



Admissions Policy & Procedure

Core Documentation Cover Page					
Admissions Policy & Procedure					
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		<p>Registration Card section.</p> <p>Amendments to Interview Events section.</p> <p>Amendment to Fees & Finance section.</p> <p>Addition of Data Protection section.</p> <p>Addition of Appeals Procedure.</p> <p>Amendments to Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>Amendments to OIA section.</p> <p>Amendments to Appendices.</p>			
V5.0	July 2019 Academic Council	<p>Major Amendment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflect new Quality Code. - update UCO Mission, Vision & Values. - update weblinks. - update policy titles. - include service users in the admissions process. - generalise the policy to include non-osteopathic courses. - addition of HCPC raising concerns process. - addition of a complaints form. 	Head of Quality	<p>All master versions will be held in:</p> <p>J:\0 Quality Team - Core Documentation Website</p>	Jul 2022
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Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					

If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Our aim is to provide fair and equal access to Higher Education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.
- 1.2 This policy is written to inform applicants, parents, carers and advisors, and University College of Osteopathy (UCO) staff of the policies and procedures involved in making an application to the UCO.
- 1.3 The UCO welcomes applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications, traditional and non-traditional, academic and vocational. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and have a whole range of qualifications both from the UK and overseas. We consider applicants to our courses solely on the basis of their merit, ability and potential. Applications from mature students who have no formal qualifications may be considered provided they have relevant work experience.
- 1.4 We will consider all information contained within the application form and produced during the interview process. This might include past academic performance, predicted grades, personal statements, academic and personal references and any other evidence of skills, aptitude and potential to succeed.
- 1.5 Our admissions policy is aligned with the UCO's Institutional Mission, Vision and Values, complies with the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code for Higher Education (2018)¹ and all relevant equalities legislation and is guided by the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group, 'Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice'²

2. INSTITUTIONAL MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

A) MISSION

- 2.1 The UCO's mission is to:

"Continually provide the highest quality education and research for all and the very best care, for each patient, on every occasion".³

B) VISION

- 2.2 The UCO's vision is that:

"By 2027, the University College of Osteopathy will be an internationally recognised university for both education and research in osteopathy and associated health care subjects; a vibrant community of staff and students keen to explore and exploit new ideas and challenge existing views, whose work will positively influence the quality of health care and shape future clinical practice locally, nationally and internationally."⁴

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

² <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5284/1/finalreport.pdf>

³ UCO Strategic Plan 2018-2023

⁴ UCO Strategic Plan 2018-2023

C) VALUES

2.3 The values and conduct to which we aspire, and that we wish to foster and sustain are as follows:

- Students and patients will always come first
- A culture of critical enquiry, scholarship and research
- A respect for the heritage and values of osteopathy
- A respect for creativity and innovation
- A respect for equal opportunities
- A celebration of diversity
- A culture of openness and honesty
- A culture of collaboration and teamwork
- A desire for environmental sustainability⁵

2.4 Excelling in our historic and continuing commitment to widening participation and to valuing diversity both within and beyond the UCO, the procedures through which the UCO assesses applications are designed to be fair, transparent, easily understood by candidates and based on principles that are applied consistently across the UCO.

2.5 Admission to the UCO is competitive and decisions will rest primarily on the qualifications, needs and aspirations of the applicant, and the reasonable expectation that they will be able to fulfil the objectives of their chosen programme.

2.6 Applications from students with additional needs will be considered on the same criteria as all others. Candidates with additional needs are invited to contact Disability and Dyslexia Support Staff to discuss the level of support available.

2.7 The UCO will facilitate timely responses to enquiries and applications, ensuring that all necessary documentation is sent at the earliest opportunity.

2.8 The UCO aims to provide information materials and activities that are relevant, accurate, current and accessible in order that the applicant may make an informed decision about their options.

2.9 Admission decisions will be made within this broad policy statement, in accordance with the UCO's Equal & Diversity Policy and with regard to each course's specific entry and selection criteria.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Responsibility for the UCO Admissions Policy and procedures lies with the Widening Participation and Admissions Strategy Group.

