

SPI Admissions Policy and Procedure



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ST PADARN'S INSTITUTE

Document Control Table

Document Title:	SPI Admissions Policy and Procedure
Author(s) (name, job title and organisation):	Gareth Longden, Registrar
Version Number:	Version 2.2
Document Status:	Approved
Date Approved:	19 November 2025
Approved By:	St Padarn's Academic Board
Effective Date:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	June 2028
Superseded Version:	Version 2.1
Related Documents:	<p>This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies, and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• B.Th. and M.A. Handbooks• St Padarn's Learning Support Policy• St Padarn's Auditing Policy• St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy• St Padarn's Code of Conduct• St Padarn's Learner's Contract• Church in Wales' Data Protection Policy• Academic Quality Handbook – University of Wales, Trinity Saint David• Core Regulations Documents: Durham University

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Visa and Immigration documentation • The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (June 2024) 	
Document History:			
Version	Date	Author	Notes on Revisions
1	01 August 2021	Gareth Longden, Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft
1.1	24 February 2021	Gareth Longden, Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended to include applicants to Durham University validated programmes
2	13 June 2022	Gareth Longden, Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised according to schedule
2.1	21 August 2023	Gareth Longden, Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision to IELTS scores for Durham University validated programmes • Updates to information about Durham University APL procedures. • Clarifications about how the APL application operates for MA students. • Separation of sections relating to undergraduate and postgraduate prior learning applications. This is to provide greater clarity for students.
2.2	15 July 2025	Gareth Longden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting changes • Removal of references to 2018 version of Quality Code. • Removal of references to PGR admissions processes.

SPI Admissions Policy and Procedure

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2. Introduction

This policy applies to admissions to university-validated St Padarn's Institute programmes.

St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that the admissions process is easily accessible, fair, transparent, and consistent and provides each learner with a good quality application experience. For the purposes of admission to St Padarn's, as well as assessing the applicant's academic ability and their potential to study and achieve the intended award, the Institute also assesses the following:

- The applicant's eligibility to live and study in the UK for the duration of the course.
- The applicant's fee status, including their eligibility for Learner Finance, bursaries, grants, and other funding.

3. Key Principles

The Institute's recruitment, selection, and admissions are informed by its Vision Statement: **To serve God's transforming mission of love for Wales by being a community focused on mission-orientated formation and training for the whole people of God.**

This document specifies the principles and processes used for considering applications to study at St Padarn's Institute, linking them with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that all our information for those who enquire and for applicants is clear and provides relevant information for making informed decisions on courses. The Institute endeavours to ensure that all information available to applicants on its website www.stpadarns.ac.uk is up to date. However, as printed materials may have been published well in advance of the start of any programme, the Institute reserves the right to make variations to the published contents, methods of delivery or specific entry requirements of courses if such action

is reasonable and considered to be necessary. Enquirers, applicants, and their families are encouraged to visit the campus in Cardiff.

4. Responsibilities for Applications Process

4.1 Each application is considered individually, based on information submitted on the application form and supporting documentation required by St Padarn's.

4.2 St Padarn's will assess and process all applications only on the information provided.

4.3 Recruitment, selection, and admissions processes are managed by the Director of Operations, who will be trained in all aspects of this policy and admissions procedures. Enquiries are initially handled by the Registry.

4.3.1 All St Padarn's staff involved in the admissions process follow the criteria and procedures for selection consistently and professionally. However, academic discretion in considering all other available information underpins the selection process to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account and that it is fair across a range of experiences and expertise.

4.3.2 Applicants for university accredited study will be enrolled on the appropriate university course and will be subject to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the accrediting university.

5. Admissions Process

5.1 Applications for study should be made via the online application portal.

5.2 Once a complete application is received by the St Padarn's Registry the application will be processed as follows:

5.2.1 The Registry normally aims to complete initial processing of all applications within **5 working days** during which time references may be requested.

5.2.2 Applicants will, if needed, be interviewed either in person or by telephone / video by a member of the academic staff.

5.2.3 All applications for admission to undergraduate programmes are

considered by the Undergraduate Admissions Group.

