



## Cambridge Muslim College Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy forms part of the Regulations and should be publicly available on the College's website. It sets out the policy, and associated procedures, for dealing with complaints and appeals relating to admissions, with the aim of ensuring consistent and fair treatment for all.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to applicants of the College's BA (Hons) programme.

### 3. Principles

- 3.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with either a service provided at application, or the lack of a service. It must relate to services that an applicant was led to believe would be provided.
- 3.2. An appeal is a request for a review of the decision not to admit an applicant to the programme.
- 3.3. If an applicant is not satisfied with an aspect of the application process, with acceptable grounds, they have the right to make a complaint or appeal.
  - 3.3.1. Acceptable grounds for making a complaint:
    - 3.3.1.1. The decision made contradicts the published entry criteria.
    - 3.3.1.2. The applicant experienced discrimination.
    - 3.3.1.3. There was an administrative error in the handling of the application.
  - 3.3.2. Acceptable grounds for making an appeal:
    - 3.3.2.1. Mitigating circumstances of which the College was unaware.
    - 3.3.2.2. An irregularity in the decision-making process, meaning that College procedure was not followed correctly.
- 3.4. There is no right of appeal in the following instances:
  - 3.4.1. The dispute concerns academic judgement
  - 3.4.2. The dispute concerns a decision already accepted by the applicant
  - 3.4.3. The request would contravene government regulations or a contract with an awarding body

- 3.5. In all cases, the published timeline for making appeals and complaints should be followed.
  - 3.5.1. Appeals and complaints submitted after the deadline will not be considered unless there is evidence that an applicant was prevented from submitting the appeal by the deadline.
  - 3.5.2. The College will aim to respond to any complaint or appeal within published timescales.
  - 3.5.3. If there are good reasons for extending the timeframe, the applicant will be notified of any delays and regularly informed of progress and the applicant shall similarly notify the College.
- 3.6. The Programme Manager (BA) will keep detailed written records of all formal admissions complaints and appeals. These records are stored as per [Data Retention Policy](#)
- 3.7. Applicants will not be disadvantaged by making a complaint or appeal.
- 3.8. Applicants may choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a relative or friend. This must be someone independent of the circumstances.
- 3.9. Whilst the applicant may wish some details to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, the College will discuss with the applicant the best way to approach the submission of evidence.
- 3.10. The complaint or appeal may be withdrawn without causing any bias against the applicant at any time during the process. In this event, the applicant must inform the College in writing. Any decision made by the College at the previous stage in the procedure will then be upheld and become the outcome.

#### **4. References**

- Admissions Complaints/Appeals Form (Appendix 1)
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Guidance (Appendix 2)
- [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance- Concerns, Complaints and Appeals](#) (Appendix 3)
- Programme Publicity & Consumer Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- BA (Hons) programme application documentation

#### **5. Responsibility**

- 5.1. Responsibility for the area of admissions complaints and appeals lies with the Academic Director.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of the designated Admissions Officer, to maintain all documentation in line with this policy.

- 5.3. It is the applicant's responsibility to be aware of the rules and regulations regarding admissions.

## 6. Procedure

- 6.1. Informal Complaint/Appeal: Applicants contemplating making a complaint or appeal should first contact the BA Programme Officer to ensure they understand why a decision has been made, whether they are likely to have acceptable grounds for appeal, and what outcomes a successful appeal could lead to.
- 6.2. Formal Complaint/Appeal
  - 6.2.1. The applicant must submit a completed Appeal Form, with any supporting evidence, to the Admissions Officer according to the timescales as outlined in this policy.
  - 6.2.2. The Admissions Officer logs the complaint in the application record and turns the form and documentation to the Academic Director.
  - 6.2.3. The Academic Director determines whether the applicant has acceptable grounds for a complaint or appeal. If there are no acceptable grounds, the Academic Director will inform the applicant in writing of the decision, its reasons, and their right to request a review of the decision.
  - 6.2.4. If the appeal meets the criteria for acceptable grounds, the Academic Director discusses the appeal with a panel of three members from the academic and support staff who were not involved in the admissions process, to reach an agreement. If mitigating circumstances or incorrect following of College procedure have been proven, the appeal will be upheld, and the original assessment decision will be reconsidered.
  - 6.2.5. The Academic Director informs the applicant in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision. If the original decision is upheld, the applicant will be informed of any further appeal processes which may be available.
  - 6.2.6. If mitigating circumstances or incorrect following of College procedure have been proven, the Principal will invite the applicant for a second interview.
  - 6.2.7. The Academic Director must inform the Faculty Board of any admission complaints or appeals.
- 6.3. Appeal to External Bodies
  - 6.3.1. If a student is dissatisfied with the way their appeal or complaint was handled and have exhausted all appropriate internal procedures at the college, they may raise the issue with the following external bodies:
    - 6.3.1.1. The Open University (OU)

6.3.1.1.1. The Open University will conduct its procedures for appeals and complaints as detailed in Appendix 1 in the [OU Handbook](#).

6.3.1.2. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ([OIA](#))

6.3.1.2.1. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) can be contacted at: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). The OIA was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide an independent student complaints scheme.

6.3.2.2. In order to appeal to the OIA, the student will need to complete the OIA’s own complaint form, which is available from [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk), and submit this to the OIA within twelve months of the date of their Closure Letter.

## 7. Timescales

Appeals and complaints must be initiated within the timescales below.

