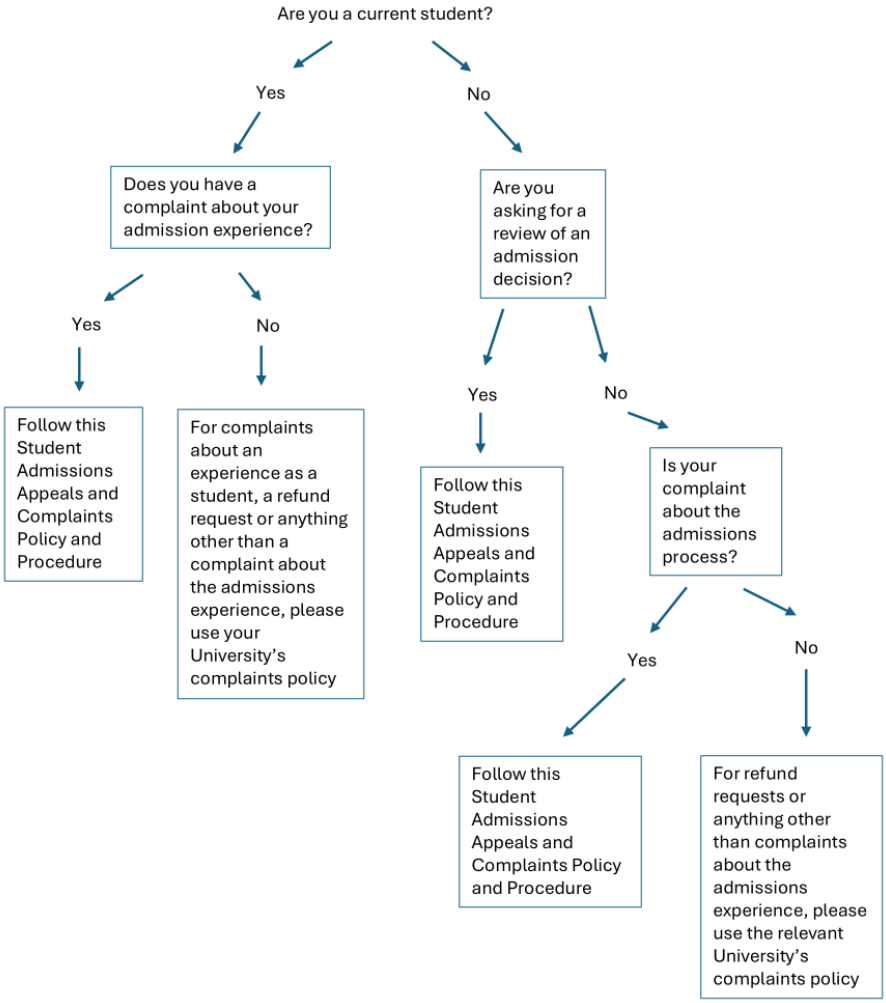
2.2 Requests for refunds **are not** within the scope of this policy. A student requesting a refund must refer to the OIEG Refund and Compensation Policy. Where a complainant is a current student in an OIEG International College and/or is requesting a refund, they should follow the relevant University complaints policy and procedure. ***See Image 1 below.***

2.3 Anonymous complaints will not normally be dealt with under this procedure. This is because complaints require investigation to enable resolution. Where a complaint is made anonymously, it is unlikely to be possible to undertake a thorough investigation.

2.4 An appeals or complaint will not be permitted from parents, sponsors or employers of applicants or students. However, in cases where an applicant is under the age of 18 or has a mental health issue or disability which might impinge on their ability to make an appeal or complaint, a third party may be nominated to progress the appeal for them. The applicant or

student must confirm in writing that they authorise a third party to represent them

Image 1. Decision flowchart.



3. Appeals

3.1 An appeal can be made to request a reconsideration of an application decision. Grounds for an appeal include:

- A procedural irregularity in the conduct of the admissions process leading to a place of study not to be offered;
- Prejudice or bias on the part of a staff member, for example during an interview;
- Where it is unclear why a place on a programme of study has not been offered;
- Where the applicant feels that the decision has not taken into consideration all relevant information.

3.2 This process does not cover appeals against requests for refunds. Please see Refund and Compensation Policy and the relevant University complaints policy. ***See image 1.***

Appeal - Stage 1: Informal Appeal

3.3 If you are an applicant and are dissatisfied with the application decision made, you must first request feedback on the decision by emailing OIEG Admission Team at pathways@oxfordinternational.com requesting "Appeal Stage 1 Feedback". The email must include the following information:

- Subject heading of the email "Appeal Stage 1 Feedback"
- Applicant name and Identification Number;
- Programme/Course and University applied for;
- The decision you are dissatisfied with;
- Any evidence or information in support of the appeal; and
- The outcome the applicant is seeking.

