



# **ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES		
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This document defines the process for complaining about the manner in which an application was handled and/or for appealing against the outcome of an application for all courses at All Nations Christian College including those validated by the Open University.		

# **ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**

To train and equip men and women for effective participation in God's mission to His multicultural world.

## **ADMISSIONS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

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### **2. INTRODUCTION**

All Nations Christian College wants all of our applicants to have a positive experience in going through our application process and we make every endeavour to provide you with the information you require and support you to make an informed choice in regards to the best course for you. However, if you are not satisfied about the handling of your application, you do have the right to make either an informal and/or formal complaint or request a formal review/appeal.

### **3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:

- All Nations Christian College Undergraduate Handbook
- All Nations Christian College Postgraduate Handbook
- All Nations Christian College Student Handbook
- All Nations Christian College RPL Policy
- All Nations Christian College Learning Support Policy
- All Nations Christian College Admissions Policy and Procedure
- All Nations Christian College Equal Opportunities Policy
- All Nations Christian College Data Protection Policy
- QAA 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education'
- Open University Handbook for Validated Awards
- Schwartz Report 2004
- UK Visa and Immigration documentation

#### **4. DEFINITION OF COMPLAINT AND APPEAL**

- 4.1.** A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with either the service we have provided or the lack of a service. It must relate to services that you were led to believe would be provided.
- 4.2.** An appeal is a request for a review of the decision to refuse your application and is usually referred to here as a review. However, such a review may not question the academic judgement of academic staff.

#### **5. PRINCIPLES OF POLICY:**

- a. We aim to respond to any enquiry or complaint confidentially, fairly and promptly and in accordance with the College's Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies. Staff aim to be courteous to the complainant, responding positively and, wherever possible, offering constructive solutions.
- b. All complaints will be managed in a sensitive way and with due regard to data protection issues. Whilst it is understood that complainants may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances therefore the college will discuss with the complainant the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.
- c. Parties to an investigation will be offered support by the College pastoral team. Parties may also choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a supportive friend. This must be someone independent of the circumstances that gave rise to the meeting and therefore not be the person offering them pastoral support through the process.
- d. A formal detailed record will be kept of all formal investigations, appeals or reviews.
- e. Informal complaints will be acknowledged within 7 calendar days and investigated, wherever possible within 14 calendar days of receiving all the relevant information and the Principal/CEO Officer notified.
- f. Formal written complaints should be recorded, acknowledged within 7 calendar days and investigated, wherever possible, within 30 calendar days of receiving all the relevant information, and the Principal/CEO notified. The complainant will be informed in the event of any unavoidable delay and its reason given, for example staff unavailability.
- g. Formal written reviews, should be recorded, acknowledged within 7 calendar days and investigated, wherever possible, within 30 calendar days of receiving all the relevant information and the Principal/CEO notified. The complainant will be informed in the event of any unavoidable delay and its reason given.
- h. The processing of the formal complaint and any review should take no longer than 90 calendar days. This requires the student to meet any College deadlines for the submission of material. If there are good reasons for extending the timeframe, the complainant will be notified of any delays and regularly informed of progress and the complainant shall similarly notify the College.
- i. All Complaints procedures should be available to all, monitored regularly, and reviewed and evaluated periodically.
- j. Any person dissatisfied with College services should be encouraged to make this known at the place and time of their dissatisfaction to the person directly involved.

- k. The first person to be advised of the complaint should, if appropriate, aim to resolve the difficulty, ensuring that the relevant College policies and procedures are followed. If it is not appropriate for the member of staff to deal with the complaint, it should be referred as soon as possible to the appropriate person, usually a Programme Leader or Manager or an Administrator.
- l. Complaints involving more than one issue may, in some cases, require the resolution of one complaint/appeal before dealing with another. This may necessitate having a discussion with the complainant regarding the best way to resolve the whole situation satisfactorily.
- m. No-one will be disadvantaged by making a complaint.
- n. The complainant will always be informed of the outcome of an investigation or appeal in writing and with reasons given for the decision which has been reached. The complainant will be informed at the same time of any further appeal processes which may still be available to them.
- o. Any further appeal will be heard by someone who was not involved in the original investigation and will occur according to the timescales given. You will be informed in the event that there is going to be any unavoidable delay.
- p. The complaint may be withdrawn without prejudice at any time during the process. (The College must be informed in writing. Any decision made by the College at the previous stage in the procedure will then be upheld and become the final outcome.)
- q. The College will not investigate any formal complaint, review or appeal which it considers to be frivolous or vexatious.
- r. All Complaints procedures should be available to all, monitored regularly, and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

