



Complaints about an academy independent admission appeal panel

This factsheet sets out the types of complaints parents / legal guardians can raise with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) about academy independent admission appeal panels ('panels'). All references to 'academies' also cover: free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools. Complaints about panels for local authority maintained schools should be referred to the [Local Government Ombudsman](#).

Complaints ESFA can investigate

We can only investigate complaints about panels that did not follow the procedures set out in the [School Admission Appeals Code 2012](#). Examples include:

- the panel did not take relevant information into account in reaching its decision, or it took irrelevant information into account
- the admission appeal decision letter you received following the panel hearing did not give clear reasons for the decision
- you were not given an opportunity to state your case without unreasonable interruption
- the panel was not set up or run in accordance with the Appeals Code

Where we find that something went wrong which could have affected the panel's decision, we will recommend that the academy reviews its appeal procedures and ask the academy to hold a fresh appeal with a different panel.

Complaints beyond ESFA's scope

We cannot consider an appeal complaint if it was held more than 6 months ago, unless there is a good reason for the complaint being delayed.

We cannot overturn the panel's decision. A panel is independent and decisions can only be challenged in court through a judicial review, for which independent legal advice should be sought.

Arranging panels is not within our remit - you should contact the academy directly to request an admission appeal.

Making a complaint

Details of how to make a complaint to ESFA are available in the [admission appeals](#) guidance.