Admission Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1. Scope and Purpose of the procedure

We aim to consider all applications fairly and in line with our procedures. However, in order to safeguard the interests of prospective students, the College, in compliance with best practice, has established an Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants.

This policy applies to all applicants for undergraduate and postgraduate Common Awards programmes which are offered by St Hild and validated by Durham University through the Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership (YTEP). It does not apply to applicants for unvalidated short courses.

Applicants will not be disadvantaged in any way if they use this Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

2. Data protection

Due to Data Protection legislation, the appeal or complaint must be submitted, in writing, by the applicant, or from someone to whom the applicant has given consent, in writing, to act on their behalf.

3. Grounds for Appeal or Complaint

Applicants are advised that there is no provision for complaint or appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on an application.

Applicants can use the following grounds to appeal or complain against the College's decision:

3.1 Procedural irregularity, where the applicant believes that the College has not adhered to its own stated procedures.

3.2 The emergence of new material information which may have affected the decision. In such cases the applicant must also provide details of why the new material information was not made available at the time of application. Please note that if this information was available or known to the applicant at the time of application and was not included for whatever reason, it will not be considered as new material information.

4. Definitions

4.1 Appeal

An appeal is defined as a request for the reconsideration of a decision on an application.

4.2 Complaint

A complaint may relate to the services or facilities offered by the College, or to the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the selection process.

5. Time limits

An appeal or complaint should normally be submitted within 20 working days from receipt of a decision on an application.

6. Making an Appeal or Complaint

There are three stages to the College's Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

6.1 Stage 1: Feedback

Prior to initiating an appeal or a complaint, if they have not already done so, applicants are recommended to request feedback on their application from the Vice-Principal responsible for the Centre to which they applied. Feedback is provided to enable applicants to reflect on their progress through the application process, and does not constitute a reconsideration of an application or a challenge to the College's decision on an application. Feedback may be given in person, over the telephone or in writing, at the discretion of the Centre Vice-Principal.

A request for feedback should be made within five working days of receipt of the decision.

Feedback will be provided within 10 working days of receipt of the request.

6.2 Stage 2: Appeal / Complaint

If an applicant is not satisfied with the feedback at Stage 1, they may make an appeal or complaint. To do so, the applicant should write to the Principal of the College outlining the nature and ground of their complaint / appeal.

Upon receipt of the appeal / complaint, the Principal will investigate the concerns raised by the applicant. The College will normally respond in writing to the applicant within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal or complaint.

The outcome of a successful appeal would be to reconsider the candidate's application with a view to either changing or upholding the original decision.

If upheld, the remedy for a complaint could include, for example, an apology or an undertaking to revise procedures.

6.3 Stage 3: Re-appeal

If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal or complaint, it can be escalated further, to the final stage of the procedure. This should normally be done within 20 working days of receipt of the response to the appeal or complaint at Stage 2.

A re-appeal letter should be sent in writing to the College Principal, who will pass this on to the one of the College Trustees, normally the Chair of Trustees. The letter needs to clearly list the reasons for escalating the appeal or complaint to Stage 3. The request should include all relevant information relating to the outcome of the previous two stages.

At this stage, an investigation will be undertaken by the Trustee. A letter of response will normally be sent to the applicant within 20 working days of receipt of the letter. Stage 3 completes the Appeals and Complaints Procedure for Applicants.

7. Reference to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

There are no other appeals procedures within the College or University beyond those detailed above. Students who believe that their case has not been dealt with properly by the College, or that the outcome is unreasonable, may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) if the complaint is eligible under its rules, and once all internal procedures have been concluded.

Information about the role of the OIA and the procedure for submitting complaints can be obtained from the OIA website: www.oiahe.org.uk.

8. Storage and Processing of Appeals and Complaints Information

If you write to the College in this way, the College can process the disclosed information for all purposes relating to the Appeal and Complaint Procedure for Admissions, and to their application to the College. The information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). It may be disclosed to those members of the College who have a need to see it, and will be stored as part of the College's record of your application.

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