3.4 The Admission Team will provide feedback to within 14 days of your submitting your request. You may be asked to provide extra information.

3.5 The request for feedback is not a request for a review of the decision but is intend for the applicant to understand the reason behind the decision.

Appeal - Stage 2: Formal Appeal

3.6 If the applicant, after receiving feedback, remains unsatisfied they can submit a **formal appeal** to the relevant University using the relevant Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. .

4. Complaints

4.1 Where the applicant or student is dissatisfied with their admission experience or has not received a resolution to an issue, the applicant or student can make a complaint in line with this policy.

4.2 The procedure aims to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved.

4.3 Where necessary, appropriate adjustments will be made to the process to accommodate the needs of disabled applicants, including those with mental health issues. This includes the provision of these procedures in a format accessible to the applicant concerned.

4.4 The applicant or student making a complaint will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of doing so.

4.5 Complaints will be handled sensitively, courteously and confidentially. Mediation and informal resolution will be an option at any point and cases will be dealt with as quickly as possible to

avoid issues becoming protracted.

5. Submission of Complaints

5.1 The complaints procedure is intended to enable applicants or students to bring matters of concern regarding the process prior to student enrolment to the attention of the OIEG, and to facilitate the investigation of those concerns with the aim of ensuring a satisfactory resolution.

5.2 The complaint procedure should be followed if an applicant or student is dissatisfied with:

- The admissions process.
- The services offered.
- The information provided by agents or OIEG.

5.3 Grounds for a complaint may include:

- A procedural irregularity in the conduct of the admissions process.
- Prejudice or bias on the part of a staff member, for example during an interview.

5.4 Complaints on the following grounds will not be considered:

- A complaint about a selection decision which disputes the academic or professional judgement of admissions staff.
- Where the decision not to offer a place arises from a failure on the part of an applicant to fulfil any academic or non-academic requirements for admission.
- Issues relating to the request for a refund.

5.5 There are two stages to the complaint procedure:

- **Stage 1: Early Resolution**, which emphasises a resolution at a local level where the issue arose.
- **Stage 2: Formal Complaint**, in which the complaint will be formally investigated, and a formal response issued.

Stage 1: Early Resolution

5.6 It is anticipated that most complaints can be resolved informally with the staff member the applicant or student is dealing with, if the issue is not resolved the applicant or student may request an early resolution. The applicant or student should complete the following form at Appendix A and submit it to pathways@oxfordinternational.com and provide the following information:

- Subject heading of the email: “Complaint Stage 1”;

- Name and Identification Number;
- Programme/Course and University applied for;
- Details of the complaint;
- Any evidence or information in support of the complaint; and
- The outcome the applicant is seeking.

5.7 Applicants must submit their complaint within one calendar month of the issue being complained about. Late complaints will not normally be considered, and if submitted must include a detailed explanation of the reason for late submission, supported by relevant evidence (for example, where the applicant was too unwell to be able to submit the complaint on time).

5.8 Complaints will be acknowledged within one week of receipt and will be passed to an Investigating Officer.

5.9 The Investigating Officer may need to seek information from other members of staff or undertake routine investigations. However, it is intended that the matter be resolved at this point and prompt action is expected of all involved.

5.10 Any staff member named in a complaint will be informed of the complaint and will have the right of reply as part of the process. We will share all documents and evidence with the member of staff. The member of staff has the right to be supported by a friend, trade union representative, colleague, or other member of the University, throughout the process.

5.11 Information contained within the complaint will only be made available to those members of staff involved in its resolution.

5.12 Examples of potential outcomes at the Early Resolution stage include:

- Providing more information or an explanation to the applicant.
- Giving an apology where it seems appropriate to do so.
- Make a recommendation to improve procedures or processes.
- Offer the applicant a practical remedy to put things right.
- Being empathetic and understanding where there is no apparent solution.
- Engaging mediation.

5.13 It is expected that the applicant or student making the complaint will receive a response by email within one calendar month of submitting the Early Resolution. In exceptional circumstances this time period may need to be extended. In such cases the applicant will be notified that their case will take longer than the normal timescales to investigate and an expected timescale to conclude the case will be provided.

5.14 The Investigating Officer may find the complaint successful, partially successful or unsuccessful. Where a complaint is found to be successful or partially successful, the

Investigating Officer will identify an appropriate course of action as a remedy.

5.15 The Investigating Officer is responsible for the communication of the outcome to the applicant or student.

5.16 If applicant or students remain dissatisfied after they receive the outcome, they can escalate their case to Stage 2: Formal Complaint.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

5.17 If an applicant remains dissatisfied following completion of Stage 1: Early Resolution, they can submit a Stage 2: Formal Complaint, by completing the Formal Complaint Form at Appendix A.

