

# ADMISSIONS APPEALS & COMPLAINTS POLICY

## Policy & Procedure 2023-2024

## POLICY

### *Introduction & Scope*

This document provides information about admissions complaints and appeals and explains the procedure for making a complaint or appeal following an application for admission to Condé Nast College of Fashion & Design – London ('the College').

The College endeavours to be fair, courteous and respectful in our interactions with applicants and offer-holders. Moreover, we aim to provide accurate, intelligible, unambiguous and timely information in order that applicants can make informed decisions about their applications to our courses. We recognise, however, that on occasion, applicants may be dissatisfied with their experience or feel that material information provided is inadequate or misleading. We also recognise that there may be occasions when applicants may consider that the College has not adhered to its Policy. In such cases they can use this procedure.

The procedure contains three stages:

- Stage 1: Informal stage
- Stage 2: Formal stage
- Stage 3: Formal review stage

The College's Admissions Policy can be found on our website [here](#).

### *General Principles*

1. The College will seek to ensure that all complaints and appeals are treated seriously and dealt with promptly and with fairness and consistency. This Procedure sets out clear timescales for the submission of complaints and appeals, and clear timescales for applicants to expect a response from the College. If a complaint or an appeal is upheld, the College will take such action or provide such remedy as may be appropriate and will do so promptly. If a complaint or an appeal is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated to the applicant.
2. Applicants can expect their complaint or appeal to be dealt with confidentially and that their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others within the College in order to reach a resolution to an appeal.

3. Applicants are expected to respond promptly to requests for additional information or documentation. It should be noted by applicants that delays in responses to such requests may result in a place no longer being available for them in the current year of entry, should an appeal be upheld.
4. An applicant may submit a complaint or an appeal only on their own behalf; those submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from the applicant.
5. No applicant will be treated less favourably or with discrimination as a result of lodging an appeal or complaint under these procedures. However, where the College deems that an appeal or complaint has been made in bad faith, or is frivolous or vexatious, we reserve the right to terminate consideration of the appeal or complaint immediately. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision to terminate consideration of an appeal or complaint, including the reason(s) why.
6. This Policy and Procedure undergoes periodic review and its content is informed by external sources, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).
7. The College ensures that staff working in recruitment, selection and admissions roles are familiar with this Policy and Procedure and their responsibilities under them.

## *Definitions & Eligibility*

### **Complaint**

8. A *complaint* is defined as a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies.
9. Grounds under which a formal complaint may be made are:

#### **Stage 2:**

- That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process
- That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process

#### **Stage 3:**

- That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage 2 complaint
- That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the first Stage 2 complaint
- That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the Stage 2 complaint, and which warrants further consideration

10. The College does not deem the following complaints to be eligible for consideration:
  - a. Complaints which do not meet any of the grounds stated under point 9

- b. Complaints made against an admissions decision that are based on the academic judgement of the College's staff about an applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme of study
- c. Complaints which are frivolous or vexatious, or made in bad faith. *Examples of frivolous or vexatious complaints include the following:*
  - i. complaints which are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive;
  - ii. complaints where a complainant seeks, or persists in seeking, unrealistic and/or unreasonable outcomes;
  - iii. pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner, including unacceptable, harassing, malicious or offensive communications;
  - iv. complaints which are intended to cause offence, disruption or annoyance;
  - v. unreasonable demands for redress.

### Appeal

11. An *appeal* is defined as a request for a formal review and reconsideration of an admissions decision, or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer.
12. Grounds under which a formal appeal may be made are:

#### Stage 2:

- That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process.
- That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process
- That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the original application, and which warrants further consideration of the application

#### Stage 3:

- That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage 2 appeal
- That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the Stage 2 appeal
- That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the Stage 2 appeal, and which warrants further consideration

13. The College does not deem the following appeals to be eligible for consideration:
  - a. An appeal made on grounds other than the grounds stated under point 12
  - b. An appeal made due to failure on the applicant's part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission
  - c. An appeal made purely on the basis of disagreement with the admissions decision
  - d. An appeal based on challenges to the judgement of selectors in relation to the academic and/or non-academic section criteria for its programmes

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

On a successful appeal, the usual process will be for the College to reconsider the applicant's application.