## 6. ACCEPTABLE GROUNDS

### 6.1. For Making a Complaint about how your application was handled:

- a. the decision made contradicts the published entry criteria;
- b. there was discrimination on grounds of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, class or other non-academic grounds;
- c. there was an administrative error in the handling of the application;

**6.2. For Requesting a Review:** The only grounds for requesting a review of the decision to deny your application is if there were mitigating circumstances the College was unaware of.

## 7. UNACCEPTABLE GROUNDS

There is no right of appeal for applications where:

- a. the dispute concerns academic judgement;
- b. the dispute concerns a decision already accepted by the applicant;
- c. the request would contravene government regulations or any contract with external organisations, such as Open University;
- d. the application was for a previous academic year.

# PROCEDURE

## 8. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

### 8.1. Informal Complaint

- a. If you should have a complaint about *the way your application was handled*, you should contact an administrator in our admissions department. In the first instance this will be dealt with informally by contacting and communicating with the relevant All Nations staff who will endeavour to deal with your concerns promptly, fairly and impartially. You will be informed of

the outcome as quickly as possible and we hope that you will feel that your concern has been addressed and resolved satisfactorily.

- b. However you must respond within 4 weeks of the incident which gave rise to the complaint or the date that you received the result of your application.

## 8.2. Formal Complaint

If you are still unhappy **about the way your application was handled**, or if you prefer, you may wish to make a formal complaint, within 7 calendar days of receiving our response to your informal complaint or within 4 weeks of the incident which gave rise to the complaint or the date that you received the result of your application. To make a complaint you must:

- a. Complete the **formal complaint form**, which can be found as an appendix to this document and on the College website: [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk).
- b. Please express your concerns clearly and succinctly and provide evidence to substantiate the issues raised wherever possible. Such evidence may include independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements.
- c. The completed and **signed** form, together with all your supporting evidence, should be given to the Recruitment and Training Administrator of the relevant Programme (paper or electronic copies are acceptable). Ask the College Administrator, Jillian Walker ([j.walker@allnations.ac.uk](mailto:j.walker@allnations.ac.uk)) if you are unsure who that is.
- d. All complaints will be managed in a confidential and sensitive way. Whilst it is understood that you may wish some evidence (e.g. a witness statement or medical evidence) to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances therefore the College will discuss with the student the best way to approach the submission of evidence before releasing all or some of the evidence to the investigating officer or any others involved in the investigation.
- e. If a complaint involves more than one issue which do not fall neatly into one category of complaint/appeal, the College will discuss with you the best way to proceed in order to resolve all the issues as quickly and fairly as possible. This may, in some cases, involve resolving one complaint/appeal before dealing with another.
- f. On receipt of the complaint there will be a formal investigation led by a Programme Leader. This would normally be the Programme Leader of the programme to which you were applying. Should your complaint be directly against him or her, then the complaint will be investigated by another Programme Leader. The formal investigation will take place, after which you will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision. We aim to respond within no longer than 4 weeks of receiving all relevant information.

## 8.3. Formal Complaint to the Open University

If you still believe your complaint has not been fairly considered, you may address your formal appeal to the Open University, who is the validating authority for the College's graduate and postgraduate programmes. This must be done within 3 months of the outcome of our final appeal process. Please refer to the 'Open University Complaints Procedure' for further information and the procedure for appeals that the student must follow. This is posted in the Open University and Quality Assurance Agency section of the student area on the College VLE and on the College website at [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk). Alternatively you can contact the Open University directly by email: [OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk), by phone: 01908 332840 or by post: The Director, OUPV, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

## 9. HOW TO SEEK A REVIEW OF THE DECISION

### 9.1. Informal Appeal

If you feel the College did not take into account certain mitigating circumstances of which it was unaware when dealing with your application, you may wish to **seek a review of the decision to refuse your admissions' application**. In the first instance this will be dealt with informally by contacting and communicating with the relevant academic staff who will endeavour to deal with your concerns promptly, fairly and impartially. You will be informed of the outcome as quickly as possible and we hope that you will feel that your concern has been addressed and resolved satisfactorily. However you must respond within 4 weeks of the incident which gave rise to the complaint or the date that you received the result of your application.