3.2 The Widening Participation and Admissions Strategy Group is, in turn, responsible to Academic Council, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

⁵ UCO Strategic Plan 2018-2023

- 3.3 Individual course teams have admission sub-groups of the Course Team (Course Recruitment Groups) who are allocated the responsibility of reviewing all applicants to that course.

4. ENTRY PROFILES

- 4.1 The UCO will make available Admissions Profiles for all its academic courses contained within the Course Information Form (CIF) of each course. All admissions decisions will be made against the criteria detailed in the admissions profile.
- 4.2 Each profile will specify:
- Typical academic entry requirements
 - Other accepted experience and/or qualities
- 4.3 Admissions profiles will be made available via the CIF on the UCO's website, the UCAS website for undergraduate full-time courses, and in the UCO's prospectus for all other courses.
- 4.4 Applicants must demonstrate they have the skills necessary for successful study, evidence of motivation and the commitment to succeed. In addition to traditional academic qualifications the UCO recognises two types of prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from some of the requirements, as explained in our Academic Regulations. These are:
- Transfer credit.
 - Recognition of prior learning (RPL), both certified and experiential as specified by the Academic Quality Framework and in line with the UCO's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy⁶.
- 4.5 The authority to consider requests for transfer of credit is delegated by Academic Council to Course Leaders with authority to admit applicants to the relevant course.

5. DECISION MAKING

5.1 UNDERGRADUATE FULL TIME

- 5.1.1 All full-time undergraduate applications will be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) who forward applications to the UCOs Admissions Department.

5.2 UNDERGRADUATE PART TIME

- 5.2.1 Applications to undergraduate part-time courses will be made directly to the UCO via the UCO's online or paper application form.

⁶ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

5.3 POSTGRADUATE

5.3.1 Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the UCO using the UCO's online or paper application form.

5.4 MSc IN OSTEOPATHY (PRE-REGISTRATION) COURSE

5.4.1 All MSc in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) course applications will be made directly to the UCO using the UCO's online or paper application form. Practitioners on this course are already registered professions in Physiotherapy, Chiropractic, Medicine, sports therapy with rehabilitation and other degree level appropriate courses. Therefore, it is expected that these applicants along with all our students will adhere to the Fitness to Practice and Professional Behaviour Policy (Osteopathic Pre-Registration Courses)⁷

5.5 THE APPLICATION PROCESS

5.5.1 Those applicants not meeting the selection criteria of their chosen course may be considered for, and offered, an alternative course. If an application is unsuccessful the reason for rejection is recorded to provide applicants with feedback if requested. Although minimum entry requirements for undergraduate courses are set in the CIF, conditional offers will be made in the context of the qualification being studied and offered for assessment for entry.

5.5.2 The Access to Higher Education (Osteopathic Sciences & Health Care) Diploma requires additional tests prior to entry on the course. These tests will take the form of a basic English language and maths written and spoken assessment. This testing is aimed to assess the capabilities of the applicant and identify how best to support them through the course and subsequent years if they choose to join our M.Ost course. The results from these tests will also be made available to the Student Support team to aid in the above-mentioned process.

5.6 ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

5.6.1 Applications from prospective International students will be considered and processed consistently with Home/EU applications.

5.6.2 Those applicants offering overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements to enrol. Assessment will be made using both UK NARIC and the UCAS Guide to International Qualifications.

5.6.3 Applicants that have English as a second language must be proficient in English in order to be admitted to a course and have the required English language qualification as stated in the entry profiles.

5.7 DECISION MAKING

5.7.1 The Course Recruitment Group (CRG) is comprised of the relevant Course Leader, Admissions Officer, a member of the Student Support Team and the I&E Tutor. Those involved in this group consider applications made to the school and form part of the

⁷ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

offer making process whilst identifying if any further evidence or conditions are required.

5.7.2 Any deviation from the normal criteria triggers a collective approach where the application and interview will be looked at in more detail as supporting information. This is performed on a case by case basis and is not solely based on academic qualifications. The interview and experiences are incorporated into the overall decision.