5.2.4 All applications for admission to postgraduate programmes are considered by the Postgraduate Admissions Group.

5.2.5 Decisions on admission will be made by the appropriate Admissions Group.

5.2.6 Successful applicants will receive a letter of offer (explicitly stating any conditions) normally within **5 working days** of the appropriate Admissions Group meeting.

5.2.7 Unsuccessful applicants will receive a rejection letter (with explanation and advice) normally within **5 working days** of the appropriate Admissions Group meeting. All unsuccessful applicants will be informed of their right to complain and appeal against an application decision or the conduct of the process.

5.2.8 Applicants must confirm their acceptance of a place on a course within **15 working days** of receipt of the letter of offer.

5.2.9 When completing the application form, at interview stage (where used for example for postgraduate courses), and when a letter of offer is sent, learners will be informed of their right to complain and appeal about an admissions decision, and about the process for doing this.

6. Admission of Candidates Preparing for Recognised Ministry

6.1 Candidates preparing for recognised ministry are admitted to St Padarn's for training for that ministry on the sponsorship of their Bishop (or equivalent Church authority), who will sign a sponsorship form to indicate this. Normally this will be on the advice of the Provincial/Regional Discernment Board after the candidate has attended a provincial or regional discernment residential event.

7. General Selection Criteria (All Programmes)

Entry routes for all programmes of study will include the widest possible range of criteria to enable each applicant's capabilities to be fully assessed. The following factors, in no particular order may, depending on the programme applied for, be

used when deciding whether to make an offer for a particular programme:

- Applicant's past performance in public examinations
- Objective assessment of any factors that affected past performance
- Objective assessment of work and/or life experience or skill-based knowledge
- Academic potential including previous theological study
- Applicant's potential to meet specific and general entry requirements
- Ability of applicant to benefit from the proposed programme of study
- Ability of the candidate to complete the learning outcomes of the proposed programme
- Applicant's understanding of the programme applied for
- Understanding of, and acceptance of, the aims and ethos of St Padarn's
- The observations of the candidate's references as to their suitability for the programme of study (including suitability for placements)
- Appropriateness of application according to eligibility criteria
- Satisfactory references where required
- Ability to meet fees. Invoices for fees, and accommodation where applicable, are issued termly. A learner must be able to meet those fees either by settling the invoice in full or arranging a payment plan for the invoices to be settled by the end of each academic year. A student must not have outstanding fees for another St Padarn's programme.

7.1 In order for St Padarn's to be assured that the admissions criteria have been satisfied, assessment will be made by means of information contained on the application form, transcripts and qualifications certificates, personal interview (in the case of applications for postgraduate taught programmes in person or by telephone / video), and references supplied.

7.2 St Padarn's will seek to provide access to higher education to the broadest range of participants within its policy of widening access and participation and equal opportunity.

7.3 This means that all applicants will be considered solely on the basis of their

merits, abilities, and potential to succeed in their chosen course. This will be done within the framework set by the Institute's policies and procedures including those regarding suitability for practice and applicants declaring a criminal conviction.

7.4 The Admissions Groups have the right to consider for discretionary admission applicants whose lack of academic qualification is compensated by experience.

7.5 All places are offered in accordance with this policy.

7.6 Any significant changes to a programme made between the time of offer and completion of registration will be notified to applicants and the options available will be advised at the earliest opportunity.

7.7 Language Requirements: General

7.7.1 St Padarn's welcomes applications in Welsh and English.

7.8 Language Requirements: Programme Specific

7.8.1 For our **Undergraduate** programmes, an **IELTS score of 6.0**, with a **minimum of 6.0** in all categories is required where applicant's home country is not listed by the UK Government as a majority English-speaking country.

7.8.2 For our **Masters** programmes, an **IELTS score of 7.0**, with a **minimum of 6.5** in all categories is required where the applicant's home country is not listed by the UK Government as a majority English-speaking country.

7.9 St Padarn's is not currently a sponsoring establishment for Tier 4 Visa applicants.

8. Criteria for Admission (Specific Programmes)

In addition to the general selection criteria of the previous section, the St Padarn's Academic Board will determine specific criteria for each programme. These specific criteria are publicly available on the St Padarn's website.