5.18 Applicants must submit their formal complaint to the Director of Global Admissions by email to admissionscomplaints@oxfordinternational.com

5.19 No additional grounds may be cited, nor additional substantive points made at any later time in the consideration of the complaint.

5.20 Formal complaints must be submitted within 14 days of being notified of the Stage 1 decision. Late complaints will not normally be considered, and if submitted must include a detailed explanation of the reason for late submission, supported by relevant evidence (for example, where the applicant was too unwell to be able to submit the complaint on time).

5.21 Formal complaints will be investigated by the Director of Global Admission, or their nominee. The Nominee may not be the same person as the original Investigating Officer of the Early Resolution.

5.22 Whilst investigating complaints, the investigator may seek guidance from those with appropriate expertise.

5.23 The investigation will normally be completed within one calendar month after receipt of the complaint, however in exceptional circumstances this time period may need to be extended. In such cases the applicant will be notified that their case will take longer than the normal timescales to investigate and an expected timescale to conclude the case will be provided.

If you are an applicant and have not been offered a place to study with OIEG or partner University:

5.24 On conclusion of the Formal Complaint process, OIEG will issue an outcome letter to the applicant. This letter will detail why the applicant's complaint has been successful or unsuccessful. This outcome represents OIEG's final decision. There is no right of further appeal.

5.25 The remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) does not apply to applicants. You can submit a request to the Academic Affairs Office (academicquality@oxfordinternational.com) to review the process. The Academic Affairs

Office reviews if the correct process has been followed it does not review the decision.

5.26 Applicants who have exhausted the complaints procedure and remain dissatisfied with their complaint outcome, may contact the Consumer and Markets Authority for independent advice and information - https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students. You may be able to refer your complaint to an independent complaint scheme.

If you are a student at the International College or Partner University

5.27 On conclusion of the Formal Complaint process OIEG will issue a completion outcome letter to the applicant. This letter will detail why the student's complaint has been successful or unsuccessful. This outcome represents OIEG's final decision.

5.28 The student can take their complaint to the University via their complaint process, or to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review the process.

6. Monitoring

6.1 OIEG regularly monitors the number and outcome of Appeals and Complaints and provides an annual report to OIEG Board of Governors.

6.2 The annual report will make appropriate recommendations and changes to systems or procedures.

6.3 Trends and patterns identified by monitoring may also be used to inform other OIEG processes, policies or activities.

6.4 Monitoring reports do not contain any personally identifiable information.

7. Document retention and disposal

7.1 All notes of meetings, documents, evidence and agreed outcomes, regarding appeals or complaints, must be stored securely and in line with the OIEG Data Retention Policy (please refer to the Privacy Policy)

8. Related policies and standards

This procedure has been developed in accordance with the following policies and standards:

8.1 OIEG and partner universities' policies:

- Ordinances and Regulations
- Admissions Policy
- Applicant and Student Criminal Conviction Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policies

8.2 UK Quality Code –

- Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access

- Concerns, Complaints and Feedback
- Learning and Teaching

8.3 AdvanceHE – Equitable Admissions for Underrepresented Groups

8.4 UK Higher Education Providers – Advice on Consumer Protection Law (May 2023)

Appendices

A. Appendix A: Stage 2 Formal stage form

Appendix A

Oxford International Education Group

Student Admission Complaints Form

Complete this form to submit a complaint regarding Admissions process for an International Pathways College Advice on completion of the form can be obtained from International College Student Support Services ***Please make sure you have read fully the student Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure before completing this form.*** ***NB – ALL sections of this form must be completed for it to be considered in our complaints process.*** **PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS OR TYPE.**	
Personal Details	
Nature of application:	Complaint (delete as appropriate)
Full Name:	
Student Number:	
College:	
Programme:	
Address for correspondence in connection with the complaint:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	
Email address	

Outline of Complaint, including dates of actions (please use additional sheets if necessary):
Have you tried to resolve the complaint within the College or relevant Team If so, who did you contact? Please explain why you were not satisfied with the response you received?
What outcome or further action are you seeking?

Please Note:

As part of the investigation of your complaint, any member of staff mentioned will be made aware of the complaint, as will the Head of Department involved.

If you have written a formal letter of complaint to anyone else please indicate names and / or let us know whether you intend to copy this to anyone else.

If you are a disabled student and require support or assistance in making this complaint or support during the progress of this complaint, please contact the Disabilities Service.

Declaration	
I declare that the information given in this form is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am willing to answer further questions relating to this matter if required.	
Signed:	
Date:	

Incomplete forms will be returned for completion