

Policy and Procedures for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints



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PURPOSE

To clarify the arrangements for applicants to obtain feedback about an unsuccessful application, to appeal a selection decision or to complain about the admissions process from the Velindre Oncology Academy (VOA).

SCOPE

The VOA is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. The VOA does not provide automatic feedback to every unsuccessful applicant, but written feedback can be provided upon request (see section 1).

Following the provision of feedback, an applicant will have the right to appeal the selection decision, providing that there are sufficient grounds for an appeal (see section 2). An applicant who wishes to make a complaint about the admission policy and procedures may do so using the complaints procedure (see section 3). The complaints procedure cannot be used to challenge an academic decision to refuse an application.

Staff dealing with admissions are given training to make them aware of their obligations under the policy and are committed to handling complaints and appeals in a professional manner in order to safeguard applicants' interests.

Admission to the Academy is solely at the discretion of the VOA.

AUTHORISED PERSONNEL

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REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Admissions Policy
- Cancellation Policy
- Anonymity and Confidentiality Guidelines
- English Language Requirements
- Student Complaint Policy

PROCEDURE

Definitions/Abbreviations

VOA – Velindre Oncology Academy

“Student” - any person enrolled or registered to follow a Programme of Study or module(s) offered by the VOA and persons who have been students of the VOA for up to 3 months after they have left the VOA.

Feedback

Feedback in this context is defined as information about why an application was unsuccessful. Any unsuccessful applicant to the VOA may request feedback on an admissions decision.

Applicants should note that the most common reason for an application to be declined is that the applicant either does not meet a specific entry requirement or does not have (or is not likely to achieve) the required grades for admission. Unsuccessful applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to check the VOA's website for details of both standard offer levels and any specific entry requirements before requesting feedback.

Procedure for requesting feedback:

The following procedure should be used to request feedback regarding an unsuccessful application to the VOA:

Requests for feedback should be made in writing to the VOA (contact details are given below), within 20 working days following notification of the original admissions decision. Applicants should include their full name and the name of the programme applied to. It is not possible to provide detailed feedback by telephone. Requests should be made via email to the VOA team at: voa@wales.nhs.uk

The VOA will respond in writing to each request for feedback within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

Requests for feedback must come from the applicant.

Appeal against an admission decision

For the purposes of this procedure, an appeal is defined as a request by an applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. An appeal will only be considered where there are adequate grounds, as set out below:

Where there is substantial new information which, for good reason, was not made available either on the original application or during the selection procedure, and where that new information is significant and directly relevant to the original decision. Please note that the new information must relate directly to the original application and cannot include activities or achievements which have taken place or been ratified subsequently;

Where there is evidence that the VOA's published Admissions Policy has not been followed.

Where an applicant believes that they have been discriminated against in relation to a protected characteristic as defined under the Equality Act 2010 as the result of an Admissions decision or VOA policy. The VOA recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act and is committed to eliminate any unlawful discrimination, be it direct or indirect discrimination, whether by perception or by association with a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation).

Appeals against an admissions decision based on the academic judgement of VOA staff about an applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme or appeals put forward on any grounds other than those specified above will not be considered.

The VOA will not consider appeals that are based on errors made by external organisations, agencies or individuals unless an agreement exists between the VOA and the third party that expressly permits them to act on the VOA's behalf in relation to the matter in question.

The VOA will not be able to consider appeals where a decision not to admit an applicant is based on restrictions imposed by, or requirements of external organisations or agencies – for example restrictions imposed by UK Visas and Immigration or the requirements of accrediting professional bodies.

Procedure for appealing against an admissions decision:

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant wishes to appeal against an admissions decision:

- An applicant should seek feedback from the VOA (see section 1 above) before deciding whether or not they have grounds to appeal the admissions decision. An appeal will not be considered until after an applicant has received formal feedback. 2.5.2 Appeals must be received within 20 working days following the provision of feedback from the VOA.
- An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Head of VOA, stating clearly the grounds for appeal (as above) and outlining the case in full. (See 1.3.1 above for contact details).
- Appeals must be made by the applicant and not a third party.
- Once received, the Head of VOA will review the record of the application and will respond in writing, normally within 20 working days.
- If the appeal is upheld, the VOA will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and the applicant will be informed of the outcome. If the appeal is not upheld, the VOA will communicate the reasons for the decision to the applicant in writing.
- No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of appealing a previous admissions decision.

Complaints

For the purposes of this procedure, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the VOA's admissions policies and procedures which have been used to reach a selection decision or about the actions, or the lack of actions, by the VOA or its staff.

A complaint will not result in the amendment of an admissions decision. However, if in the course of investigating a complaint the Head of VOA believes there are grounds for an appeal against the selection decision, the Head of VOA may advise the applicant to submit a formal appeal.

Procedure for complaints:

The following procedure should be followed if an applicant wishes to submit a formal complaint:

Complaints must be received within 20 working days of the conclusion of the admissions process against which the complaint is being made.

A complaint should be submitted in writing to the Head of VOA, and should provide the following information:

- the nature of, and reasons for, the complaint, giving as much detail as possible; • any steps already taken to resolve the matter, if appropriate; • details of any response received to date and a statement as to why the response(s) is not satisfactory;
- an indication of the outcome which is sought. 3.3.3 The complaint must be made by the applicant and not a third party. The VOA will not respond to requests from anyone other than the applicant, unless exceptional circumstances exist prevent the applicant from making the complaint and providing that the third party has the explicit consent, in writing, from the applicant to act on their behalf.

Once received, the Head of VOA will investigate the complaint and will seek to resolve the complaint or explain the situation and will respond in writing, normally within 20 working days.

If the complaint is substantiated, the VOA will take such reasonable action as is appropriate and the applicant will be informed of the outcome. If the complaint is not substantiated, the VOA will communicate the reasons for the decision to the applicant in writing.

Applicants who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints process may wish to refer their case to Citizens Advice www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

The record of any individual complaint or appeal will be kept on file for as long as the dispute continues and should not be needed beyond the end of the admissions cycle concerned. It shall thereafter be confidentially destroyed.

No applicant will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of submitting a complaint.

The Head of VOA will review, on an annual basis, any complaints and appeals which have been referred to them and will recommend changes to procedures or systems in accordance with the nature and pattern of complaints received.