8.1 Applicants with qualifications from other educational contexts outside Europe will be considered on a case-by-case basis, using transcripts and where necessary samples of work. Samples of work and transcripts will be assessed by St Padarn's academic staff who will draw on their experience of teaching other learners from

similar contexts, and their own international teaching experience to assess the suitability of the learner to undertake the programme.

8.2 In some cases, where applicants do not meet the academic requirements due to exceptional circumstances, a written piece of work may be set to assess their academic suitability for the course for which they have applied. St Padarn's may deem it necessary for the applicant to undertake further work to reach the required standard before beginning any programme of study.

9. Admissions with Prior Learning – General Information

St Padarn's accepts applications based on Prior Certificated Learning and Prior Experiential Learning and this is a standard and important feature of its admissions process. All staff with responsibilities for recruitment and admissions will keep up to date with developments internationally and nationally.

A student friendly guide to the applications for Prior Learning is provided as part of the application pack provided to potential students.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- Certificated Learning is understood to be learning which has been recognised previously by an education provider and evidenced by formal certification.
- Experiential Learning is understood to be learning which has been achieved through experiences outside the formal education and training systems. It is often learning that is associated with a working environment. It is different from formal learning as it is often unstructured and can be more personal and individualised. Learning must be at an equivalent level to that on the modules offered on our programmes and you must be able to evidence the learning. This is typically done by means of a portfolio of evidence.

Principles which underpin all applications for Prior Learning.

Credit

Credit is the common currency of higher education programmes and is what you need to achieve a degree or other award. Each module within a programme has a credit value and these credits are accumulated towards the full award. For example, an undergraduate certificate requires 120 credits at level 4, while an honours degree requires 120 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 (360 in total). Credit is only awarded for whole modules, not parts of modules.

Relevant

The prior learning has to be relevant to the programme of study to which you are applying. The Prior Learning process is intended to stop learners having to repeat learning that they have already achieved. For example, if you have already studied an introduction to Christian Doctrine at another institution then it may well be the case that you have already achieved the learning that you would if you were to study the same subject at St Padarn's. In this situation you would likely receive credit for the prior learning, and you would not have to study the module again with us. However, if your previous learning was not so closely linked to a module on our programme then we would not recommend the award of prior learning credit. For example, if you had previously studied the subject of Early Christian Music at another institution then, as that subject is not included in any of our programmes, we would not be able to recommend the award of prior learning credit.

Recent

Normally, if a qualification or credit is more than 5 years old, it is considered out of date and may not be used towards a qualification with St Padarn's.

N.B. The universities which validate our programmes employ different terminology to describe the process by which prior learning may contribute to their awards. The validating university for our **undergraduate** programmes uses the terms Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). The validating university of our **postgraduate** programmes uses the terms Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

9.1 The Recognition / Accreditation of Prior Learning requires a careful assessment of what has been learnt and may involve preparation by the applicants in order for them to demonstrate the learning they feel they have already achieved. This will always involve the presentation of supporting evidence.

9.2. Requests for Recognition / Accreditation of prior learning are normally dealt with at application stage.

10. Prior Learning Applications to Undergraduate Programmes

10.1 The consideration of prior learning applications for **undergraduate** programmes is undertaken by the validating university using their own prior

learning policies and processes. St Padarn's staff will provide advice and support about the application process.

Applicants need to declare at the time that they make their initial application to study at St Padarn's that they wish for their prior learning to be considered. It is not normally possible for prior learning applications to be considered after a learner has begun their programme of study.

10.2 Applicants should be aware that for **undergraduate** programmes an application for **Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning** application may require the payment of a fee to the validating university. Applicants should be aware that this may represent a substantial amount; applicants will be advised of the cost prior to the initiation of work required for an RPEL application.

10.3 Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning only: St Padarn's **does not** support applications for more than 40 credits of Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning to the undergraduate programmes validated by the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David.

11. Prior Learning Applications to Postgraduate Programmes

11.1 The assessment of prior learning applications for **postgraduate** programmes is undertaken by St Padarn's using the validating university's policies and procedures; decisions are subject to review and, if necessary, revision by the validating university.

For applications to **postgraduate** programmes that are validated by **Durham University** further detailed information on the relevant policies and procedures can be found at <https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/admissions/>.

