

THE INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH
Complaints Procedure for Applicants: Annex to
the Admissions Policy



1. Purpose of the procedure

1.1. To safeguard the interests of prospective students, The Institute of Cancer Research (the ICR) has established a Complaints Procedure for Applicants.

1.2. Applicants are advised that there is no provision for appeal against the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision on an application, or that an offer of a student place can be made as a result of the outcome of a complaint.

1.3. Selection for entry to an ICR degree is based on consideration of a combination of factors including academic ability, motivation for study, experience and interest in the subject area, and references as well as the potential to benefit from the experience and to contribute to life at the ICR.

1.4. The ICR receives a very large number of applications for PhD studentships and, as entry is so competitive, is unable to provide feedback to applicants following submission for this programme via the application portal.

2. Principles of investigation

2.1. The ICR aims to balance the rights of the complainant and those of any person complained against; all parties will be treated with dignity and respect. The complainant should not expect to suffer any reprisals for making a complaint in good faith. Submitting a complaint will not prevent an applicant from being able to re-apply to the ICR in the future or affect the applicant's ability to comply with any offer of study already issued. Any evidence of recrimination should be brought immediately to the attention of the Registrar via admissions@icr.ac.uk.

2.2. Alternative trained and experienced members of staff may be nominated by the Registrar to take on any of the roles detailed in this procedure, in the event that those named have had any previous involvement in the matter, could be reasonably perceived by the applicant to be biased, or are unavailable at the time of the investigation. Consideration of the individuals who will undertake roles at each stage should be included at the start of the process, so as to ensure appropriate members of staff will be available to cover later stages.

2.3. Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure to enable applicants with disabilities to engage with equal opportunity.

3. Data protection

3.1. Due to Data Protection legislation the complaint must be submitted by the applicant. In exceptional circumstances, the ICR may consider a complaint from someone to whom the applicant has given consent, in writing, to act on their behalf.

3.2. Appropriate and proportionate written records will be kept throughout the process and stored confidentially in accordance with the ICR's policies on record retention and data protection legislation.

3.3. Anonymised data will be recorded and reported for monitoring purposes. To this end Registry maintains a log of all complaints, recording the nature and outcome of each complaint.

3.4. The ICR's Academic Board is responsible for monitoring student complaints.

3.5. Where a Complainant's personal data requires processing in the context of an investigation and resolution of a student complaint, personal data will only be disclosed to those persons who need such data for the purposes of conducting the investigation.

3.6. No person will be told any more about the investigation than is strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required and to enable the administration, investigation, decision-making process to take place.

4. Definition of and Grounds for Complaint

A complaint relates to the services or facilities offered by the ICR or to the actions or behaviour of a member of staff during the selection process. If upheld, the remedy for the complaint could, for example, include an apology or an undertaking to revise procedures.

5. Grounds for Complaint

5.1. Applicants can use the following grounds to complain about a decision or incident in the ICR's application process:

5.1.1. **Procedural irregularity or error**, where the applicant believes that the ICR has not adhered to its own stated policy and procedures;

5.1.2. **Perception or evidence of bias or prejudice in the decision-making process.**

6. Time limits

A complaint should be submitted as early as possible to the admissions manager. Formal complaints must be made within 20 working days from when the event which is the subject of the complaint about occurred.

7. Informal resolution of complaints

7.1. Wherever possible, applicants should seek a resolution to their complaint informally and directly with the member(s) of staff involved or with the admissions manager, without the need to resort to formal proceedings.

7.2. If the complaint relates directly to a decision made within the application process and they have not already done so, applicants are strongly encouraged to request feedback on their application from the course to which they applied. Feedback is provided to enable applicants to reflect on their progress through the application process and does not constitute a reconsideration of an application or a challenge to the ICR's decision on an application. Feedback may be given in person, over the telephone or in writing.

7.3. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome at this stage, they are advised to seek a written response.

7.4. Depending on the severity or nature of the complaint, the applicant may be advised to proceed directly to a formal complaint without the need to first seek informal resolution.

8. Formal complaint

8.1. Where applicable, if an applicant has not found a satisfactory resolution informally, they may make a formal complaint. To do so, the applicant should complete the applicant complaint form and send it to the admissions manager who will usually acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. Please note that it is important to include all required information as stated in the form.

8.2. A complaint can be declined to be considered if it does not fall within the permitted grounds; if it is discriminatory, trivial, vexing, or malicious; or if it has been submitted outside the timeframe and there are not valid and evidenced reasons for late submission.

8.3. If a complaint is accepted, it will be investigated by the Deputy Registrar (or nominated alternative) together with a member of the Academic Dean's Team. The investigation is likely to include requesting responses from those responsible for shortlisting and/or interviewing the candidate. This will involve sharing a copy of the applicant's complaint with the relevant staff.

8.4. An applicant will normally receive a complaint decision letter within 20 working days of receiving acknowledgement of the formal complaint form submission. If a complaint decision will take longer than 20 working days, the applicant will receive an update regarding the investigation.

8.5. The complaint outcome letter will include a description of the investigation that took place; the decision; the reasons for the decision; and any actions being taken because of the decision.

8.6. The complaints decision letter confirms the ICR's final decision. This decision is likely to be communicated to any staff or department involved in the investigation.

8.7. As per 2.1 above, there is no policy to prevent an applicant from re-applying to the ICR in the future for either the same or another programme of study.

THE INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR APPLICANTS

Formal Complaint Form

The completion and submission of this form initiates a complaint and should be used in conjunction with the Complaints Procedure for Applicants. The completed form should be sent to: admissions@icr.ac.uk

1. You may submit a complaint on the following grounds:
 - A. Procedural irregularity or error, where the applicant believes that the ICR has not adhered to its own stated procedures;
or
 - B. Evidence of bias or prejudice in the decision-making process

Please note that the ICR will not review an application where the applicant is simply dissatisfied with the academic or professional judgement of those making the decision.

3. Please complete the sections below.

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS			
SURNAME		FIRST NAME	
DATE OF BIRTH		APPLICATION Ref.	
PROGRAMME OF STUDY			
HOME ADDRESS			
HOME TELEPHONE		MOBILE TELEPHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS			

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF COMPLAINT
If necessary, please attach additional information.
(a) Please give specific details of your complaint which should include the dates of incidents and events as appropriate, including what steps you have taken to resolve the matter informally (max 700 words)

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(b) Please provide a numbered list of any supporting evidence you are attaching with this form. Any such evidence should be paginated and provided in the order set out in this list. Please note that all information should normally be accompanied by this form as it may not be possible to consider material which is submitted later in the process without good reason.

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DECLARATION	I declare that the information in this form is true and accurate.		
Signed		Date	