RADA

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure (for entry 2027)

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Introduction

1. In this document, “you” or “your” means the applicant; “we”, “us” and “ours” means the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA).

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

General principles

1 RADA is committed to providing the best possible experience for applicants throughout the admissions cycle. However, we recognise there may be occasions when you feel that the quality of your experience of the admissions process falls short of what might be reasonably expected. This Policy and Procedure facilitates your being able to take forward an appeal or complaint against a decision regarding admission to one of our Higher Education programmes. This Policy and Procedure does not apply to any other courses offered by us, including short courses or RADA Business courses

2 Some issues may be able to be resolved via an informal query, and we encourage applicants to explore their issue informally with us 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 we deem 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 or complaint received under these procedures will be treated confidentially, and only staff required to investigate the complaint or appeal will know about it. We will process your personal information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and our Privacy Notice. We will only share your data with thirdparties in accordance with our policy on data protection where the law either requires or allowsus to do so, or where we have your express consent. Our policy on data protection (RADA Privacy Notice) can be found here https://www.rada.ac.uk/privacy/

Definitions

6 **Appeals.** An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review 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 of maladministration in the Admissions Policy or 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 1 or Stage 2 is upheld, the investigating officer will determine the most appropriate outcome; this might not necessarily be the desired outcome of the person making the appeal or complaint.

9 After carrying out the review, and taking all relevant facts into consideration, the investigating officer/reviewer will determine whether to uphold the complaint or appeal. They will provide the applicant with a reasoned decision in writing for their findings and where appropriate will offer a remedy or make recommendations in respect of changes to internal processes and procedures in response to your complaint. Examples of outcomes of successful appeals or complaints are:

- A formal apology;
- A fresh audition interview or workshop, without prejudice, either in the current cycle (if possible) or in a subsequent year, including moving a candidate to a later stage in the 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 our 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 we are 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 we are 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 us 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 1 admissions complaint or appeal should be lodged **normally within 28 calendar days from the communication of the admissions decision/outcome or the incident occurring**. Complaints or appeals received outside of this timeframe will not normally be accepted. We 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 Deputy Registrar (Admissions and Student Services).

- A Stage 1 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 2 Request for Review should be lodged **within 14 calendar days of the date of the Stage 1 outcome letter**.
- A Stage 2 outcome letter will be sent, normally within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Stage 2 complaint/appeal.

14 While we 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 1 or Stage 2 will not normally be considered.

18 Admissions complaints or appeals that are made anonymously under this procedure will not be considered under any circumstances.

The following complaints would not be considered eligible for consideration:

- complaints which do not meet either of the grounds stated in either Stage 1 or Stage 2 of this admissions complaints process (see below);
- complaints which are frivolous, vexatious or made in bad faith;
- complaints against an advertised audition/interview process
- 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.

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 us 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.

19 **The following would not be considered eligible grounds of appeal:**

- grounds other than those stated in either Stage 1 or Stage 2 of this process (see below);
- 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;
- challenges to the judgment of the audition or interview panel in relation to the selection criteria for its programmes
- an appeal made in relation to an application received after the published deadline
- retrospective reporting of mitigating circumstances that might have been reasonably made known at the time of application
- reasons arising from the applicant's failure to follow the process, eg incomplete/insufficient application information provided, non-attendance at audition or interview with no adequate explanation

External advice

20 Once an admissions appeal or complaint has exhausted Stage 2 of the procedure, there are no further internal mechanisms for an admissions appeal or complaint to be considered.

21 Applicants should note that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), the independent body that reviews student complaints in higher education, does not normally consider complaints relating to admissions decisions. If you remain dissatisfied following the completion of RADA's admissions complaints procedure, you may wish to seek independent advice regarding any other options that may be available to you, for example through Citizens Advice or the Competition and Markets Authority.

Admissions appeals and complaints procedure

Informal Stage

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

Stage 1: Formal Stage

2 You can submit a Stage 1 complaint or appeal using the Admissions Appeals/Complaint Form (Appendix 1) and submitting it within 28 calendar days of your audition/interview or incident to admissions@rada.ac.uk for the attention of the Assistant Registrar .

3 Grounds for Complaint

a.	There is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process
b.	There is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process.

4 Grounds for Appeal

a.	There is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error/inconsistency in the admissionsprocess such that there is reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome might have been different had the error/inconsistency not occurred.
b.	There is evidence of prejudice or bias in the selections process.
c.	There is additional relevant information which was for valid reasons unable to beincluded in the original application, and which warrants further consideration of the application.
d.	There is evidence that admissions criteria were not applied correctly or fairly, and/or new evidence not known to the Academy at the time the admissions decision was made. In such cases, you must provide details of why the information was not made available at the time of application. If this information was available or known to you at the time of application but not included for any reason, this may not be considered.

5 The Assistant Registrar , or nominee, will consider and investigate the complaint or appeal. They 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.

6 A Stage1 outcome letter will be sent, normally within 28 days of the date of receipt of the Stage 1 complaint/appeal.

Stage Two: Request for review of a decision

7 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 1 outcome letter**, under any of the following grounds:

8 **Grounds under which a Stage 2 complaint or appeal may be made:**

a. That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the process of the Stage 1 complaint or appeal
b. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the first Stage 1 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.

9 Applicants can lodge a Stage 2 complaint or appeal by submitting the following:

- a freshly completed **Admissions Complaint/Appeal Form**, clearly marked as 'Stage 2' and including any reference number provided on the Stage 1 Outcome Letter;
- the original Stage 1 Admissions Complaint/Appeal form;
- the Stage 1 Outcome letter.

10 Please address a Stage 2 Admissions Complaint or Appeal for the attention of the Registrar using the admissions@rada.ac.uk email.

11 The Registrar may appoint someone to conduct the Stage 2 review. This will be a member of 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 our behalf. The person appointed to conduct a Stage 2 Review will be senior to the person who conducted the original investigation and will be trained to use our procedures.

12 A Stage 2 Outcome Letter will be sent, normally within 21 calendar days of receipt of the Stage 2 appeal or complaint.

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Review Date	July 2027

RADA Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal admissions appeal or complaint 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 appliedto	
Expected start of programme (e.g. September 2024)	
Reference number (asapplicable)	

2 Important information and guidance

You are advised to read through RADA's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure and Procedure before making a submission, as it contains important information about how your complaint/appeal will be handled and respective timeframes.

These procedures have two stages, and you should clearly indicate on this form which stage you are lodging your admissions appeal or complaint.

To make a Stage 1 admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:

- a completed Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form
- any supporting evidence (this should be listed in Section 5 of the form)

To make a Stage Two admissions appeal or complaint, you must submit:

- a freshly completed Admissions Appeals and Complaints Form
- any other new evidence which you wish to have considered as part of your Stage 2 Admissions appeal/complaint

Please complete all the requested information. Please note that incomplete or late submissions will not normally be considered.

Please indicate whether you are lodging a Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeal or complaint, and the respective grounds, by completing the relevant boxes below:

☐ I am lodging a Stage 1 Appeal – please go to 3A

☐ I am lodging a Stage 1 Complaint – please go to 3B

☐ I am lodging a Stage 2 Appeal or Complaint – please go to 4

3A Stage 1 Appeal	
On the following grounds:	**Please tick all that apply:**
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	
That there is evidence of unfair treatment in the selections process	
That there is additional relevant information which was, for valid reasons, unable to be included in the original application and which warrants further consideration	

3B Stage 1 Complaint	
On the following grounds:	**Please tick all that apply:**
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the admissions process	
That there is evidence of unfair treatment in the selection process	

4 Stage 2 Complaint or Appeal The grounds are the same regardless of whether you have submitted an appeal or a complaint	**Please tick all that apply:**
That there is evidence of significant administrative or procedural error in the processing of the Stage 1 appeal or complaint	
That there is evidence of prejudice or bias in the handling of the first Stage 1 appeal or complaint process	
That there is new evidence which the applicant was unable to provide as part of the first Stage 1 appeal or complaint, and that sufficient evidence remains that the initial decision on the application warrants reconsideration.	

Date Stage 1 appeal or complaint was lodged:	
Date of Stage 1 appeal or complaint outcome letter:	
Stage 1 outcome (Upheld/Not upheld):	

Please list all documentation enclosed with your submission

(there is no minimum or maximum limit)

5 Documentation			
	Description		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
Date of incident:		**Date of admissions decision:**	

Statement of complaint / appeal:

Please use this space to 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 youare 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 appeal or complaint**

DECLARATION:	I confirm that the above details and any attached documentation is atrue 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 Policy and Procedure.
Signature:	
Date of submission:	