

**Admissions , Complaints
and Appeal Policy for The Open
University Awards (2026-27)**

21/07/26

SLT Responsibility – Adam Fahey
Policy Author – Matthew Twitchett

Significant Changes Following Review

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
N/A	No changes as a result of review	Matthew Twitchett

This policy has been approved by The Open University through its Institutional and administrative revalidation complete in June 2023.

This policy is available in an alternative format on request including a word version.

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	21-07-26
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Matthew Twitchett
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff employed
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by awarding organisations

You will need to consider whether it's possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy	Who cannot or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	None identified		
Disability	1	Some students may need support in understanding the policy and help in raising a complaint. This will be provided by the student support teams in the College.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from a Carer/Parent or Guardian and the College in raising an complaint.	As and when required
Gender (Sex)	1	None identified		
Gender Reassignment	1	None identified		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	None identified		
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	A student may not be able to appeal during pregnancy or maternity leave. Support and guidance will be provided to the student in this case to mitigate any negative impact.	Student will be able to apply for internally for additional time to appeal a decision in accordance with awarding organisation requirements. The College will support this process within awarding organisation requirements.	As and when required
Race	1	None identified		
Religion or Religious Belief	2	Time frames for a student to lodge an appeal could be affected by religious holidays.	Students should consider how a religious holiday could impact on an appeal date. The College will accept an appeal if a student is impacted by a religious holiday and provides evidence.	College will respond to student within 2 working days.
Sexual Orientation	1	None identified		
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	None identified		

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010.
2. As part of the policy approval process Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved.

South Essex College Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy and procedure relate to applicants & students studying for The Open University awards_at South Essex College.

2. Feedback

- 2.1 The College does not provide automatic feedback to every unsuccessful applicant; we are happy to provide written feedback upon request. The following information provides details of the College's applicant feedback policy, as well as details about the complaints and appeals procedures for applicants. These policies and procedures would also apply to former applicants & students at the College who had been unsuccessful in gaining re-admission (whether to their former programme or to another subject)
- 2.2 Feedback in this instance is defined as a request for information on why an application was unsuccessful
- 2.3 All applications to South Essex College are considered fairly, equally and in line with the College's admissions policy.
- 2.4 The College believes in a holistic approach to selection. In considering applications the College therefore takes into account all aspects of the application, including qualifications achieved to date, any predicted results on qualifications that are still pending, personal statement, relevant work experience, academic reference, any mitigating circumstances that we are alerted to (such as long-term illness or personal difficulties which can be emailed in support of the application to HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk and any contextual data.
- 2.5 On occasion, the College may also ask for additional information, which might include additional or updated references, further information on qualifications

(including transcripts), an additional or enhanced personal statement, examples of work, a set essay and/or an interview. In taking the decision to offer or reject, the College is therefore considering all the information that has been made available to the College.

2.6 All decisions are checked by the HE Admissions Team.

2.7 The College does not write automatically to unsuccessful applicants but communicates the decision via email (*Note: the exception to this are former students seeking re-admission or part-time applications, where the decision will be issued in writing by the HE Admissions team direct to the applicant*).

2.8 The College is, however, happy to provide written feedback (upon request) to unsuccessful applicants, in accordance with the procedures set out below and as outlined in the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

2.9 If applicants have additional information to submit in support of their application, this can be provided as part of the request for feedback.

2.10 The most common reason for an application to be declined is that the applicant *either* does not meet a specific entry requirement (for example, having GCSE Grade C or above English/Maths or a suitable alternative qualification) *or* does not have (or is not likely to achieve) the required grades for admission (i.e. our standard offer level) as advertised in our Prospectus on our College website. Unsuccessful applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to check the College's Prospectus and College website entry profile for details of specific entry requirements *before* requesting feedback.