### 9.2. Formal Review

- a. If you are still unhappy **about the decision to refuse your application**, or you prefer, you may wish to lodge a formal review. This must be done within 14 calendar days of receiving our response to any informal appeal you have made or within 4 weeks of the date that you received the result of your application.
- b. You will need to submit a signed and completed **Formal Review form** to the Recruitment and Training Administrator of the relevant programme. This form is attached as an appendix to this document and it can also be found on the College website: [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk).
- c. Explain on the form how or why you feel your appeal for a review fulfils one of the above grounds. Disagreement with the outcome is not sufficient grounds for a review of the decision.
- d. Provide any additional supporting evidence with, where appropriate, an explanation of why this was not submitted with the original application. Without a reasonable explanation, further evidence will not be accepted.
- e. Following the receipt of the specific written complaint the Programme Leader will investigate and determine whether you have any valid grounds for a review. This will usually be done within 7 working days.
- f. Should there be proven grounds, The Programme Leader shall form a committee of academic and administrative staff to consider the review usually within 30 calendar days of agreeing that there is a valid case to answer.
- g. Minutes will be taken.
- h. You will be informed and given the reasons should there prove to be any unavoidable delay.
- i. You will be informed of the outcome of the review in writing, and with the reasons given and, at the same time, be informed of any further appeal process which may still be available to you.
- j. If the original decision is upheld you will be informed in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision, usually within 3 working days of the committee reaching their decision.
- k. If mitigating circumstances have been proven, undergraduate applicants may be invited for a second interview with a different member of academic staff.
- l. If mitigating circumstances have been proven, Postgraduate applicants may be required to submit a first or second document critique for assessment by a different member of academic staff. They may also be required to come for an interview with a member of the Postgraduate staff.

team. An example of a mitigating circumstance might be personal health or family bereavement.

### **9.3. Appeal to the Open University**

If you still believe your complaint has not been fairly considered, you may be given leave to address your formal appeal to the Open University, who is the validating authority for the College's graduate and postgraduate programmes. This must be done within 3 months of the outcome of our final appeal process. Please refer to the 'Open University Complaints Procedure' for further information and the procedure for appeals that the student must follow. This is posted in the Open University and Quality Assurance Agency section of the student area on the College VLE and on the College website at [www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk). Alternatively you can contact the Open University directly by email: [OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUVP-Director@open.ac.uk), by phone: 01908 332840 or by post: The Director, OUVF, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK.

The decision of the Open University will be final.

## **10. DATA PROTECTION**

**10.1.** All student records, past and present, are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. See the All Nations Christian College Data Protection Policy for details.

**10.2.** In line with the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, data subject have a number of rights. They can:

- access and obtain a copy of their data on request;
- require the College to change incorrect or incomplete data;
- require the College to delete or stop processing their data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing; and
- object to the processing of their data where the College is relying on its legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing.

**10.3.** Should a data subject wish to exercise any of these rights, they should contact the College Data Protection Officer at [info@allnations.ac.uk](mailto:info@allnations.ac.uk) . Every effort will be made to respond to such communications within 7 days; data access requests will be met within 30 days. If a data subject believes that the College has not complied with their data protection rights, they can complain to the data protection supervisory authority, The UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who can be contacted at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/handling>

## **11. RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND UPDATING**

**11.1.** The Principal/CEO, the Programme Leaders and the Recruitment and Training Administrators, have overall responsibility for the admissions policy, including its approval and annual review.

**11.2.** The Programme Leaders and the Recruitment and Training Administrators have responsibility for overseeing the admissions process and ensuring that decision making complies with Open University regulations.

**11.3.** This document, as well as all other policy, procedure and guidance documents relating to students studying at All Nations Christian College, will be available to all, monitored regularly and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

## **12. POLICY COMMUNICATION**

**12.1.** This document can be found in the full College 'Policy and Procedures' document which is located in the student area on the College VLE and on the College website:

[www.allnations.ac.uk](http://www.allnations.ac.uk)

**12.2.** Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

**12.3.** This policy will be included in staff induction.