

Applicant & Student Review Process

What is this Procedure for?

What is the Applicant Review Process?

At Staffordshire University, we are committed to providing equal opportunities for applicants and students, regardless of their personal circumstances or background. This means that we won't make an unnecessary decision on your admissions application based on a criminal conviction.

However, we also have a duty of care towards all members of our community. This includes our duty to safeguard children and vulnerable adults who may participate in any activity organised or managed by the University or come into contact with University staff or students on or off campus. For more specific information on this, please see the University's Safeguarding Policy ([link to https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/safeguarding-policy](https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/safeguarding-policy)).

Sometimes when you apply to study a course with us, there might be some circumstances where we need to give your application some additional consideration. If you're studying with us and your circumstances change, we can make sure that we put something in place to support you and other members of the University community. For example, we might become aware that you have a criminal record which might make it difficult for you to be able to work in the sector that your course relates to, and we would want to talk to you to help you to understand this.

If you are applying to study on a course that leads to professional registration, like nursing or midwifery, we'll consider this through the Fitness to Practise Procedure. You can find more information on this in the Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise Procedure ([LINK-https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/fitness-to-study-and-fitness-to-practise-procedure](https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/fitness-to-study-and-fitness-to-practise-procedure)). This procedure includes a link to a list of courses which lead to professional registration.

What process applies to me?

We understand that it can be confusing when we tell you that you are going through a process to make decisions about your studies. We will always be clear on the reasons why.

Applicant Review Process	Student Review Process
<p>We will use the Applicant Review Process if you are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applying to a course which doesn't lead to professional registration <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. We become aware of something that we think might affect the way that you study or complete your course 	<p>We will use the Student Review Process if you are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently studying on a course which doesn't lead to professional registration <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. We become aware of something that we think might affect the way that you study or complete your course
<p>This is a way for us to appropriately consider applications for admission to the University. Below are some examples why we may use this process. This list is not exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have an unspent serious criminal conviction and want to stay in our accommodation • You are applying to study at the University and are currently in prison • You have a probation order and we want to make sure we can support you with this 	<p>This is a way for us to confidentially consider criminal convictions for current students. Below are some examples why we may use this process when you are studying with us. This list is not exhaustive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have an unspent serious criminal conviction and are currently living in our accommodation • You are convicted of a serious criminal offence • You are given a probation order which places restrictions on you

What can you expect of us?

What are these processes for?

If you tell us about, or we become aware of, your criminal record, or that a criminal investigation is currently ongoing, we may want to consider this in more detail. The Applicant & Student Review Process is a way for the University to assess your application and make a decision about whether the course is right for you to join or continue studying on. This process will only look at your criminal record and any relevant information relating to that.

We'll make sure that the information provided as part of this process is considered objectively, fairly and transparently. We'll take a risk-based approach to consider any risks to yourself, other students, staff and the University, as well as our local community and placement providers, where applicable.

If you are an applicant, your application to the course will still be considered through our usual admissions processes. This means we might need to make a decision on your application, as well as a separate decision relating to your declaration.

Why does the University have this process?

We have a duty of care to everyone in our community. We also want to make sure that the course is right for you, and that you will be able to achieve your potential in study and beyond.

What convictions does this relate to?

We know that when students join us, sometimes things have happened in their past. If you're not on a course leading to professional registration, we may not be concerned if you have minor convictions or records, such as speeding.

Regardless of what course you are studying on, if the University becomes aware that you have relevant unspent criminal convictions which are more serious, we may need to take further action through this procedure. That includes but is not limited to anything which falls into the below categories.

- Any kind of violence including (but not limited to) threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm or offences which resulted in actual bodily harm.
- Offences listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003
- The unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances
- Offences involving firearms
- Offences involving arson
- Offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2002

We might also need to take further action if you are serving time in prison when you apply to the course, or at any time during your studies.

How might the University find out about a criminal record?

We might know about your criminal record if you tell us about it, or if someone else tells us about it. We might also find out because the information has been reported in the press or online.

Staffordshire University are cautious about any information that we receive from anyone other than an applicant or student. That includes members of the public, an applicant's family member, other applicants, or a school or college. If we receive any information, we will try to check what we have been told first. If the information is found to be accurate, we will get in touch with you to discuss this.

What happens after you find out about a criminal record?

We expect all of our students to follow the expectations that we set out. We will be looking for you to be honest and clear with us about your background, and any risks that may be presented to yourself and others, and it is your responsibility to tell us about this.

If we find out about a criminal record, we might need to get more information first. To do this, we might speak to you, or others connected to your case, someone from the Probation Service or the police. If you have a probation, court or other legal order which places restrictions on you, we will need details of these. This is so that we can determine what we can put in place to support you in following them.