- Applications can be made for all postgraduate taught programmes offered by St Padarn's i.e., Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, and MA.
- All applications for APL for postgraduate taught programmes should be submitted prior to the commencement of study.
- All applications for APL for postgraduate taught programmes must be supported by evidence which demonstrates when and where the prior learning took place, and what form the learning took.
- All applications for APL for postgraduate taught programmes must be supported by a mapping exercise which lists the relevant Programme Learning Outcomes or

Module Learning Outcomes, and which identifies which ones the applicant is claiming to have met in their prior learning, and what evidence is being submitted to back up that claim.

- All applications for APL for postgraduate taught study will be considered by the Postgraduate Admissions Group, and learners will be informed about the outcome of their APL application prior to the commencement of their study.
- For information about the APL application process learners should contact, in the first instance, the Programme Leader for their course of study. The Programme Leader will provide the applicant with information about the relevance and currency of their prior learning, the evidence that will be needed to support the claim, the mapping process, and the mapping exercise.

11.2 The **criteria** by which APL applications are considered are as follows:

- Prior learning must be considered to be current. Current is defined by St Padarn's as there being no more than five years between the time at which the prior learning took place and the time at which an APL application is submitted.
- For APCL, we normally measure currency from the point at which the relevant certificate was awarded, or a transcript issued.
- For APEL, we measure from the point at which either the original learning took place, or the events or practices in which the applicant has demonstrated that she or he has kept that learning alive.
- Prior learning must be considered to be relevant.

11.3 An APL application will involve the learner demonstrating either:

- that he or she has already met all, or nearly all, of the Module Learning Outcomes for each of the modules from which he or she wishes to be exempted; or
- that he or she has already met all, or nearly all, of those Programme Learning Outcomes, of the appropriate award, that would have been covered by the modules from which he or she wishes to be exempted.

11.4 There is no fee associated with the consideration of an APL application.

11.5 The maximum quantity of APL credit that St Padarn's allows is normally one-third of the whole programme.

- For the **Postgraduate Certificate**, the maximum limit is normally **20 credits** of APL (APEL and APCL combined).
- For the **Postgraduate Diploma**, the maximum limit is normally **40 credits** of APL (APEL and APCL combined).
- For the **MA**, the maximum limit is normally **60 credits** of APL (APEL and APCL combined).

12. Mature Applicants

Anyone who is 21 at the start of their undergraduate course is eligible for consideration as a mature learner. St Padarn's recognises that typically such applicants are highly motivated. Many may apply who do not have appropriate qualifications from within the formal education system; their applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

13. Deferred Entry

Deferred entry is granted at the discretion of the Programme Leader. Applicants should indicate that they wish to defer entry on their application form. Applications for deferred entry will be considered equally up until the point of confirmation. Normally, deferred entry is granted for one year only.

14. International Learners

All applicants will need to demonstrate their right to study in the UK before an offer of a place on a course will be made. St Padarn's is not currently an institution which can sponsor learners who require a Tier 4 Visa and therefore cannot at present accept such applicants.

15. Age on Entry

For undergraduate learners, the expected age of entry to St Padarn's is 18 years or

over at the point of enrolment.

16. Applicants with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs

The Institute operates a Policy to ensure equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities including those with additional learning needs. Applications from learners with disabilities and additional learning needs are welcomed by St Padarn's.

16.1 The Institute seeks to ensure that those responsible for the recruitment of learners do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly against people with disabilities.

16.2 Registry staff will ensure that any necessary arrangements are made to enable an applicant with a disability to complete the application form and submit relevant documentation and attend a formal interview if that is required.

16.3 Support for learners with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs is set out in the **St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy** and the **St Padarn's Learning Support Policy**.

17. Outcome of Application Process

17.1 Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for the course they wish to take will be informed of other more appropriate courses offered by St Padarn's at the same time as being notified of the decision on their initial choice. All applicants will be informed of their right to complain and appeal against an application decision or the conduct of the process.

17.2 Applicants who have met the entry requirement of St Padarn's will receive an offer of a place subject to available places remaining on a course. The number of places available on a given course will be determined annually by the Academic Board. Any offer of a place made will include details on how to respond to the offer and further information on subsequent steps. St Padarn's will inform its applicants of any significant changes made to a programme, and in cases where such changes no longer meet an applicant's needs, will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative internally or help secure a comparable course at an alternative institution.