5.7.3 A special Course Recruitment Group (CRG) is convened at least 3 days prior to A-level results day in August to consider all applicants that do not meet their conditional offer. Normal CRG members are required to attend as well as either the Vice-Chancellor or Deputy Vice-Chancellor in attendance. All decisions are compared to previous special CRG meetings and the overall admissions process throughout the academic year to ensure that we are maintaining standards and procedures.

5.8 CLEARING

5.8.1 The clearing process is slightly different in terms of obtaining and processing full time UCAS applications. At this stage applicants will provide us with their name, personal UCAS ID number and contact details so they can be found on the UCAS system. During this stage applicants can only officially apply to one institution at a time. Interviews will be arranged in an ad-hoc basis either in person or skype and in special circumstances via telephone

6 DEPOSITS AND VISAS

6.1 Those applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK in order to study at UCO will be required to pay a £1,000 non-refundable deposit as a condition of the release of their Certificate of Acceptance onto a place of study at the UCO. It is a measure of the seriousness of applicant's intention to study and is being introduced at the same time as the UKVI Visa and Immigration system.

6.2 The £1,000 deposit is only required for the first year of the course and will be used as payment against the balance of tuition fees which are paid at enrolment. Students will have the option of paying the remainder of the fee by instalments.

6.3 Applications from overseas students will be processed as per the normal admissions procedures. However, wording contained within conditional offer letters and unconditional offer letters will signal to students the necessity of making payment of the compulsory deposit once the applicant has reached "unconditional firm" stage.

6.4 Students who have not received confirmation of their immigration status/ leave to remain will be considered on a case by case basis and condition of their admission to the UCO will be contained within their offer letter.

7 APPLICATION REGISTRATION CARD (ARC)

7.1 The ARC is a credit-card sized plastic card, which is issued to acknowledge a claim for asylum. It contains information about the individual's identity, photograph/image and immigration status.

- 7.2 Applications from those applying for an ARC card will still go through the UCAS process as per normal. Interviews and any offers made will be conditional upon their status to remain in the country if there are no other academic requirements.
- 7.3 Applicants may also be declined or rejected an offer if their academic requirements and interview do not meet the required standard or grades for entry.
- 7.4 We expect all students to have the required level of English language proficiency. This may vary between courses, but can be found on the website under English language requirements or the “International Applicants” section:
<https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/how-apply/international-applicants>
- 7.5 Initially all those that have applied for asylum and a place on our courses will be considered eligible for Home fees. If the ARC application is refused the applicant is technically no longer an asylum seeker and can be treated as an international student for fees purposes while any appeal is being considered.
- 7.6 Leave to remain will need to be granted prior to the first day of the first academic year of their course (usually 1st September). Prior to Indefinite leave being granted by the Home office you may be offered a conditional offer.
- 7.7 Applicants who are asylum seekers and receive a positive decision on their asylum claim while on a course must inform the UCO immediately, so you can be reassessed for home fees. This will come into effect from the beginning of the next academic year.
- 7.8 You can defer your application to a course at the UCO for the following year if you are unable to obtain remain to leave to remain prior to the start of the academic year.
- 7.9 Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 the UCO is not able to provide immigration advice to asylum seekers and refugees.

Useful contact details:

Admissions team: admissions@uco.ac.uk

Student support: studentsupport@uco.ac.uk

- 7.10 A copy of applicants` ARC card will be taken and kept on file at UCO.

8 SIMILARITY DETECTION

- 8.1 The UCAS similarity detection service reviews all personal statements within incoming applications. These are checked against a library of all personal statements previously submitted to UCAS and sample statements collected from a variety of web sites and other sources including paper publications. Each personal statement received at UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.
- 8.2 Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service team. Universities will be notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Applicants will also be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection service has found that their personal statement merits investigation. Full details can be found at
<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/apply-and-track/filling-your-application/fraud-and-similarity>

- 8.3 Following any notification from UCAS of Similarity Detection, it is the responsibility of the Admissions Offer to contact the applicant to request an explanation into the reasons of the similitude in their personal statement to one submitted in a previous application.
- 8.4 The applicant's response will then be discussed along with their application at the following Course Recruitment Group meeting.