2.11 If an applicant wishes to receive feedback, then this will be provided on request to HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk or requested in writing to the following address:

HE Admissions
South Essex College

HE Admissions
6th Floor Luker Road
Southend on Sea Essex
SS1 1ND UK

- 2.12 The request should include the applicant's full name (as declared on the application form), SEC ID number (where relevant) and programme(s) applied for. The letter/email should state that the applicant is seeking feedback on their rejection.
- 2.13 Please note that requests for feedback must be submitted within the same admissions cycle as the application about which the feedback is requested.
- 2.14 When the request for feedback arrives, the applicant will be sent a letter or email acknowledging receipt of the request and giving an indication of the date by which they can expect to receive written feedback. Whilst every effort will be made to respond to requests quickly, at certain times of year this is not possible. The College will aim to respond within 28 working days, but the acknowledgment letter will give a better indication of the expected length of time required to reply.
- 2.15 Feedback, where appropriate, may include advice on possible courses of action. Advice on possible courses of action is merely guidance aimed at helping the applicant. Applicants are reminded that independent guidance is also available from advisers within their existing school or college or from careers services and applicants should consider consulting these sources for help.
- 2.16 Requests for feedback should normally come from the applicant. The College will not respond to requests for feedback from those advising applicants (whether parents, guardians, teacher or careers advisers) *unless* that individual/parent has been explicitly appointed (in writing) to act on behalf of the applicant. A copy of the written authority to act for the applicant would need to be provided along with the request for feedback. In most cases,

however, the College would expect to receive the request for feedback direct from the applicant.

3. Appeal for an admissions decision

3.1. If following receipt of feedback (as detailed above in section 2), an applicant feels that an error has occurred in the admissions process, they have the right to request a formal review of the admissions selection decision on one of the following grounds:

- pertinent information was missing from the original application;
- there has been a misinterpretation of information or data contained within the original application;
- and/or
- there was a procedural anomaly in the handling of the application.

3.2 This review can only be requested after an applicant has received feedback on the reason for their original rejection. The request for a review must then be placed (in writing) within 28 calendar days of the feedback being sent to the applicant, stating clearly on what grounds the request for a review is being made.

3.3 This request should be sent to the Deputy Executive Director - HE and Quality, South Essex College, Luker Road, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 1ND, UK or emailed to HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk for the attention of the Deputy Executive Director - HE and Quality

3.4 As with the original request for feedback, the subsequent request for a review must be made by the applicant and not a third party. The College will not respond to requests from anyone other than the applicant (unless written permission has been granted by the applicant).

3.5 Once received, an allocated Manager will review the record of the application (normally in consultation with the relevant Admissions Tutor) and will respond by letter or email. If the original decision is upheld, this correspondence will include the

reasons for the decision. The complainant will receive a response within 10 working days. A working day Monday to Friday excluding any College holidays.

3.6 A separate fee status appeals process exists for applicants who wish to challenge their fee status assessment, and these must be directed in the first instance to HEadmissions@southessex.ac.uk

4 Complaints

4.1 A complaint is normally a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies.

Complaints are different to requests for feedback or appeals.

4.2 A complaint does not necessarily have to be in connection with a decision to turn down an applicant. A complaint is a concern about a particular procedure, an irregularity in the administration of an application, or a belief that a policy has not been correctly implemented. Complaints may cover any aspect of the admissions process and will normally focus on a specific issue or situation (which could include the feedback request). A complaint does not necessarily question the decision of the College but raises a concern about how the selection process has been managed.

4.3 As with requests for feedback and appeals, the complaint must come from the applicant. The complaint must be submitted within three months of the conclusion of the admissions process against which the complaint is being made. Complaints must initially be sent (in writing or by email) to

Executive Assistant to the Deputy Chief Executive – Curriculum & Quality
South Essex College
Luker Road
Southend On Sea Essex
SS1 1ND UK

or emailed to Yoursay@southessex.ac.uk . The Compliments & Complaints Policy

can be found on the College website.

4.4 The OIA is unable to consider complaints raised during the admissions process, please ensure you refer to the Colleges, Compliments & Complaints Policy can be found on the College website.

End of Policy

Senior Leadership Responsibility	Adam Fahey
Policy Author	Matthew Twitchett
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Executive Director Quality, Teaching and Learning.
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Type of Policy	Public

