

***Policy on
Higher Education Admissions Appeals***

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***Approved by
Academic Board***

Policy Title	HE Admissions Appeals
Document Owner	Julie Coverley
Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure	All Staff
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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

This policy has been assessed for its compliance with the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

Julie Coverley, Director of Higher Education: Julie.Coverley@Newdur.ac.uk

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1. Rationale

The reason for the development of this policy is derived from the College's commitment to demonstrating sound practice in recruitment, selection and admission of students but recognises the need to have a transparent and fair admission appeals policy and procedure in place for use by prospective students. The term prospective student refers to anyone applying or considering applying for admission to any programme provided by the College.

This policy and the associated procedure have been developed with regard to the regulatory objectives of the Office for Students (OfS), the quality agenda and the requirements of all awarding/validation bodies associated with the College.

In relation to Higher Education, the policy is underpinned by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code 2024.

This policy and procedure will be for use by prospective students/applicants who wish to appeal an admissions decision that has been made in respect of them. An appeal can be made where there is a specific concern related to a procedural irregularity, evidence of bias or prejudice or new material information becoming available which may have affected the decision. An appeal is defined as:

'a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision'

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure the College provides a robust and transparent framework, which enables any admissions appeal to be fully and rigorously investigated. This will be carried out in accordance with the appropriate regulatory framework and with all appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the student and the College interests are protected at all times and stages of the process.

In order to fulfil the stated aim of the policy the College has established the following objectives, which are to:

- a. ensure that programme applicants are provided with information about the regulations that are in use for the admissions process;
- b. ensure that the College provides information to applicants about the grounds for an admissions appeal;
- c. ensure that an open and transparent process is in place which provides applicants with the opportunity to initiate an admissions appeal;

- d. ensure that any investigation held in relation to an admissions appeal will be conducted in full compliance with the regulations and associated procedure;
- e. ensure that throughout all stages of an investigation communication will be maintained between the College and the appellant.

3. Applicant Entitlements

Under the terms of this policy and with alignment to the first primary regulatory objective of the OfS, all students from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, succeed in and progress from, higher education, all applicants to the College are entitled to:

- a. have access to the most up to date information about the admissions process related to education programmes that is detailed and accurate (at the time of publication);
- b. have access to College policies and procedures related to the initiation of an admissions appeal;
- c. receive appropriate advice and support from the College in cases where they are considering whether to bring an admissions appeal;
- d. expect that any admissions appeal they submit will be dealt with in accordance with the published policy and procedures of the College.

4. Applicant Responsibilities

This policy requires applicants to fully acknowledge and actively engage in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- a. ensuring they are familiar with the admissions process relevant to the programme they are applying for;
- b. ensuring they adhere to the College HE Admissions Policy and procedures associated with the admissions process relevant to the programme they are applying for;
- c. ensuring that at each stage of the application and appeal process, they provide honest and accurate information and communicate timely any changes to circumstances which could have a bearing on admission decisions;

- d. ensuring, if required, they request feedback from the admissions tutor on reasons for an unsuccessful application;
- e. ensuring they, at the earliest reasonable opportunity, bring to the attention of the admissions tutor or Curriculum Manager matters of concern in order that, where possible they can be resolved without recourse to the formal procedure;
- f. ensuring that at each stage of the application and appeal process, they provide honest and accurate information and communicate timely any changes to circumstances which could have a bearing on admission decisions.

5. Teaching Staff Responsibilities

The policy requires teaching and support staff to ensure that:

- a. they provide accurate and detailed information to prospective applicants about the admissions procedure for their programme;
- b. they follow the College HE Admissions Policy and procedures associated with their programme;
- c. if requested, they provide feedback to applicants on the reasons for an unsuccessful application and where appropriate advice on possible courses of action which may include alternative study options;
- d. questions raised by applicants relating to the procedure and outcome for selection are responded to in a timely manner.

6. College Management Responsibilities

College Management should ensure that:

- a. all staff involved in the admissions procedure are fully conversant with this policy and the demands it places upon them;
- b. staff development is made available to staff to support them in implementing this policy and to understand the procedures which underpin the policy;
- c. the policy is implemented consistently.

7. Standards by which the Success of this Policy can be Evaluated

The following standards/measures will be considered when evaluating the success of this policy:

- a. positive feedback from appellants on the effectiveness of the policy and procedure;
- b. feedback received from external audits and reviews.

8. Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy resides at all levels of the College specifically:

- a. the Vice Principals and Heads of School are responsible for overseeing the implementation of sections 6 & 7;
- b. Curriculum Managers & Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that programme teams collaboratively address the requirements of this policy;
- c. teaching staff are responsible for meeting their responsibilities as described in section 5.

9. Associated Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting/related documentation:

HE Admissions Policy