

**Policy Coversheet**

<b>Name of Policy</b>	University Admissions Policy
<b>Purpose of Policy:</b>	Policy for the Admission of Students to the University
<b>Intended Audience:</b>	Potential Applicants, Applicants and Offer Holders
<b>Approval for this policy given by:</b>	Academic Board
<b>Last Review Date:</b>	November 2023
<b>Review Date Due (3 years from last review):</b>	July 2026
<b>Individual Responsible for Review:</b>	Head of Admissions & Applicant Engagement
<b>Authorising Department:</b>	Business to Markets

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## **1. Purpose, Scope, and Principles**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- i) enquirers, applicants and offer holders, their parents, supporters, or advisors with information about the University's admissions processes and procedures.
- ii) a clear framework for all university staff involved in recruitment, selection, and admissions to promote and ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency within those processes.
- iii) Assurance that the interests of applicants are protected throughout the recruitment, selection, and admissions process.

1.2 This admissions policy is supported by several other policies and procedures which are listed below:

- Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practice Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Placement Practice and Work-Related Learning Policy Student Charter
- University Credit Control Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Access and Participation Plan
- Data protection policy
- Applicant and Student Review Policy

1.3 This policy applies to all Undergraduate, Professional, Postgraduate Taught and Research applicants. This policy applies up until the point an applicant becomes a fully enrolled student.

1.4 This admissions policy has been developed in line with the UUK Fair Admissions Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>.

1.5 All admission procedures and criteria by which applicants are selected will be fair, lawful, transparent, and consistently applied. They will reflect the university's Access and Participation Plan (APP) and the UUK Fair Admissions Code of Practice.

1.6 The University is committed to providing education and training for all applicants who demonstrate the potential to benefit from its provision, in line with the published entry requirements established for each course.

1.7 The admissions process is designed to assess whether applicants possess the ability and aptitude to complete their studies successfully.

1.8 The Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Group, made up of representatives from each academic school and the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Partnerships senior management team will have responsibility for examining and agreeing admissions criteria and entry requirements on an annual basis.

1.9 Admissions criteria and entry requirements will be transparent and consistently applied for all applicants when considering ability, aptitude, skills, qualifications and prior learning or experience (acquired in the workplace or elsewhere) that indicates their potential to succeed on the course and will be published in prospectuses, leaflets or on the University website.

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<sup>1</sup> [Fair admissions code of practice \(universitiesuk.ac.uk\)](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/fair-admissions-code-of-practice)

- 1.10 In all cases, the applicant (or their approved proxy) is responsible for ensuring that the University is in receipt of accurate information required to allow the institution to consider their application.
- 1.11 The admissions process is evidence based. Omission of relevant information or evidence, or the supply of inaccurate information or evidence, may invalidate the application or the offer of a place.
- 1.12 Information will be collected and used only in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- 1.13 All recruitment, admissions and enrolment procedures will be regularly monitored for their effectiveness for all groups of applicants.

## **2. Application standards**

- 2.1 Applicants can nominate an individual, or proxy, who is able to discuss their application with the university.
- 2.2 Applications for full time undergraduate programmes should be made via UCAS. Full details on that application and admissions process are available [here](#).
- 2.3 Undergraduate applications received by the UCAS Equal Consideration Date will be guaranteed equal consideration as defined in the UCAS guidelines.
- 2.4 Undergraduate applications received after the UCAS Equal Consideration Date will be considered on an individual basis, informed by the number of vacancies available on the relevant programme of study.
- 2.5 Applications to our Professional Courses, Postgraduate Taught and Professional Doctorate programmes should be made via the University's online application form. Links through to the application form are available on the course pages of our website.
- 2.6 Applications to our full time PGCE courses should be made via DfE Apply. Full details on that application and admissions process are available [here](#).
- 2.7 Applications for MPhil and PhD are normally made following an initial enquiry and/or conversation with the relevant Graduate School lead about a proposed area of research via the university's online application form.
- 2.8 Applications for MPhil and PhD provision are considered and approved by the Graduate School Committee.

## **3. Offering standards**

- 3.1 Admissions actions are dealt with via the central admissions teams and academic staff in academic schools and institutes.
- 3.2 The University will ensure all admissions decisions are made by those equipped to make the required judgements.