9 INTERVIEW EVENTS

- 9.1 All short-listed candidates will be invited to attend Interview Events at the UCO. They are informed in advance of details of the selection procedures, thus allowing for an opportunity to discuss any special requirements or needs prior to attending.
- 9.2 The purpose of the interview events is to confirm whether candidates have the potential aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed on their desired course. The Interview Events are designed to appeal to the needs of the applicants, providing all applicants with an equal opportunity to demonstrate to the Interview Teams that they are the right candidates and have the potential to become successful students.
- 9.3 For those that are unable to attend the Interview event in person (often due to logistic or timing) we offer Skype interviews with video. This is particularly popular and convenient for international applicants. We also offer telephone interviews with the speaker on as another alternative for applicants that are unable to come in for an interview in person or use skype; the interview questions and style is the same for both skype and telephone interviews.
- 9.4 The interview panel is comprised of at least 2 interviewers, which is the minimum required in order to conduct the interview. Applicants will have the opportunity to discuss the information provided on the application form.
- 9.5 For courses leading to a professional qualification, service users (i.e. current UCO patients) will also normally be involved in the interview event process.
- 9.6 The interview processes for all courses are reviewed annually and are developed each year, if necessary, based on feedback from students, staff and faculty and on any relevant Higher Education and Institutional or Course changes.

10 DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) AND HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRES

- 10.1 Courses requiring DBS and the completion of a health assessment form will have this clearly stated in their CIF and the UCO prospectus. The UCO's current DBS Policy and Student and Health Policy provide further details regarding these⁸.
- 10.2 Successful applicants to any course approved by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body will be required to undergo Police record checks, carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service, as a condition of enrolment.

⁸ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

- 10.3 Successful applicants to any course approved by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body will be required to complete the Health Questionnaire as a condition of enrolment.
- 10.4 Students are advised to read guidance published by the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body regarding any DBS or health concerns prior to applying to their chosen programme of study or to contact the UCO's Admissions Team for assistance.

11 APPLICANTS WITH CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND ARRESTS

- 11.1 UCAS advice states: 'An applicant who has a relevant criminal conviction that is not spent is required to state this on their application. 'Relevant' is defined in Apply as offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, or offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant. Certain courses, for example, teaching, health, social work, veterinary medicine, veterinary science or courses involving work with children or vulnerable adults, do not come under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.'
- 11.2 A criminal conviction not yet spent shall not normally be a bar to entry to a course unless:
- a) The programme provides entry to employment in an occupation covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1975;
 - b) In the view of the UCO, the applicant might pose a threat to staff and other students;
 - c) Specified by an accrediting Professional Body.
- 11.3 While we do not wish to penalise an ex-offender, the UCO does have a duty of care to its patients and staff and there may be occasions when an academically suitable applicant will be refused entry. The UCO's policy is that applicants who declare a criminal conviction are initially reviewed on the same academic grounds that apply to all applicants. It is the responsibility of applicants to inform the UCO of any convictions occurring after the application has been submitted and throughout their time at the UCO.
- 11.4 As a condition of acceptance/continuation, all registering students are required to have completed and cleared an enhanced criminal record disclosure by a given deadline.
- 11.5 Where the applicant indicates a criminal conviction on the application form, following a successful interview event, in addition to an offer letter detailing all conditions of enrolment, the applicant will be provided with information regarding the UCO's DBS policy and risk assessment procedure. The applicant will then have the option of completing an early DBS check or contacting the UCO's Registrar to begin the Risk Assessment Process. The Registrar will then notify the applicant of the outcome of their application.

12 FEES AND FINANCE

- 12.1 All prospective students must complete a Fee Assessment Form⁹ as well as providing a black and white copy of the personal details page of their current passport, all visas and stamps, including relevant documents to support their form. The completed Fee Assessment Form and documents should be sent via e-mail to feestatus@uco.ac.uk.
- 12.2 All prospective students should ensure they read our Tuition Fee Policy so that they understand what we expect of students and what students can expect when paying their tuition fees.
- 12.3 The policy details essential information relating to fees and payment of fees. Conditions outlined in the policy include:
- Your tuition fee liability if you withdraw from your course
 - Your responsibilities for paying fees and sanctions for non-payment of fees
 - An annual review, so fees are likely to increase year on year.
 - The amount payable is not only dependent on your course but also your fee status
- 12.4 Further information about fees can be found at:
<https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees>

