

RADA

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure 2020-21

The form for submitting an admissions appeal or complaint is at the end of this document.

General principles

- 1 The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) is committed to fairness and transparency, and we recognise that there will be occasions where an applicant may wish to lodge an appeal or complaint against the admissions process. This policy sets out the procedures by which an applicant may lodge a formal appeal or complaint against a decision regarding admission to one of RADA's direct entry higher education programmes. This procedure does not apply to any other courses offered by RADA, including the MA Text & Performance (for which and admissions appeals or complaints should be made to Birkbeck, University of London).
- 2 Some issues may be able to be resolved via an informal query, and we encourage applicants to explore their issue informally with RADA before deciding to proceed with a formal appeal or complaint. Should you wish to make a formal appeal or complaint, the process outlined here will apply.
- 3 For informal queries about issues concerning an admissions decision, please email the admissions team (admissions@rada.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Discrimination: Declaration of intent

- 4 No applicant will be treated less favourably or with discrimination as a result of lodging an appeal or complaint under these procedures. Nevertheless, where RADA deems that an appeal or complaint has been made in bad faith, or is frivolous or vexatious, we reserve the right to terminate consideration of the appeal or complaint immediately. Applicants will be informed in writing of the decision to terminate consideration of an appeal or complaint, including the reasons why.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 5 Any appeal and/or complaint received under these procedures will be treated confidentially, and only staff required to handle and/or resolve the complaint or appeal will know about it. RADA will process your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and our policies on data protection and data processing. We will only share your data with third parties in accordance with our policy on data protection where the law either requires or allows us to do so, or where we have your express consent.

Definitions

- 6 **Appeals.** An appeal is defined as a request for a formal interview and reconsideration of an admissions decision, or the wording/terms/conditions of an offer. An appeal may relate to the following decisions within the application process:
 - The decision to interview
 - The decision to make an offer
 - The content of the offer
 - The decision to reject on examination results.
- 7 **Complaints.** A complaint is defined as a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policies. This could involve concerns around a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions process.

Outcomes

- 8 It is important that we understand an applicant's desired outcome(s) of a complaint or appeal. We will consider whether those desired outcomes are feasible, reasonable and proper should

an appeal or complaint be successful. Where an appeal or complaint at either Stage One or Stage Two is upheld, the investigating officer will determine the most appropriate outcome. It might not necessarily be the desired outcome of the person making the appeal or complaint.

- 9 Examples of outcomes of successful appeals or complaints:
- A formal apology;
 - A fresh audition, without prejudice, either in the current round (if possible) or in a subsequent year, including moving a candidate to a later stage in the audition process;
 - A conditional offer of a place (subject to meeting any conditions within a specified timeframe before a place can be confirmed);
 - Refund of the application fee (in exceptional circumstances).
- 10 The above list is not exhaustive; investigating officers and reviewers have the discretion to determine the most appropriate outcome(s) following the investigation process.
- 11 Applicants should be aware that where the offer of a place on a programme is made in the event of a successful appeal or complaint, this will be subject to RADA's requirements, offered at the next available opportunity and may not necessarily occur within the year pertaining to the application. There may be occasions where an applicant meets the grounds for an appeal or a complaint to be upheld, but RADA is nevertheless not satisfied that the applicant is suitable for admission to the programme.
- 12 In the event of a complaint or appeal being upheld but where RADA is still not satisfied that an applicant is suitable to be admitted to the programme, other appropriate means of resolution will be sought, which may in exceptional circumstances include refund of the application fee where it is deemed appropriate by RADA to do so. The reasons why the applicant is not considered suitable will be communicated in the Stage 2 Outcome letter.

Timescales

- 13 A Stage One admissions complaint or appeal should be lodged **normally within 28 calendar days of either the admissions decision or of the incident occurring**. Complaints or appeals received outside of this timeframe will not normally be accepted. RADA will only consider these in exceptional circumstances (for example, where an applicant can demonstrate that there are valid reasons why they were unable to meet the normal timescale for submitting an appeal or complaint) and at the discretion of the Registrar.
- A Stage One outcome letter will be sent to the applicant, normally within 28 calendar days of the date of receipt of the Stage One complaint/appeal.
 - A Stage Two Request for Review should be lodged **within 14 calendar days of the date of the Stage One outcome letter**.
 - A Stage Two outcome letter will be sent, normally within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Stage Two complaint/appeal.
- 14 Whilst RADA will endeavour to ensure that these timescales are followed, there may be occasions where the investigation of a complaint or consideration of an appeal mean that we cannot meet this schedule. This might include where we need further information from the applicant. We will keep the applicant up to date about the status of the appeal or complaint.