- 3.3 Some of our courses carry requirements relating to level 2 qualifications. In most cases these are set out and determined by professional/regulatory bodies, such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council, and will be published in prospectuses and on the University website.
- 3.4 All applications are reviewed individually and take account of an individual's context when making decisions.
- 3.5 Meeting typical entry requirements does not mean that an offer of a place will follow.
- 3.6 At the point of offer, clear information will be provided to the successful applicant on:
- information on how to view conditions attached to the offer
  - what the applicant must do next and by when
  - arrangements relating to accommodation applications, student finance applications and how to visit the university
- 3.7 Applications for deferred entry will be considered but there are exemptions across the course portfolio meaning deferred entry is not possible.
- 3.8 Applicants may be offered places on alternative courses, such as our Foundation Year courses. Where this happens, this will be clearly identified on an applicant's offer letter.
- 3.9 Where a request for deferred entry to the following year has been made and is not possible, the applicant will be informed, and they can decide as to whether they would like to withdraw their choice and reapply the following year.
- 3.10 Where an applicant is not offered a place, they will receive a letter confirming on what basis that decision has been reached. It is possible for applicants to request feedback and advice about alternatives and future options, as appropriate.
- 3.11 Where offers have been made based on incorrect or fraudulent information, the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer or withdraw the student if enrolled.

#### **4. Information, advice, and guidance provision**

- 4.1 The University will provide applicants with accurate, clear, relevant, and accessible information, advice, and guidance to enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options prior to and during their course of study. This will be achieved by the activities outlined below:
- 4.1.1 Ensuring that all public information relating to courses, processes and procedures at the university are compliant with consumer protection law as defined within Competition & Markets Authority's guidance<sup>2</sup>.
  - 4.1.2 Holding advertised open days, subject specific recruitment events and offer holder days.
  - 4.1.3 Visiting schools as part of our education liaison function and facilitating visits

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<sup>2</sup> [UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/uk-higher-education-providers-advice-on-consumer-protection-law)

to the university by schools and colleges.

- 4.1.4 Providing access to information in suitable alternative formats for applicants with disabilities or with specific needs as appropriate.
- 4.1.5 Responding to applicants' requests for advice made by telephone, email on social media or in person.
- 4.1.6 Providing advice and guidance on opportunities for credit transfer and accreditation of prior learning as defined under the relevant university policy.
- 4.1.7 Ensuring that any alterations to courses from earlier published information are communicated to applicants holding an offer. This may include closure of a course, significant changes to cost, location, content and the status of a course, including withdrawal or granting of validation by a professional or statutory body, or the failure of an advertised course to gain approval or accreditation.

## **5. Admissions processes**

### **Fee Assessment**

- 5.1 The University charges different levels of tuition fees depending on whether a student is identified as 'Home' or 'International'. The admissions team are responsible for assessing, at the point of application, which fee status is to be applied. This decision is informed by the prevailing legislation of the UK Government and is in line with the guidance provided by the [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#).
- 5.2 Where the admissions team are unable to determine a fee status, they will contact the applicant to gather the information required.
- 5.3 Applicants may receive an offer of study from the university while the fee status is being assessed; this will be made clear to applicants in their offer letter.

### **Disability and additional learning needs**

- 5.4 Every reasonable adjustment will be made to support applicants who have disclosed a physical condition, sensory impairment, mental health condition or specific learning need.
- 5.5 Applicants are encouraged to provide details on any disability or additional need on the relevant application form to ensure a smooth transition into university.
- 5.6 Following an offer from The University and disclosure of a physical condition, sensory impairment, mental health condition or specific learning need, an applicant may be contacted by the Student Inclusion Team. The Student Inclusion Team may contact applicants to offer advice and support available during their studies.
- 5.7 Applicants attending auditions, interviews, portfolios or any other selection activity, are encouraged to disclose any disabilities or specific learning needs, for us to discuss their needs and put adjustments in place prior to arrival.

### **Criminal Convictions**

- 5.8 Applicants that disclose a criminal conviction will receive clear information on the procedure which will be followed, in accordance with the appropriate University policies and the General Data Protection Regulations. For applicants studying on a course which leads to a job which is regulated by a professional body such as nursing, teaching, social work, psychology and counselling and biomedical science, this will normally follow the Fitness to Practise Procedure. For any other applicants, we will normally follow the Applicant and Student Review Policy.

