

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

Francis James is committed to providing an accessible, fair and transparent admissions process that supports our mission to deliver high-quality education. Staff aim to work efficiently and respectfully, operating under the principles set out in the Admissions Policy.

This procedure exists for those circumstances where an applicant is dissatisfied with the conduct of our selection process or with its outcome. This includes decisions relating to recognition of prior learning (RPL) as part of the admissions process. It sets out the basis on which Francis James will consider complaints about its admissions procedures and clarifies what applicants may do if they wish to request a review of a decision.

2. Definitions

Complaint: A complaint is a specific concern related to a perceived procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions procedures or policy.

Appeal: An appeal is a request for a formal review of an admissions or RPL decision, or the terms/conditions of an offer, to check that it was made fairly on the basis of all the evidence originally submitted.

3. Principles and procedure

- 3.1. No applicant will be disadvantaged in any way because they have exercised their rights under this procedure.
- 3.2. Complaints and appeals are expected to be made by the applicant. Anonymous complaints or appeals will not be dealt with as all investigations should be evidence-based.
- 3.3. Applicants and any individual(s) against whom complaints are made may expect complaints to be dealt with confidentially and their privacy will be respected. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such disclosure.
- 3.4. Formal complaints or appeals should be submitted as soon as an applicant believes there is a concern. This should normally be within 14 days of any specific alleged issue or decision/action as part of the admissions process.
- 3.5. The appeals and complaints procedure cannot be used to consider new information about an application if this should have been made available as part of the original application. New information may be accepted in cases such as where a third party has made an error which affected judgements made about the applicant's suitability or where medical or other mitigating circumstances can be shown to have affected the quality of the original application. Francis James reserves the right to decide whether new evidence can be considered on these grounds.
- 3.6. Francis James will not enter into discussions on matters it regards as those of academic judgement. Admissions staff will make every effort to explain how selection criteria work, and why they are appropriate, but an admissions decision appeal or complaint will not be considered simply because

an applicant disagrees with or wishes to challenge the criteria set.

- 3.7. If a complaint or appeal is upheld, Francis James will take appropriate action or provide an appropriate remedy. If a complaint or appeal is not upheld, the reasons for this will be communicated to the applicant in a timely and accessible manner.

4. Process

- 4.1. Stage 1: Informal Resolution
- Applicants are encouraged to contact Francis James to discuss their concerns informally with the admissions teams. Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage, without escalating to a formal appeal or complaint
- 4.2. Stage 2: Formal Appeal Submission/Complaint Submission
- If unresolved, the applicant must submit a formal Admissions Appeal and Complaints Form (available on the Francis James website) within the published timeframe (usually 14 days from the decision date or identified issue).
 - The submission should include clear grounds for appeal or complaint and all relevant evidence.
- 4.3. Stage 3: Appeal/Complaint Review and Outcome
- A designated panel, composed of staff from Francis James not directly involved in any of the admissions process, will be convened to review the information provided in the form.
 - The panel may request additional information or interviews with relevant parties including the applicant.
 - A decision is normally communicated in writing within 28 working days of receipt of the appeal or complaint.
 - Possible outcomes include:
 - 4.3.1. Appeal or Complaint Upheld (with appropriate remedies set out)
 - 4.3.2. Appeal or Complaint Rejected (with reasons provided).
- 4.4. Stage 4: Request to review
- If the applicant remains dissatisfied, they can request a review of the Panel's decision on limited grounds (eg, new evidence or procedural flaw).
 - A senior official (or other designated reviewer) will re-examine the process.
 - The outcome of this review is final, and a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued, allowing the applicant to escalate the matter externally if desired.

5. External Review

- 5.1. If an applicant exhausts the internal processes and remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the issue to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within 12 months of receiving the Completion of Procedures Letter, which Francis James issues at the conclusion of its processes. The OIA offers an independent review of the complaint or appeal.

6. Monitoring and Oversight

- 6.1. Francis James will maintain records of all appeals and complaints, as part of admissions process record-keeping, to identify any areas for improvement and ensure policy effectiveness.
- 6.2. Monitoring and review of admissions appeals and complaints will be undertaken periodically (at least annually) by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

7. Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually by Francis James to ensure:

- Fairness and accuracy
- Consistency with broader institutional regulations and policies

Written By	Revision Date	Revision Number	Approved By	Review Date
H Barratt	28/09/2025	1	 S Graham	28/09/2026