## PROCEDURE

### Stage 1: Informal Stage Procedure

- 1.1.1 Some issues may be able to be resolved amicably via an informal query, and applicants are welcome to explore their concern informally with the Admissions Team before deciding to proceed with a formal appeal or complaint, by emailing them at [admissions@sia.edu](mailto:admissions@sia.edu). Applicants should receive a response to their complaint **within 10 working days**.
- 1.1.2 In addition, applicants who are unsuccessful in their application may also request feedback from the Admissions Team. Applicants will normally receive feedback **within 15 working days** of the original request; however, if there is likely to be a delay in the process applicants will be informed of this. In most cases this will help applicants to understand why their application was unsuccessful. This stage also allows for an informal review of the decision in the event of an error having been made.
- 1.1.3 Whilst appeals and complaints may be resolved at this stage, applicants are free to access the formal procedure should they not wish to resolve the matter informally, or should they feel that the matter is not satisfactorily resolved.
- 1.1.4 Applicants should undertake Stage 1 of this Procedure in a timely fashion in order to comply with the timeframes set out under Stage 2.

### Stage 2: Formal Stage Procedure

- 1.1.5 Where early resolution is not reached or where Stage 1 is not suitable due to the complexity or seriousness of the complaint, an applicant may register a formal complaint **within 20 working days** of receiving a written response from the Admissions Team. A Stage 2 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form (Annex 1) should be completed and emailed at [admissions@condenastcollege.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@condenastcollege.ac.uk) marked FAO the College's Admissions Manager. Please note that Admissions Appeal/Complaint Forms can only be considered where all required information stated has been completed and submitted.
- 1.1.6 On receipt of a Stage 2 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form, the College's Admissions Manager will initially consider whether the complaint is made on one or more of the grounds specified in point 9, and if it has been submitted in the timeframe specified in 1.1.5. If this test fails, the applicant will be notified **within ten working days** of the complaint being received that the complaint is not eligible with the reasons given. There will be no opportunity of the student to appeal against this decision.
- 1.1.7 If the complaint is deemed to be valid, the College's Admissions Manager will acknowledge receipt, log the complaint and liaise with the Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee) who will investigate the concerns raised by the applicant. Any further information required by the investigating officer at this stage will be requested from the

applicant in writing. This information should be provided by the applicant **within 20 working days** of this request. Where additional information is not received from the applicant within this timeframe, the complaint may be considered formally closed by the investigating officer.

- 1.1.8 Once in receipt of the information required for the Stage 2 investigation, the investigating officer will respond in writing to the applicant **within 20 working days** outlining what, if any, action will be taken in relation to the complaint.
- 1.1.9 The Stage 2 investigation will be undertaken by a member/s of staff not involved in the consideration of the complaint at Stage 1.

### Procedure for Stage 2 appeals

- 1.1.10 Where early resolution is not reached or where Stage 1 is not suitable due to the complexity or seriousness of the appeal, an applicant may register a formal appeal **within 20 working days** of receiving a written response from the Admissions Team. A Stage 2 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form (Annex 1) should be completed and emailed at [admissions@condenastcollege.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@condenastcollege.ac.uk), marked FAO the College's Admissions Manager. Please note that Admissions Appeal/Complaint Forms can only be considered where all required information stated has been completed and submitted.
- 1.1.11 Applicants should ensure that they provide details of the circumstances of their case, including a copy of the feedback provided at Stage 1, give an indication of the actions they have already taken to try to resolve it, and state clearly the remedy that they are seeking.
- 1.1.12 On receipt of a Stage 2 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form, the College's Admissions Manager will initially consider whether the appeal is made on one or more of the grounds specified in point 9, and if it has been submitted in the timeframe specified in 1.1.10. If this test fails, the applicant will be notified **within ten working days** of the appeal being received that the appeal is not eligible with the reasons given. There will be no opportunity of the student to appeal against this decision.
- 1.1.13 The College's Admissions Manager will also determine if the appeal is valid under the grounds set out in point 12. An applicant whose appeal does not meet the required grounds will be informed of this in writing. Valid appeals will be considered by the Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee).
- 1.1.14 Applicants will normally be informed of the outcome of their appeal in writing **within 20 working days**.
- 1.1.15 The Stage 2 investigation will be undertaken by a member/s of staff not involved in the consideration of the appeal at Stage 1.