### **Additional Admissions Checks**

- 5.9 For certain courses, particularly in teaching, health, social work, and other courses involving work with children and vulnerable groups there are additional checks undertaken as part of the admissions processes. These can happen before an offer is issued or after
- 5.10 Additional admissions checks include, but are not limited to, setting pieces of academic work as a means of assessing suitability for entry, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and Occupational Health (OH) checks.
- 5.11 Applicants to courses where disclosure of criminal convictions is deemed necessary must declare relevant criminal conviction(s), including spent sentences and cautions (see the Fitness to Practise procedure for more information).
- 5.12 Occupational health checks are be carried out by third party providers and will provide the university with an indication of fitness to undertake the course.
- 5.13 DBS and Occupational Health Checks may not appear as a condition of any offer, but the offer letter explains that completion of those checks is mandatory for admission to those courses.
- 5.14 Applicants to courses where a DBS and Occupational Health checks are required should be advised that where those checks are not passed admission to the course may not be possible.
- 5.15 Applicants should respond to requests for information from the university in good time. Failure to provide information to the university may result in an application being withdrawn or rejected.

### **Applicants Under 18**

- 5.16 The University does not normally accept applications from applicants that are under 17 years of age. Applicants that are under 18 should demonstrate a high level of academic maturity in their application.
- 5.17 Applicants who are under 18 should be aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the University while they are under 18.
- 5.18 For more information including processes and procedures relating to the admissions of students under the age of 18, please see our Under 18 policy and our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

## **Auditions, interviews, and portfolio reviews**

- 5.19 Applicants to courses where an audition, interview or portfolio review is required will receive clear information and guidance relating to these.
- 5.20 For certain courses, initial assessment for Basic Skills attainment (numeracy, literacy, ESOL) may be carried out as part of the admissions process. The offer of a place on the course may then be informed by the outcome of those assessments.
- 5.21 Where diagnostic assessment on needs in literacy and numeracy takes place, which is carried out during the induction process, this is not part of the admissions process and will not compromise an applicant's enrolment on a course. The purpose of these tests is to ensure that appropriate support is provided after an applicant has been admitted.
- 5.22 There will be a clear structure for each interview, or other selection method, and these will be conducted against pre-determined criteria.
- 5.23 Where an applicant is assessed as unsuitable for a particular course following interview, audition, or portfolio review then, wherever possible, they will be offered places on other courses.

## **6. Recognising previous learning and experience**

- 6.1 Applicants can use the Recognising your previous experience and learning policy to access Higher Education courses leading to the University's own awards.
- 6.2 Applicants might already have some experience related to your studies when they apply to join the University. This might be because the applicant studied something to a similar level, or they have a lot of work experience that is related to your studies. When applicants provide this information, the University will normally undertake a mapping exercise against the University course. This includes checking whether the learning outcomes, content, currency, academic credit, and level of award are appropriate and relevant. This might mean that the applicant doesn't need to study a particular module or modules if we can recognise this part of the course as already completed.
- 6.3 In those situations, the applicant may enter a The University validated course later than the stage, level, or year than the normal entry point for the course. This denotes the point of entry to the course. For more information, please see the Recognising your previous experience and learning policy.

## **7. English Language Requirements**

- 7.1 As all teaching, learning and assessment at the University is through the medium of English, all applicants will be required to demonstrate that they meet the required level of English language competency for their desired course of study.
- 7.2 Applicants whose first language is not English (<https://www.gov.uk/student-visa/knowledge-of-english>) will be required to have a recognised English language qualification, such as IELTS Academic (International English Language Testing



System), or equivalent at the appropriate level for the course of study for which they wish to be considered. The equivalent qualifications are outlined on the [University website](#).

- 7.3 Each course will stipulate the required IELTS Academic score together with any individual band requirements as and where appropriate.
- 7.4 Due to external regulatory bodies some courses require an IELTS Academic test to confirm the required levels are met and cannot accept an alternative test to demonstrate this.
- 7.5 Where an applicant's English language competency is below that necessary for their intended course of study, they will be required to successfully undertake a pre-session English language course prior to being enrolled on their course. It may be possible to undertake a pre-session English Language course prior to having an offer confirmed on their main award, subject to the pre-session course running and meeting the criteria for entry onto this award. Please refer to the University website for details." (<https://www.staffs.ac.uk/international/your-application-journey/english-language-requirements/english-language-courses>)
- 7.6 Where an applicant has provided more than one form of English Language evidence their most recent English Language test will be used to assess that they meet the required English Language competency level.
- 7.7 The University reserves the right to revoke the acceptance of English Language tests at any time.