Once we have all of the information we need, a member of the management team from your School or Institute will look at this. They may involve other, appropriate members of staff in this process, such as a member of the Safeguarding Team. They will decide whether it's something that needs further consideration. If they don't think it will affect your studies, your application will continue, and we won't take any further action.

If it's something that they think needs to be looked at in more detail, your application will go to a Panel. If you are an applicant this will be the Applicant Review Panel, for current students, it will be a Student Review Panel.

Applicant & Student Review Panel

Who will consider my application?

If you're an applicant and we find out about a criminal record, we'll stop assessing your application while we consider what you've told us.

An Applicant or Student Review Panel will include:

- A Head of Department
- An academic from your course (not your personal or module tutor)
- A Course Director from another Department
- The Head of Residential Services or nominee (if you are planning to stay in our accommodation)

The Review Panel may also wish to invite relevant members of university staff to discuss the case, if appropriate, such as the Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Manager.

Whenever we can, we will invite you to this meeting, if you are able to attend. We recognise that this might not always be possible, so this meeting will go ahead in your absence if you are unable to attend. We know this can be a difficult time and you will want to prepare for the meeting, so we will always give you at least a week's notice (excluding bank holidays). We recommend that you contact the Students' Union as soon as you can to arrange representation. Alternatively, you can bring along a supportive friend. If you want to, you can write a statement before attending. You will need to send this to us at regulations@staffs.ac.uk 48 hours before the meeting.

Someone will take notes at the meeting, and you will be sent a copy of our decision on your suitability to study on your course, usually within one week (excluding bank holidays).

What decision will an Applicant Review Panel make?

If you are an applicant, the Applicant Review Panel will consider all of the information objectively, assessing the risk to you and the rest of our community. The Applicant Review Panel will make a decision whether to accept or reject your application, on grounds relating to your criminal record only. Some possible outcomes are as follows:

- The level of risk is acceptable and so you may continue without any conditions
 - The level of risk can be managed by certain conditions, such as that you cannot stay in University Accommodation
 - The level of risk can be managed by a safety and wellbeing plan to help you to start or continue your studies
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- The level of risk is unacceptable and so you cannot continue. If we can, we will try to offer you an alternative course.

What decision will a Student Review Panel make?

If you are a current student, the Student Review Panel will consider all of the information objectively, assessing the risk to you and the rest of our community. The Student Review Panel will make a decision on what support we are able to offer you, and whether this is appropriate enough for you to continue on in your studies. If we think we need to take further action, we will normally make a decision under the Student Conduct Procedure. Some possible outcomes could be

- a) The level of risk is acceptable and so you may continue without any conditions
- b) The level of risk can be managed in your studies, but that you cannot continue to stay in University Accommodation
- c) The level of risk can be managed by a safety and wellbeing plan to help you to continue your studies
- d) The level of support you would need to continue on your studies is not appropriate, or the level of risk is unacceptable

In the case of d), the Conduct Panel can decide to Recommend to the Vice Chancellor that you should be expelled from the University.

Please see a list of case studies ([LINK- To be created on approval, content found at the end of this document](#)) to help you understand how we view cases.

What if I disagree with the Panel's decision?

If you are not happy with the decision that a Student Review Panel have made, you will be able to appeal through the Student Conduct Procedure. You will be given details of how to appeal in the information sent to you as part of the decision.

If you are unhappy with the decision that an Applicant Review Panel have made, you can submit a complaint about the admissions process. More details on how to do so can be found in the Admissions Policy ([LINK- https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/admissions-policy](https://www.staffs.ac.uk/students/course-administration/academic-policies-and-regulations/admissions-policy)).

Applicant and Student Review Panel Case Studies

Here are some case studies to help you understand how we view applications at an applicant or student review panel.

- Where an applicant or student is subject to an ongoing Police investigation, we would need to consider any bail conditions and discuss when an outcome to the investigation would be reached
- We will consider the applicant or student's course and determine whether a criminal conviction would mean there would be any impact on their ability to attend certain placement settings, engage with future studies, or any employment opportunities. For example, applicants to our Criminology Awards are likely to seek employment opportunities within the Police, and a criminal conviction may have an impact on the likelihood of being able to follow that career path. Applicants to our Step Up programmes may want to discuss the impact on any future courses they wish to progress on to

- Where an applicant or student is subject to a probation order, we would ask for a copy of the order so we can ensure that the applicant's studies do not contravene that order. For example, if someone has been barred from entering a licensed premises, we would need to consider the access to Students' Union venues on campus
- Where a legal restriction has been placed on the use of IT equipment and internet access, we will need to consider what support it is possible or appropriate for us to put into place so that you can comply with these restrictions
- Where an applicant or students is placed on the Sex Offenders Register, we would need to consider the terms of the registration. For example, an applicant may not be allowed to be within a defined radius of young adults and children. We would need to consider the University's safeguarding responsibility and our duty of care to all members of our community