17.3 Learners will be registered with St Padarn's for their programme of study and also with the relevant validating university.

17.4 The following, additional information will be made available to learners before they commence their programme of study:

- Academic and other support services available
- Relevant programme handbook and programme regulations
- St Padarn's Institute Policies and Procedures
- Accommodation details (if appropriate)
- Induction information
- Moodle login details
- St Padarn's email details

18. Changes to Programmes

St Padarn's reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of programmes if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary.

19. Discontinuation of Programmes

19.1 St Padarn's reserves the right to discontinue or merge programmes both before and after a learner's admission. Circumstances where a programme may be discontinued include, but are not limited to, lack of demand, departure of key personnel, withdrawal, or reduction in funding and/or change of law.

19.2 If a programme is discontinued St Padarn's will contact applicants as soon as the decision is made to explain the decision and offer advice about the applicant's best course of action. This may include offering a suitable alternative internally or helping to secure a comparable course at an alternative institution.

20. Document Verification

20.1 All learners will be required to present original academic and personal documentation (or certified copies) at enrolment prior to the start of the programme of study.

20.2 Documentation is verified by Registry staff. If any information relevant to the application is found to be fraudulent, inconsistent with the application or missing, the application will be deemed void, and the offer of a place will be cancelled.

20.3 Learners should identify referees to support their application. If St Padarn's has any reason to believe that the learner or their referee have:

- Left out any information (including qualifications the learner has completed, any qualifications with an unsuccessful grade; or any qualifications for which results are still pending)
- Given false or misleading information
- Supplied a personal statement, or parts of a personal statement, that has not been written by the learner

St Padarn's reserves the right to take any necessary steps to check with the learner and third parties whether documentation is accurate or complete.

20.4 St Padarn's reserves the right to cancel an application if the Institute, having carried out suitable checks, believes that any of the issues raised under 20.3 are deemed to have taken place.

21. Prior Extenuating Circumstances

21.1 It is the applicant's responsibility to inform St Padarn's of any extenuating circumstances that may lead, or have led to, past academic performance that is not truly indicative of their true potential.

21.2 St Padarn's reserves the right to request further information from a third party when an applicant requests extenuating circumstances for past qualifications. If deemed necessary, and with the applicant's permission, the applicant's academic institution, examination body, doctor or other appropriate third party may be contacted.

22. Equality of Opportunity

The Institute recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all potential learners during the enquiry, and to follow a fair, transparent, and professional recruitment, and selection process.

22.1 St Padarn's will make every effort to ensure that applicants are treated solely on the basis of their merit, abilities, and potential. St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that unlawful direct or indirect discrimination does not take place. We are also committed to avoiding discrimination on grounds of socio-economic background. We believe that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience at St Padarn's (see **St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy**).

22.2 St Padarn's will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly by showing appropriate sensitivity to individual differences. It will also ensure that decisions about recruitment, selection and admission at all levels are based solely on objective academic and non-academic criteria that have been made available to applicants prior to application.

22.3 The Institute will ensure that staff involved with admissions are aware of the moral, regulatory, and legal issues affecting equal treatment of potential learners and applicants.

22.4 The Institute will ensure that policies and procedures related to admissions and enrolment are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to support its mission and strategic objectives and that they remain current and valid in the light of legislation and regulatory requirements. The Institute will also ensure that staff involved with recruitment and admissions, are competent to undertake their role and kept up to date with legislation and regulatory requirements.

22.5 The Institute will seek to promote and develop diversity of its learner body by:

- Treating each applicant on his/her own merit
- Identifying learner potential as well as acknowledging past academic and other achievements
- Ensuring that all publicity campaigns and material, correspondence and application forms reflect the diversity of the learner population and potential application group, avoiding inappropriate images or descriptions of the learner body.