### Stage 3: Formal Review Stage Procedure

- 1.1.16 Requests for reconsideration under Stage 3 must be made in writing **within 10 working days** of receiving the Stage 2 outcome by emailing the College's Head of Student Recruitment, Agata Mazurkiewicz [agata.mazurkiewicz@condenastcollege.ac.uk](mailto:agata.mazurkiewicz@condenastcollege.ac.uk), with a completed Stage 3 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form, which must indicate the reason for the escalation and why their concerns raised at Stage 2 have not been addressed.
- 1.1.17 The College's Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee) will review the documents relating to the complaint in order to determine whether appropriate procedures were

adhered to under Stage 2 and whether the written outcome was reasonable in the light of the available evidence or if any new evidence should be accepted. The College's Head of Student Recruitment will not ordinarily consider the complaint afresh or involve further investigation.

- 1.1.18 The Stage 3 review will be undertaken by a member/s of staff not involved in the consideration of the complaint at an earlier stage.
- 1.1.19 Taking account of the substance of the complaint and the previous attempts at resolution, the Head of Student Recruitment will decide on an appropriate course of action, which may include: (a) specific action to resolve the matter; or (b) not upholding the complaint.
- 1.1.20 The applicant will normally be informed of the outcome of a Stage 3 review in writing by the Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee) with their decision **within 20 working days** of receipt of the request for the Stage 3 review. The outcome of the Stage 3 review will be final.

### Procedure for Stage 3 appeals

- 1.1.21 Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 can request the appeal to be reconsidered under Stage 3. This should normally be requested **within 10 working days** of receipt of the outcome of the appeal under Stage 2.
- 1.1.22 Requests for reconsideration under Stage 3 must be made in writing to the College's Head of Student Recruitment, Agata Mazurkiewicz [agata.mazurkiewicz@condenastcollege.ac.uk](mailto:agata.mazurkiewicz@condenastcollege.ac.uk), with a completed Stage 3 Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form, and must indicate the reason for the escalation and why their concerns raised at Stage 2 have not been addressed.
- 1.1.23 It is not envisaged that Stage 3 appeals will involve the submission of new material information, i.e., material information not submitted at Stage 2. If applicants wish to submit new material information, they will need to provide details giving the reasons as to why this information was not available at the time of their Stage 2 appeal. Please note that the College's acceptance of such new material is at its sole discretion.
- 1.1.24 The request for reconsideration under Stage 3 will be considered by the Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee). Responses to any requests to provide further information and/or documentation to help with the investigation of the appeal must normally be received **within 10 working days**.
- 1.1.25 Applicants will normally be informed of the outcome of Stage 3 appeals in writing by the Head of Student Recruitment (or their nominee) **within 20 working days**. The outcome of the Stage 3 Appeal will be final.
- 1.1.26 If the appeal is upheld, in all circumstances the College will work with the applicant in an attempt to find a suitable remedy, wherever possible. It should be noted that at particular times of the admissions cycle, remedies to appeals may be difficult, for example, there may be no places available on a particular programme for the current year of entry.