Deadline	Who	Appeal	Complaint
<b>Submit</b>	Applicant	Within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision	Within 14 Calendar days of the matter first occurring
<b>Acknowledge receipt by email</b>	College Coordinator (BA)	Within seven (7) calendar days of formal Appeal/ Complaint date	
<b>Investigate</b>	BA Programme Manager	Within one 30 calendar days of the Appeal/Complaint date	
<b>Complete the procedure</b>	BA Programme Manager	Within 50 Calendar days of receiving the Appeal/Complaint	
<b>Inform applicant of outcome</b>	BA Programme Manager	within 7 days of outcome becoming known	

### REVISION HISTORY

Revision Number	Effective Date	Description of Change
00	March 2017	New Document
01	26 April 2018	1. Formatting change 2. Policy number assignment 3. Changes to form
02	15 March 2021	1. Update the References of QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
03	April 2022	1. Programme Officer to investigate Informal Complaints while the Principal investigate the Formal Complaints

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Amend timeline to be 14 days for both Appeal and Complaints</li> <li>3. Amend timeline of the full process to be around 50 calendar days only</li> <li>4. Under 3.6, clarify who keep records of Appeals &amp; Complaints forms and for how long</li> <li>5. Include the OU and OIA as External bodies for further Appeal</li> </ol>
04	February 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change responsibilities to Academic Director.</li> <li>2. Change from Programme Officer to Admissions Officer</li> </ol>

## Appendix 1



### Cambridge Muslim College Admissions Complaint/Appeal Form

This Admissions Complaint/Appeals Form is designed for use with the College's Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy. Please ensure that you have read and understood the document before completing this form.

Before submitting a formal complaint or appeal, you must attempt to resolve matters informally.

Submit the completed and signed form to the Admissions Officer.

Contact information	
First name	
Family name	
Preferred telephone number	
Preferred email address	

<b>Do you have a disability or specific learning difficulty you would like us to be aware of when considering your complaint/appeal?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please give details of adjustments that will assist you.
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<b>I am making a:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Complaint</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Appeal</b>
<b>What informal steps have you taken to resolve your complaint/appeal?</b> Please provide information about who you have already discussed your complaint/appeal with, and when.		
<b>What was the outcome of your informal discussions?</b> Please indicate why you are still unsatisfied.		

**I am making a complaint/appeal based on:**

Check the College policy to ensure that your reasons are listed as acceptable grounds.

Please set out your points clearly and concisely. This should be a factual statement of the circumstances and reasons for your complaint/appeal. Be specific, regarding Who? What? When? And Where? Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

There were mitigating circumstances the College was unaware of and I have material evidence that I was unable to provide earlier. (By material evidence, we mean information that might have the potential to change a decision, although this cannot be guaranteed.)

State the evidence and explain why this information was not given to the College at the correct time.

There was an irregularity in the decision-making process, meaning that College procedure was not followed correctly.

State which parts of the procedure were not followed correctly.



Other circumstances and reasons for your complaint/appeal

**List any documents you are attaching to support your complaint/appeal**

For example, independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements.

**What remedy are you seeking?**

Please provide information about the steps you would like the College to take to resolve your complaint/appeal (a requested remedy will be considered but cannot be guaranteed).

Please check:

- I have completed all sections of this form.
- I have included all supporting documents, where necessary.

Signature	
Date	

**Form 200.006.01**

## Appendix 2



### Cambridge Muslim College Complaints and the Law

#### Introduction

The College is committed to understanding its responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law. In creating this policy, the College has referred to the compliance advice *UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law*, published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which sets out minimum standards that apply to various aspects of an HE provider's dealings with students and applicants.

#### Complaints

The College has a legal obligation to ensure that its complaint handling processes and practices are accessible, clear and fair to students and applicants. The College must ensure that:

- its complaints procedure is easily located and accessible to applicants, for example on its website
- applicants are provided with information about the College's complaints process before they accept an offer of a course
- students and applicants are provided with clear and accurate information about the College's complaint handling procedures in writing and (where applicable) verbally
- where a programme is in partnership with, or awarded by, another HE provider it should be clear where responsibility for complaint handling lies
- accurate details of any external complaint or redress scheme that students and applicants can access should be provided
- where students and applicants raise concerns at an informal level, they should be informed that they can make a complaint under the College's formal complaints process if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved
- it follows any guidelines published by any third party redress or complaint schemes of which the College is a member
- staff are trained in and follow the complaint handling procedures in practice.

The College should also ensure that its complaints handling processes are fair, which is more likely to be achieved where it:

- sets out clear and reasonable timescales in which students and applicants can expect to hear back about their complaint at each stage of the process
- sets out clear and reasonable timescales relating to how long students and applicants will be given to respond to any requests for further information
- does not create unreasonable barriers for students and applicants pursuing a complaint
- provides the ability for students and applicants to escalate the matter if they are unhappy and, where the regulatory framework allows it, ultimately to appeal if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved.

## Appendix 3

### QAA UK Quality Code

QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education [Advice and Guidance](#) Concerns, Complaints and Appeals, states the following Expectation, Practice and Principles:

#### Expectations For Quality

- Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.
- From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

#### Core Practice For Quality

- The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

#### Guiding Principles

1. Concerns, complaints and appeals are used to improve the student experience.
2. Concerns, complaints and appeals procedures are accessible and inclusive.
3. Information is clear and transparent.
4. People raising concerns or making complaints or appeals are treated with dignity and respect, and their well-being is properly considered.
5. Concerns, complaints and appeals processes are proportionate and allow for cases to be resolved as early as possible.
6. Concerns, complaints and appeals procedures are fair and impartial.
7. Confidentiality and anonymity are appropriately assured.
8. Concerns, complaints and appeals are resolved in as timely a way as possible.