13 DISABILITY SUPPORT

- 13.1 The UCO is an inclusive environment and wants to encourage all students with disabilities to apply.
- 13.2 The UCO considers someone to have a disability if they have either a physical or mental impairment which is long term and has a substantial long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 13.3 All applicants are encouraged to disclose their disabilities at the earliest stage possible so adjustments, where reasonable, can be made during the application process.
- 13.4 Where applicants have declared a disability, the Admissions Team will invite them to have a discussion with a member of the Student Support Department to discuss disability support queries.
- 13.5 Where a student has complex needs, and may have difficulties satisfying the course requirements, the Student Support Manager will discuss the matter with the prospective student to obtain as much information and evidence on their disability. If there are still concerns after the discussions, the Student Support manager may refer the matter to the Occupational Health Committee to consider in further detail.
- 13.6 In the unlikely event that a student's disability means they cannot fulfil the course requirements, the Student Support Manager will inform the applicant as soon as possible. In the vast majority of cases however, a disability does not prevent a student joining the course. Adjustments are always made to the delivery of the UCO service when reasonable to accommodate students.

⁹ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/courses/course-fees/fee-status>

- 13.7 Further information about the Disability Policy for students can be found at:
<https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>
- 13.8 Please note, successful applicants to all our Courses, will be required to comply with the Student Health Policy before being allowed to enrol.

14 DATA PROTECTION

- 14.1 The provisions of this policy should be read in conjunction with the UCO's Data Protection Policy & Code of Practice, which has been updated in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the new Data Protection Act 2018.
- 14.2 All data including application forms, interview sheets and qualifications are collected in a file for each applicant. These files are stored in lockable filing cabinets for the duration of application process. In October of that academic cycle the files are then moved onto the registry department and stored in a lockable filing system throughout the student's life cycle with their course at the UCO.
- 14.3 Any applicants that defer their application are kept with the admissions team for a further year/ deferred year and will be contacted on the email or contact details provided in their application form. Applicants in this situation are also encouraged to get back in touch with the admissions department during their deferred year if they require any information or advice.
- 14.4 Those applicants that withdraw before the starts of the course or decline our offer are kept for the next academic year in our filing system in case they would like to return. After that year if they do not return their files are securely disposed of to maintain confidentiality and a new application would need to be submitted.

15 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 15.1 Policy is informed by the monitoring and evaluation of all admissions-related processes as follows:
- Annual review of admissions processes, including consultation to review performance and efficiency.
 - Formal annual review of entry profiles and decision-making criteria, including new qualifications, plus ad hoc revisions where necessary.
 - Bi-annual audit of decision making to ensure consistency in offer making.
 - Annual review of application data to inform course development.

16 APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 16.1 The UCO is committed to delivering an admissions service that is fair and transparent and in accordance with the Admissions policy. If applicants are unhappy with a decision made about their application, we encourage them to initially raise the matter informally with a member of the admissions team to obtain feedback
- 16.2 Applicants may request a review of a decision/outcome made on their application with regards to admissions decisions, this is defined as an appeal.

- 16.3 Applicants can appeal admissions decisions by the UCO only if they feel that the UCO did not appropriately consider any aspect of their application in accordance with the admissions policy or any other relevant regulations, for example the tuition fee status regulations.
- 16.4 If an applicant was rejected on the basis of not meeting the academic requirements, they have no right to appeal against the decision made by the Admissions Team.
- 16.5 If an applicant has made false statements about their academic achievements, the UCO reserves the right to revoke any offer made. There will then be no right of appeal.
- 16.6 If an applicant has made a false claim on their criminal records bureau disclosure and is deemed to have a high-risk status the UCO will revoke any offer made and reject the student's application. There will then be no right of appeal.
- 16.7 Appeals need to be made in writing to the Registrar. Any appeal will normally need to be submitted by the applicant themselves and not a third party. In cases where the applicant has requested that a third-party representative should act on their behalf written consent must be provided from the applicant to confirm that this is the case.
- 16.8 The appeal must clearly set out the reasons why an application for review is being submitted with clear reference to the section of the policy/regulations that the applicants believes has not been followed when a decision has been made.
- 16.9 The Registrar will assess appeals against the criteria set out in sections 16.3 to 16.6. Any appeal that meets the criteria set out under section 16.3 will be passed on to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) for a final decision. If an appeal does not meet the criteria, then the Registrar will communicate this outcome to the applicant within ten working days of the appeal being submitted.
- 16.10 Following consideration of any appeal, the Registrar will communicate the decision, which is final to the appellant, usually within 20 working days of an appeal being submitted.

17. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

- 17.1 A complaint is defined as the expression of a specific concern. This policy document concerns a complaint made against service provided by the admissions department, including the operation of all admissions services and the conduct of admissions personnel, or the UCO itself in respect of the admissions process. It does not relate to appeals against an admissions decision, which should be made under the appeal procedure (Section 16).
- 17.2 All admissions personnel adhere to the underpinning core values set out in section 2.3 of this policy.
- 17.3 If, at any time, any of the above principles are breached then it is in the best interest of the UCO to investigate the matter thoroughly and efficiently to ensure that the UCO remains consistently fair to all potential students
- 17.4 The UCO appreciates all types of feedback and understands that some students may not be satisfied with the UCO's admissions process. The Admissions Complaints Procedure ensures that any complaint is fairly dealt with and taken seriously.

17.5 The UCO will keep a secure record of all complaints for audit and review purposes to ensure that each complaint was dealt with in a fair and consistent manner. The complaints procedure is intended to operate proceedings fairly and to investigate and respond to student complaints adapting these proceedings to meet the particulars of a given complaint.

A) PRINCIPLES OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

17.6 The underlying principles of the complaints procedure include:

- a) Complaints should be dealt with seriously and fairly;
- b) Complaints should be investigated promptly. Generally, complaints made more than three months after the incident occurred will not normally be considered;
- c) All complaints will be dealt with on their individual merits. In accordance with the equal opportunities policy, all complainants will be treated equally.
- d) Submission of a complaint will not lead to recrimination or adversely affect academic progression provided it is made in good faith and not maliciously or vexatiously;
- e) Confidentiality will be respected throughout;

17.7 Those who investigate or adjudicate on behalf of a complainant will do so impartially, fairly and under the principles of natural justice;

17.8 In the event of a hearing, complainants will be allowed to be accompanied by a friend or relative.

B) COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

17.9 There are three stages to the complaints procedure, the informal stage, the formal stage and the appeals stage.

C) STAGE ONE – THE INFORMAL STAGE

17.10 Applicants who have a complaint about an administrative function or service are advised to discuss their complaint with the Admissions Tutor or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) informally in the first instance. It is expected that most complaints will be resolved amicably and quickly in this informal manner. Informal complaints should normally be dealt within ten working days and a written record will be kept of the outcome which will be forwarded to the Registrar.

17.11 It is envisaged that this informal procedure will enable most complaints to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant. If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this informal manner, the student may then proceed to the formal stage.

D) STAGE TWO – THE FORMAL STAGE

17.12 A complaint that cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally may then be submitted formally as follows:

17.13 The details of the complaint should be recorded on a complaints form (Appendix 1).

- 17.14 Complainants are urged to submit their complaints as quickly as possible after the incident being complained about, and after no more than, three months. The completed complaints form should be submitted to Registrar.
- 17.15 Once the form has been submitted the following actions will be taken with immediate effect:
- a) The Registrar will decide whether the complaint is appropriate for consideration and provide a written response to the complainant within ten working days of receipt
 - b) Where the complaint warrants further investigation, the Registrar will pass the complaint to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education);
 - c) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will inform any members of staff concerned that a complaint concerning them has been received;
 - d) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) will appoint an investigating officer with no prior involvement in the matter to look into the complaint, seeking relevant documentation from any member of staff or student/applicant at his/her discretion. The investigating officer will then produce a report for consideration by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).
 - e) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) may convene a hearing at which the applicant and any other persons involved may submit their views on the complaint if they deem it necessary. Normally a written decision as to whether the complaint will be upheld will be provided to the complainant within twenty working days of receiving the Stage 2 complaint. In cases where a hearing is deemed necessary, a written decision as to whether the complaint will be upheld will normally be made within twenty-five working days of receiving the complaint;
 - f) The reasons for the decision of the outcome, including action taken as a consequence will normally be given.