### External Advice

Once an admissions appeal or complaint has exhausted Stage 3 of the procedure, there are no further internal mechanisms for an admissions appeal or complaint to be considered. Applicants are advised that the remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the

ombudsman for student complaints) does not include admissions. However, should an applicant wish to take their complaint further, they are advised to consult their local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice on the legal avenues open to them, or the Competition and Markets Authority.

### **Storage & Processing of Information**

Any appeal or complaint received under these procedures will be treated confidentially, and all information provided in relation to this Policy and Procedure will be used solely for the purpose of handling an applicant's complaint or appeal. Only personnel requisite to the consideration and/or resolution of the complaint or appeal will be made party to it. The College undertakes to treat all appeals and complaints received under these procedures with confidentiality and sensitivity. Applicants' data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with the College's Privacy Policy<sup>1</sup>.

The College will retain data submitted with Stage 2 and Stage 3 admissions appeals and complaints for monitoring and assurance purposes. Statistical data arising from Stage 2 and Stage 3 admissions appeals and complaints will be anonymised and reported on an annual basis.

### **Accessibility**

The College endeavours to ensure that this Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure remains easily located and accessible to applicants via the College's website. It will also be provided in writing and (where necessary) verbally, to any applicant who specifies their intention to register a formal complaint

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://www.sothebysCollege.com/privacy-policy>

# ADMISSIONS APPEALS & COMPLAINTS FORM

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal admissions complaint or appeal at either Stage 2 or Stage 3, in accordance with Condé Nast College of Fashion & Design's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure. Please ensure that you read the procedure before completing and submitting this form.

1. Applicant Details	
Surname:	
First name:	
Contact address:	
Contact e-mail address:	
Contact telephone number:	
Programme applied to:	



2. Important Information & Guidance
<p>You are advised to read through the Admissions Appeal and Complaints Policy and Procedure before making a submission, as it contains important information about how your complaint/appeal will be handled and respective timeframes.</p> <p>These procedures have two formal stages, and you should clearly indicate on this form which stage you are lodging your admissions complaint or appeal.</p> <p><b>To make a Stage 2 admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A completed <b>Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form</b></li> <li>● Any supporting evidence</li> </ul> <p><b>To make a Stage 3 admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A freshly completed <b>Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form</b></li> <li>● The original Stage 2 Admissions Appeal/Complaint form, together with any supporting evidence that was submitted for consideration with the Stage 2 submission</li> <li>● The Stage 2 response from Head of Quality (or their nominee)</li> <li>● Any other new evidence which you wish to have considered as part of your Stage 3 admissions appeal/complaint</li> </ul>

Please indicate whether you are lodging a Stage 2 or Stage 3 complaint or an appeal, and the respective grounds, by completing the relevant boxes below:

STAGE 2 COMPLAINT	
I am lodging a Stage 2 COMPLAINT on the following ground(s):	<i>Please tick all grounds that apply:</i>
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	<input type="checkbox"/>
That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process	<input type="checkbox"/>

STAGE 2 APPEAL	
I am lodging a Stage 2 APPEAL on the following ground(s):	<i>Please tick all grounds that apply:</i>
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	
That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process	
That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the original application, and which warrants further consideration of the application	

STAGE 3 COMPLAINT OR APPEAL <i>(the grounds at Stage 3 are the same)</i>			
I am lodging a Stage 3 COMPLAINT		I am lodging a Stage 3 APPEAL	
I am making my Complaint/Appeal on the following ground(s):		<i>Please tick all grounds that apply:</i>	
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage 2 complaint or appeal			
That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the Stage 2 complaint or appeal process			
That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the Stage 2 complaint or appeal, and which warrants further consideration			

**3. Statement of Complaint / Appeal:**

*Please write a statement describing the issue(s) of complaint/appeal.*

**Desired Outcome(s):**

*Please specify your desired outcomes or resolutions to your complaint/appeal*

**Declaration:** I declare that the information given in this form is true. I have consulted Condé Nast College of Fashion & Design's *Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure*.

Signature:

Date of submission: