

Revised: June 2019

Review date: June 2020

Requests for information to the Office for Students: appeals against decisions

How do I appeal?

Once you have received our response to your request for information, should you wish to appeal you must do this within two calendar months.

You should write to us, explaining why you are not satisfied with our response. For example, we may have refused to give you some or all the information requested; you may think we are taking too long to supply the information (more than 20 working days under FOI or Environmental Information Regulations); or you may feel that you have been wrongly charged a fee.

The appeal must be in writing; you can send it by post, fax or email. The address is:

FOI appeals

Office for Students

Nicholson House

Lime Kiln Close

Stoke Gifford

BS34 8SR

Email: foi@officeforstudents.org.uk

There are two possible stages to the process: first an internal review by OfS officers; then, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, an appeal to an external body.

Stage one: internal review

We will set up an internal review panel, led by an OfS Director, and two OfS staff members, one of whom will be a member of the Legal team where possible. None of the panel members will have been involved in the original decision. The director on the panel has the authority to make the final decision on the review, taking into consideration advice from the other two panel members.

The panel members will determine which legislation applies; and will consider all the details of the original request and decision, and the grounds given for appealing against it. In doing so they may talk to the staff who dealt with the original request, obtain advice from other sources, including legal advice, or contact you directly for further details or clarification.

We aim to deal with simple issues within two to three weeks and more complex issues within six weeks. Specifically, we may need more time if we need to reconsider whether granting the request is not in the public interest.

If we are unable to respond within these timescales, we will write to you explaining why there is a delay and advising when we expect to be able to respond.

Outcomes of the internal review

The internal review panel will discuss its conclusions with OfS' FOI Officer, so that we can learn any lessons from the process. We will keep full records of the review and its outcome.

We will inform you of the outcome; and take the agreed action. There are three possible outcomes:

- the original decision is reversed. We will advise you of the result, and what we will do and when; for example, when we will supply the information
- the original decision is amended. Again, we will inform you about what we plan to do and when
- the original decision is upheld. In that case, we will give you details of a possible second stage - an appeal to the relevant external body.

Stage two: appeal to an external body

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) oversees the work we do in connection with information rights legislation. Complaints that cannot be resolved by a public sector body's internal complaints procedure may be taken to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Before you can appeal to the ICO, you must have been through the first stage of internal review by OfS. Appeals should be in writing, setting out why you are not satisfied with our response and the outcome of the internal review. For more details of the processes see the website given below.

Contact details

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

WILMSLOW

SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545700

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>