E) STAGE THREE – THE APPEAL STAGE

- 17.5 An applicant will be entitled to seek a review of the outcome of stage 2 of the complaints process by the Vice-Chancellor only where:
- a) There is evidence that Stage 2 investigation did not include in its deliberations all relevant issues, and any relevant issues identified as not included at Stage 2 are material to the decision and do not constitute a new basis for complaint;
 - b) There is evidence that the Stage 2 investigation was not carried out in accordance with UCO policies.
 - c) The complainant should submit a statement in writing to the Registrar which should clearly set out the reason(s) why s/he is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two. All details should be provided to the Registrar including all evidence produced during Stage Two procedures. The Registrar will review the case, seeking further information where appropriate and, if necessary, inform the Vice-Chancellor of the complaint.
 - d) The Vice Chancellor may resolve the case with the documentation provided or may wish to conduct a hearing where both the complainant and any persons involved may put their views forward. Where a hearing is deemed necessary, this procedure for this

will broadly follow the format given in the UCO Student Complaint Policy and Procedure¹⁰.

- e) A final decision will normally be communicated to the complainant in writing within twenty working days of submission of a referral to the Registrar. In cases where a hearing is deemed necessary, a written decision as to whether the complaint will be upheld will normally be made within twenty-five working days of receiving the complaint; this decision will be final.

F) COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

- 17.6 Where a complaint is upheld in whole or in part, possible outcomes may include an apology, a clear explanation of the events or context that led to the incident in question, a change in procedures to ensure that the circumstances do not recur, referral of the complaint for consideration under another procedure or a combination of these or other outcomes.

G) GENERAL

- 17.7 Anonymised records of informal complaints will be retained by the Registrar to inform future service improvements and oversight.
- 17.8 Copies of all admissions complaint forms are kept on file in accordance with the UCO record retention schedule at which point they are securely disposed of.
- 17.9 A report on all complaints (not including the names of students or staff) is made annually to the Teaching Quality & Standards Committee and Academic Council.

18. OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

- 18.1 The Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is an independent body set up to review student complaints against Higher Education Providers in England and Wales:

www.oiahe.org.uk

- 18.2 Applicants will have the right to refer their appeal or complaint to the OIA if they remain dissatisfied following the issue of a completion of procedures letter.

19. THE HEALTH & CARE PROFESSIONS COUNCIL (HCPC)

- 19.1 If you are applying for a course approved by the HCPC and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint regarding our admissions process following the issue of a completion of procedures letter, you may refer your concern to the HCPC by following the HCPC's guidance on their website here:

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/education-providers/updates/2018/raising-a-concern-about-a-programme-a-step-by-step-guide/>

¹⁰ <https://www.uco.ac.uk/about-uco/who-we-are/policies-procedures-and-privacy>

APPENDIX 1: ADMISSIONS COMPLAINT FORM

Name:			
Contact Address:			
Telephone Number:			
Course of Study:			
Please explain your complaint fully:			
Please explain how you have attempted to resolve your complaint so far and why you remain dissatisfied:			
Please explain what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint:			
<p>Declaration:</p> <p>I agree that information about my complaint may be gathered from within the UCO by members of staff in the UCO as directed by the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).</p> <p>Experience has demonstrated that in order to investigate complaints properly, and to balance fairness with the rights of the person about whom the complaint is made, disclosure is needed, and accordingly I agree that my name and other necessary information about the complaint may be disclosed in order to investigate it.</p> <p>I also understand and accept that the outcome of formal complaints must be recorded for the purposes of monitoring and analysing complaints generally, and for reporting to Academic Council for monitoring and evaluation in terms of quality assurance and in line with the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code (2018)¹¹.</p>			
Applicant's Signature:		Date:	

¹¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/concerns-complaints-and-appeals>

UCO Administrative Record	
Date Received:	
Acknowledgement Sent:	
Registrar's Signatory:	