

SWW DTP2 Complaints Procedure 2020-2021

General principles

Applicants have no right of appeal against a decision by SWW DTP2 not to offer a studentship. Because of the intensity of competition for places, there will inevitably be occasions when an applicant disagrees with a selection decision. Providing that the decision can be shown to have been reached fairly and in accordance with published selection criteria, the original decision will not be overturned. However, should an applicant believe that SWW DTP2 principles and procedures for the award of studentships have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied, the procedures below provide a mechanism for an objective review.

Applicants who believe they have encountered a problem with the assessment process should raise the matter informally in the first instance with the administrative staff who have been dealing with their application, and do so as soon as they become aware of the possible problem. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved in this way, applicants may invoke the formal process outlined in this document.

The SWW DTP2 will not consider feedback requests and complaints submitted by third parties without the explicit consent of the applicant. The SWW DTP2 does not process anonymous complaints under this procedure.

Applicant complaints and feedback requests may be shared with relevant SWW DTP2 administrative staff for the purpose of these procedures.

Applicants requesting feedback, or submitting a complaint, will not be discriminated against at any stage of the assessment process. Awarding bodies will not be informed if a complaint has been lodged. Each case will be dealt with fairly and consistently. Most complaints are resolved satisfactorily on an informal basis. Complaints that cannot be resolved informally may be escalated through the formal complaints procedure.

Complaints should be raised as soon as problems arise to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution. Applicants may raise a complaint within 90 days of becoming aware of an issue, unless there is good reason for the delay, in which case this reason should be outlined when a complaint is made.

The SWW DTP2 endeavours to acknowledge complaints within five days of receipt, and to respond fully within 14 days (for each stage, informal and formal, as necessary). If the SWW DTP2 is unable to respond fully within this period, it will inform the complainant of an alternative timescale.

An annual review of formal complaints is undertaken by the SWW DTP2 Director, to ensure that necessary corrective actions, recommendations, and process changes are put in place.

Stage one: informal complaint

In the first instance, applicants with a complaint should raise it informally with the SWW DTP2 administrative team. Informal complaints can be made face-to-face by visiting the SWW DTP2 Office, by phone, by post, or via email. The “Contacts” tab on the SWW DTP website has up-to-date information on numbers and addresses. Please note that some avenues (e.g. face-to-face and telephone contact) may be temporarily unavailable following Covid-19-related advice.

SWW DTP2 administrative staff will gather the information required for assessing the complaint. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, applicants may follow the formal complaints procedure below.

Stage two: formal complaint

If a complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved via the informal process, applicants may submit a formal complaint.

Formal complaints must be submitted to the SWW DTP2 Manager within 14 days of receipt of the response to an informal complaint (see stage 1). Formal complaints should be emailed to swwdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk marked for the attention of the SWW DTP2 Manager. The SWW DTP2 Manager will review formal complaints and the resulting decision will be considered final.

Further information

Requests for clarification of these procedures should be sent to the SWW DTP2 Administrative Team (swwdtp-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk).