

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Context

At Staffordshire University we are passionate about transforming the lives and aspirations of the individuals and communities we serve. We are committed to admitting students who have the ability to achieve and benefit from their experience at university. Staffordshire University also embraces widening participation by providing opportunities (locally, nationally and internationally) to those that would not normally consider higher education.

Aims

In accordance with the university Plan 2007 – 2012, we aim to

- Offer a diverse range of learning opportunities that suit individual needs.
- Provide a quality learning environment and preparing students for lives and employment in an increasingly interdependent society.
- Value the skills and abilities of individuals, where equality of opportunity is available to all.

Staffordshire University is dedicated to providing progression opportunities for those who have chosen both academic and vocational routes into higher education and values the variety of skills and qualities such individuals bring to the University and wider community.

Staffordshire University works in collaboration with 11 local colleges to form Staffordshire University Regional Federation, (SURF) which enables the provision of a wide range of courses, modes and progression routes for applicants. Close links have been developed with other colleges both regionally and nationally and through these links, we have been able to encourage higher education participation.

Staffordshire University values its rich diversity of students and we act fairly towards applicants for admission and exercise equal treatment without unlawful discrimination, complying to the recommendations by the Fair Admissions to Higher Education Review (Schwartz, 2004) and the QAA Code of Practice (2006). Staffordshire University provides a transparent framework and aims to ensure there are not any barriers for entry to higher education.

Staffordshire University recognise and embrace the requirement of professionalism in every respect of its commitment to a fair admissions system and has a positive approach to its staff development and the role of SPA (Supporting Professional in Admissions), ensuring that those involved in admissions are competent in undertaking their roles and responsibilities.

Principles

Applicants are treated consistently and as individuals in accordance with our aims and admissions practice. The responsibility of making offers for available places is with the Admissions Team and Faculty Academics. We reserve the right to refuse admission to applicants who do not meet entry requirements or who the University believes, for specific reasons, would not be fit to be a member. Where possible, measures are taken to offer applicants an alternative progression, particularly with opportunities through the Staffordshire University Regional Federation.

Applicants are assessed as individuals, considering both academic and vocational achievements, potential to achieve and to meet higher education outcomes. This also includes recognition of any challenging circumstances that an applicant has encountered. Information materials are designed so that they are appropriate for a range of potential students. Information will include specific entry requirements from a diverse range of possible entry qualifications.

Staffordshire University is committed to ensuring that no applicant who is judged academically suitable should be refused admission on the grounds of disability without reason. We endeavour to offer a supportive and welcoming environment to any applicant who declares that they have a disability. The University will discuss with an applicant how it can or cannot support his/her disability and will support all needs where reasonable adjustment can be made.

We promote equality of opportunity for all, which includes those who may possess a criminal conviction. When considering applicants with relevant criminal convictions, Staffordshire University applies the legislation relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Applications from overseas are welcomed. Staffordshire University will apply its standard entry requirements against the qualifications gained by the applicant in their own country, with the aid of the National Academic Recognition Information Council.

Our approach to the admission of mature applicants and applicants from non-traditional or non-standard academic routes is flexible. Each application is considered individually. Staffordshire University recognises that previous experience gained in work or other areas of life may have prepared mature applicants for a course of study.

Staffordshire University has strong links with local schools and colleges and local students have the opportunity to participate in a number of schemes in order to assist in the raising of aspiration and gaining a place on their chosen award.

The University welcomes applications from students who are leaving care and will work with relevant agencies to ensure a smooth transition from care to university life.

General Requirements For Entry To Undergraduate Awards

Staffordshire University considers applications on an individual basis and welcomes applications from people with a wide variety of qualifications, skills and experience. The University admits students on the basis that they are able to demonstrate their potential to succeed. The University recognises that this is not always demonstrated through the achievement of formal qualifications.

Where English is an applicant's second language, applicants must demonstrate a sufficient command of the English Language either by being mainly educated in the English Language or have a formal recognised English Language qualification at an approved level.

The University welcomes breadth of study and applicants need to demonstrate a depth of understanding that will provide the foundations for study at a higher level. In addition, for application to some of our awards, an in-depth knowledge of certain subject areas is required.

Applicants are normally expected to achieve one of the following qualifications in order to meet the minimum entry requirements but are advised to consult individual award requirements for the level at which these qualifications should be attained:

- Two subjects at Advanced GCE (one subject in the case of HND and some foundation courses).
- One GCE Double Award.
- One BTEC National Extended Diploma or Diploma (a BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in the case of HND and some foundation courses).
- An Advanced Diploma.
- A pass in the Welsh Bacallaureate.
- Three SQA Highers - passes. (Two in the case of HND and some foundation courses).
- Two subjects at SQA Advanced Highers (One in the case of HND and some foundation courses).
- An award of the Irish Leaving Certificate with a minimum of five Higher passes.
- Achievement of an Access to Higher Education Programme to the QAA recognised standard for entry to Higher Education.

- A pass in an Advanced Apprenticeship.
- An award of the European Baccalaureate Diploma (at least 60%).
- An award of the International Baccalaureate Diploma with a minimum of 24 points.
- Achievement of an OCR National Diploma or Extended Diploma (a national certificate in the case of an HND or some Foundation courses).
- A successfully completed NVQ at level 3 or above.
- A pass in a University validated Foundation Course.
- A pass in a University Foundation year.
- An equivalent International qualification.

Some awards may require additional achievements e.g. GCSE Maths and English or have specific requirements as a condition of admission such as an interview, portfolio or test.

We recognise the relevance of additional learning and experience (such as key skills, CoPE) to a university degree and encourage applicants to develop these learning and experience opportunities and to highlight them in their application.

General Requirements For Entry To Postgraduate Awards

Entry requirement for postgraduate taught courses is usually at least a 2:2 honours degree (UK) or an appropriate equivalent qualification (including those gained overseas).

We also take into account Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Previous study or work, community or volunteer experience can be cited for credit. APEL has potential significance for people who, through life and work experience, have gained knowledge, skills and analytical abilities that are comparable to those with a higher education qualification.

Special Admissions

Applicants not in possession of formal academic qualifications listed above may be considered for entry onto an award. This is based on prior learning, acquired through academic study or through life experiences, which is not formally assessed. Learning could have taken place at work, home or through leisure activities and if it is measurable and is relevant to the award then it will be considered.

Applications are considered on an individual basis and are welcomed from people with a wide variety of qualifications, skills and experience. Staffordshire University admits students on the basis that they are able to demonstrate their potential to succeed and meet learning outcomes and recognises that this is not always demonstrated through the achievement of formal qualifications.

An Admissions Tutor may wish to make a special case for an applicant who does not possess the minimum entry requirement for an award. This case is based on a holistic assessment of the applicant's skills, aptitude and abilities. Evidence may be provided for example through experience such as work-based learning or by the means of a written assignment or portfolio. Ultimately, it must be established that the applicant has the potential to benefit and succeed in the award of their choice.

When compiling a case for special admissions the following issues may be considered:

- An evaluation of the experience and qualifications gained and how the necessary subject knowledge and skills is provided.
- An explanation of the assessment method used and its relevance.
- The barriers that the applicant may have had to overcome in order to achieve at their current level.
- The reference provided.

All decisions relating to special admissions will be documented stating the reasons for acceptance or rejection. Approval for admitting students through special admissions must be sought from the Head of Recruitment and Admissions, who will consider the points listed above when making the final judgement.

Applicants who do possess the relevant life experience and who do not meet the general entry requirements are not normally eligible for special admissions unless the Admissions Tutor can provide a convincing case for consideration and that the special admission is in accordance with the Staffordshire University's Diversity Policy.

Some awards may require additional achievements or have specific requirements as a condition of admission.

Feedback

Staffordshire University recognises that it is important that unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. UCAS applicants will automatically receive minimum feedback via UCAS Track, however we are happy to provide further feedback if possible. For all other applicants we are happy to provide feedback on request.

Appeals and Complaints

Staffordshire University recognises that on occasion an applicant may wish to appeal against a decision or to make a complaint for a specific concern related to a procedural irregularity in the admissions procedures. If an applicant considers that they may have cause for an appeal or complaint, they are requested to write in the first instance to the Recruitment Manager - Admissions.

Admissions Policy Review

Each Faculty is required to review its course provision and entry requirements and training needs of Faculty staff on a regular basis. We also regularly review our practices and policies in light of the changing education environment.

Contact:

Gurjit Nijjar
Recruitment Manager – Admissions
Staffordshire University
College Road
Stoke on Trent
ST4 2DE