## **8. Visa requirements including UKVI Student Visa Route**

- 8.1 Applicants who are not UK nationals and who will not be sponsored under the Student Visa route must prove their right to live and study in the UK to gain admission to the University. They must satisfy immigration requirements in force by the Home Office at the time of entry onto the course. The University will not normally accept students whose immigration status is pending a decision with the Home Office.
- 8.2 Applicants under the Skilled Worker / Tier 2 visa route or similar will not usually be permitted to study courses that require full time on campus attendance.
- 8.3 Students seeking University sponsorship through UK Visas and Immigration Student Visa sponsorship route will need to satisfy all UKVI Student Visa compliance requirements as stipulated in the Immigration Rules (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/appendix-student>) and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/student-visa>) in addition to any and all necessary University policies and requirements.
- 8.4 The University reserves the right to refuse Student Visa sponsorship to any applicant who cannot satisfy the University that they effectively meet all Student Visa route compliance requirements or University policies satisfactorily. Any refund of fees paid will be considered in accordance with the International Deposit Refund Policy (<https://www.staffs.ac.uk/international/your-application-journey/scholarships-fees/international-deposit-refund-policy>).

## **9. Monitoring and review**

- 9.1 The University will monitor and regularly review its policies and procedures to ensure that they continue to support the University's mission and strategic objectives, that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances and that they meet all external requirements, including adherence to equality legislation.
- 9.2 To monitor its Admissions Policy, the University will:
- Provide opportunities for students to inform the University as to their experience of the
  - application process through a survey. This will be carried out in partnership with the Students' Union, through a range of mechanisms, including the student representatives' structure, student representatives' forums, through student surveys and other evaluation mechanisms, as appropriate.
  - Monitor any complaints received.
  - Consider the effect of the Admissions Policy, and in particular the operation of course entry criteria, when annually reviewing against the relevant benchmarks, (learner success rates and progression, retention, withdrawal, and non-completion data) as appropriate.
  - Review data regarding applications, offers made, the take-up of offers and successful completion where relevant, to inform future recruitment and curriculum development.
  - Review its policies in relation to changing patterns in the applicant market, changes in the nature of the main qualifications offered by applicants and the demand for modes of study.
  - Monitor admission procedures across schools and subjects, where relevant
  - Monitor the application of admission policies and procedures to courses provided by collaborative arrangements with partner institutions.
  - Monitor success rates of students with advanced standing and accreditation of prior learning or experience.
  - Review recruitment materials and any pre-entry information and activities

## **10. Staff Development**

- 10.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all those involved in recruitment and admissions are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.
- 10.2 Staff development and training sessions are held for staff involved in admissions to update knowledge and expertise in the light of changing circumstances.
- 10.3 Staff participate in national agendas through membership of various professional bodies, through workshops and conferences and are committed to sharing good practice locally and with collaborative partners.

## **11. Complaints**

- 11.1 An applicant cannot complain or appeal where this is a disagreement with the judgement of an admissions decision, in assessing the merits of application, or in reaching a decision on entry, which has been reached in accordance with the published criteria and processes contained in this policy.
- 11.2 Unsuccessful applications will have a record of the reason why it has been unsuccessful which is shared as part of the decision.
- 11.3 Applicants can request additional feedback via email. Admissions staff will seek to provide written feedback from the academic team responsible for the decision. In some instances, admissions staff will connect applicants to academic staff for additional feedback on development areas.
- 11.4 Where an applicant has cause for concern about the way their application has been handled, they can raise the matter formally in writing to the relevant Admissions Manager. Applicants should provide evidence that supports their concerns and a statement of remedy. The relevant Admissions Manager will acknowledge the complaint and respond within 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement.
- 11.5 If the applicant remains dissatisfied, they can request a review of the complaint by the Head of Admissions & Applicant Services. This should be completed within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the process outlined in paragraph 11.4.