23. Marketing and Promotion

23.1 Information contained in prospectuses, website, flyers, or brochures will be available to applicants before and during the application process. This information should be comprehensive and will cover the following areas:

- Programmes offered, details of programme structures, duration, mode of

attendance and end qualifications

- The nature of the Institute, its purpose, ethos, aims, and objectives
- The cost of study, including tuition and other fees and payment arrangements where these have been determined in advance of publication of materials
- Academic entry requirements
- Advice on sources of financial assistance (internal and external)
- Institutional policies on equal opportunities
- How to raise a complaint
- The role and requirements of any external validating and accrediting bodies.

23.2 Promotional material will not contain unfair or misleading statements.

23.3 Institute staff should follow the principles of responsible recruitment. All staff involved in the recruitment process will work closely together to ensure they are fully aware of the information that should be made available to applicants.

23.4 The Institute will respond to all enquiries as quickly as possible, and normally no later than a maximum of **5 working days**, after receipt of an enquiry.

24. Data Protection

24.1 All applications to St Padarn's are covered under the General Data Protection Regulation. The information provided in applications will only be used for admissions purposes and will form part of the learner's record if they accept a place. Data relevant to the application will be entered into the St Padarn's database and the progression of the application monitored through to commencement on a programme of study. The information will be confidential between the applicant, St Padarn's and any other parties the applicant has consented to as part of the application process (e.g., referees and validating university). However, St Padarn's may have to release information to authorised outside agencies, such as the police or the Home Office, to prevent or detect fraud. St Padarn's submit learner name and contact details to the validating university solely for the purposes of recording learner details and progression information. By registering for a programme leading to a university validated

award the learner agrees to the sharing of their information with the validating university. The validating university will not make any contact with learners unless there is a specific need in relation to their studies towards a validated award.

24.2 It is the learner's responsibility to keep their personal information up to date with St Padarn's and to notify them of any changes or errors.

24.3 In line with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation, applicants have a general right of access to personal data which St Padarn's processes about them. Full details of how to make a request to access personal data can be found at <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/privacy-notice/>.

24.4 For full details on Data Protection see **Church in Wales Data Protection Policy**.

25. Right of Appeal

St Padarn's wishes all applicants to have a positive experience in going through the application process and makes every endeavour to provide applicants with all the necessary information they require and to support them in making an informed choice regarding the best course for them. However, applicants who are unsatisfied about the handling of their application, have the right to make either an informal and/or formal complaint or appeal in writing to the Principal within **28 days** of receiving notification of the rejection of their application.

26. Process of Making a Complaint or Appeal concerning the Admissions Process or Decision

An admissions complaint is a complaint about a procedural error, irregularity, or maladministration in admissions policies or processes. In the first instance, you should attempt to resolve matters informally with St Padarn's. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal process, you can submit a formal appeal. When making admissions decisions, St Padarn's staff will exercise academic judgement. You cannot appeal or complain about an admissions decision on the basis that you disagree with this academic judgement.

26.1 Notice of an intention to appeal must be given in writing to the Principal by the applicant within **28 days** (unless there is a good reason for the delay) of the date

of the letter containing the disputed decision on the application.

26.2 The Principal (or a nominated member of the senior staff) will investigate the complaint or appeal and reply with their decision within **15 days** of receiving the complaint or appeal.

26.3 You can complain if you have evidence: that St Padarn's did not follow its own stated admissions policies and processes correctly, or that an aspect of the institution's admissions policies and processes was inherently unfair, unjust, or lacking in the transparency required to allow applicants to understand the process, or that there was an error or omission in the admissions process that materially affected the admissions decision.

26.4 For postgraduate courses that are validated by Durham University the university may review the complaint after the internal complaints process of St Padarn's has been completed. The university will examine whether the admissions policies and processes were fair, transparent, and were followed correctly, without significant errors or omissions.

27. Policy Approval and Review

This policy as well as all other policies, procedure, and guidance documents relating to learners studying at St Padarn's, will be available to all, monitored regularly, and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

27.1 The Director of Operations has overall responsibility for the admissions policy.

27.2 The Admissions Groups (Undergraduate and Postgraduate) and Registry staff have responsibility for overseeing the admissions processes and ensuring that decision making complies with the regulations of the validating university and other external bodies, where appropriate.

27.3 This document can be found on the SPI website: www.stpadarns.ac.uk .

27.4 Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

27.5 This policy will be included in staff induction.