Eligibility

- 15 An admissions complaint or appeal should normally be made by the applicant. Appeals or complaints made on behalf of the applicant by parents, representatives, school or another third party will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where there are clear and valid reasons for doing so, and where express permission has been granted in writing by the applicant.
- 16 Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the matter with (as appropriate) peers, parents, advisors, teachers or tutors for support and guidance before deciding to lodge an appeal or

complaint.

- 17 Admissions complaints or appeals which are incomplete or submitted beyond the respective deadlines for Stage One or Stage Two will not normally be considered.
- 18 Admissions complaints that are made anonymously under this procedure will not be considered under any circumstances.
- 19 **The following complaints would not be considered eligible for consideration:**
- complaints which do not meet either of the grounds stated in either Stage One or Stage Two of this admissions complaints process (see below);
 - complaints which are frivolous, vexatious or made in bad faith;
 - complaints made against an admissions decision based on the academic judgment of RADA staff about an applicant's suitability for entry to a particular programme of study.
- 20 **Examples of frivolous or vexatious complaints include the following:**
- complaints which are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive;
 - complaints where a complainant insists on pursuing complaints already deemed by the institution to not to have merit;
 - complaints where a complainant seeks, or persists in seeking, unrealistic and/or unreasonable outcomes;
 - pursuing what may be meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner, including unacceptable, harassing, malicious or offensive communications;
 - complaints which are intended to cause offence, disruption or annoyance;
 - unreasonable demands for redress.
- 21 **The following would not be considered eligible grounds of appeal:**
- an appeal made on grounds other than the grounds stated in either Stage One or Stage Two of this process (see below);
 - an appeal made due to failure on the applicant's part to fulfil academic or non-academic requirements for admission;
 - an appeal made purely on the basis of disagreement with the admissions decision;
 - an appeal based on challenges to the judgment of the audition or interview panel in relation to the section criteria for its programmes.

External advice

- 22 Once an admissions appeal or complaint has exhausted Stage Two of the procedure, there are no further internal mechanisms for an admissions appeal or complaint to be considered.
- 23 Applicants are advised that the remit of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the ombudsman for student complaints: this does not apply to Foundation students) does not include admissions. However, should you wish to take your complaint further you are advised to consult your local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice on the legal avenues open to you, or the Competition and Markets Authority.

Created	October 2016
Last approved by RADA Academic Board	October 2018

Admissions appeals and complaints procedure

Informal Stage

- 1 Many issues may be resolved amicably through an informal query, and applicants are welcome to explore their concern informally with RADA before deciding to proceed with a formal appeal or complaint. For informal queries about issues concerning an admissions decision, applicants should contact the Admissions Manager, admissions@rada.ac.uk.

Submitting a Stage One admissions complaint or appeal

Stage One: Formal Stage

- 2 You can **submit a Stage One complaint or appeal** using the **Admissions Appeals/Complaint Form** (attached below) and submitting it within **28 calendar days of your audition/interview or incident** to admissions@rada.ac.uk. It will be directed to the appropriate staff member under the instruction of the Registrar.
- 3 **Stage One Grounds under which a Stage 1 complaint may be made:**
 - a. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process.
 - b. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process.
- 4 **Stage One Grounds under which a Stage 1 appeal may be made:**
 - c. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process.
 - d. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process.
 - e. That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the original application, and which warrants further consideration of the application.
- 5 The Registrar or nominee will consider and investigate the complaint or appeal. The Registrar/nominee will determine the most appropriate individual to carry this out depending on the individual circumstances of the case, and to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. A Stage One outcome letter will be sent, normally within 28 days of the date of receipt of the Stage One complaint/appeal.

Stage Two: Request for review of a decision

- 6 If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the admissions complaint or appeal, they may make a request for review. This request must be lodged **within 14 calendar days of the date of the Stage One outcome letter**, under any of the following grounds:
- 7 **Stage Two Grounds under which a Stage Two appeal or complaint may be made:**
 - a. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the process of the Stage One complaint or appeal
 - b. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the first Stage One complaint or appeal process
 - c. That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the original application, and that sufficient evidence remains that the initial decision on the application warrants reconsideration.
- 8 Applicants can lodge a Stage Two Admissions Complaint or Appeal by submitting the following:
 - a freshly completed **Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form**, clearly marked as 'Stage Two' and any reference number provided on the Stage One Outcome Letter;

- the original Stage One Admissions Appeal/Complaint form;
 - the Stage One Outcome letter.
- 9 Please address a Stage Two Admissions Complaint or Appeal for the attention of the Registrar using the admissions@rada.ac.uk email.
- 10 The Registrar will appoint someone to conduct the Stage Two review. This will be a member of RADA staff who has not previously been involved in the case. If there is no one available from RADA, the Registrar may seek an external person to conduct the review on RADA's behalf. The person appointed to conduct a Stage Two Review will be senior to the person who conducted the original investigation and will be trained to use RADA's procedures.
- 11 A Stage Two Outcome Letter will be sent, normally within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Stage Two appeal or complaint.

RADA Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal admissions complaint or appeal in accordance with RADA's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure. Please ensure that you read the procedure before completing and submitting this form.

Please complete this form either electronically or, if handwriting, please complete in block capitals:

1 Applicant Details	
Surname:	
First name:	
Contact address:	
Contact e-mail(s) address:	
Contact telephone number:	
Date of Birth:	
Course/programme applied to:	
Expected start of programme (e.g. September 2020):	
Reference number (as applicable)	

2 Important information and guidance
<p>You are advised to read through RADA's Admissions Appeal and Complaints Policy and Procedure before making a submission, as it contains important information about how your complaint/appeal will be handled and respective timeframes.</p> <p>These procedures have two stages, and you should clearly indicate on this form which stage you are lodging your admissions complaint or appeal.</p> <p>To make a Stage One admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a completed Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form• any supporting evidence (this should be listed in Section 5 of the form) <p>To make a Stage Two admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a freshly completed Admissions Appeal/Complaint Form• the original Stage One Admissions Appeal/Complaint form, together with any supporting evidence which was submitted for consideration with the Stage One submission• the Stage One Outcome letter• any other new evidence which you wish to have considered as part of your Stage Two admissions appeal/complaint <p>Please complete all the requested information. Please note that incomplete or late submissions will not normally be considered.</p>

Please indicate whether you are lodging a Stage One or Stage Two complaint or an appeal, and the respective grounds, by completing the relevant boxes below:

3 Stage One Complaint			
I am lodging a Stage One Complaint	Tick below if applicable:	On the following grounds:	Please tick all grounds that apply:
		1a. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	
		1b. That there is evidence of unfair treatment in the selections process	

4 Stage One Appeal			
I am lodging a Stage One Complaint	Tick below if applicable:	On the following grounds:	Please tick all grounds that apply:
		1c. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	
		1d. That there is evidence of unfair treatment in the selections process	
		1e. That there is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to be included in the original application, and which warrants further consideration of the application	

5 Stage Two Complaint or Appeal (please note the grounds are the same regardless of whether you have submitted an appeal or a complaint)			Please tick all grounds that apply:
I am lodging a Stage Two Complaint	Tick below if applicable:	2a. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage One complaint or appeal	
		2b. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the first Stage 1 complaint or appeal process	
I am lodging a Stage Two Appeal	Tick below if applicable:	2c. That there is new evidence which the applicant was unable to provide as part of the first Stage One complaint or appeal, and that sufficient evidence remains that the initial decision on the application warrants reconsideration.	

Date Stage One complaint / appeal was lodged:	
Date of Stage One complaint / appeal outcome letter:	
Stage One outcome (Upheld/Not upheld):	

List all documentation enclosed with your submission (there is no minimum or maximum limit)

6 Documentation	
No.	Description
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
Date of incident: ___ / ___ / ___ Date of admissions decision: ___ / ___ / ___	

Statement of complaint / appeal:

Please write a statement describing the issue(s) of complaint/appeal. Your statement should include

- *a concise explanation of how you believe you meet the respective ground(s) under which you are making an appeal or complaint;*
- *any steps that been taken to resolve the matter*
- *details of any responses received from RADA*
- *a statement of why you feel the response(s) is/are unsatisfactory.*

Desired outcome(s):
(Please specify your desired outcomes or resolutions to your complaint/appeal)

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DECLARATION:	I confirm that the above details and any attached documentation is a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information. I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of RADA sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation and to retain a record of that investigation, in accordance with the RADA Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure.
Signature:	
Date of submission:	