Criminal Convictions

Aims

The aim of the admissions process is to select students who have the ability and motivation to benefit from the degrees they intend to follow and who will make a contribution to the life of the University.

The process takes place within the framework of the University’s Admissions Code of Practice. This document expresses the University’s commitment to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities for students in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and are given equal opportunities within the University.

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that no prospective student should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds that are not relevant to academic ability and an applicant’s potential to achieve success in his or her chosen course of study.

However, it is important that these aims are achieved without prejudice to the safety and well-being of other members of the university community and, indeed, there may be occasions where this has to be placed ahead of all other considerations.

This procedure is intended as a mechanism to ensure that decisions regarding the admission of an applicant with criminal convictions are taken only after the implications have been fully explored.

Declaration of Criminal Convictions

Applicants to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are required to disclose any relevant criminal convictions they hold.

Relevant criminal convictions are currently defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as those convictions for offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, and convictions for offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking.

Spent convictions, as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 are not considered to be relevant, and do not need to be disclosed unless the individual programme specifically requires it. However, it is important to note that custodial sentences of more than four years in duration will never be considered spent.

Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Disclosure

Certain programmes of study are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and applicants must declare any conviction, including those which are spent and including cautions, warnings, reprimands and bind-over orders. Such programme areas include medicine, social work,
teaching or those involving work with children or vulnerable adults and are not covered by this procedure.

Consideration of criminal convictions: the procedure

1. If an applicant has ticked the criminal convictions box on their application form, they are required to complete a criminal convictions declaration form (see attached).

2. The application will initially be considered on its academic merit, against the standard programme entry requirements.

3. If the application is unsuccessful on academic grounds
   If the application is unsuccessful, no further action will be taken in relation to the criminal conviction and the applicant will be informed that they have been unsuccessful on academic grounds.

4. If an offer of admission is recommended
   - If an offer of admission is recommended, but the conviction is not ‘relevant’, the offer will be made, the applicant will be informed that their conviction is not ‘relevant’ and their record will be updated.
   OR
   - If an offer of admission is recommended and the conviction is ‘relevant’ the application is passed to the Deputy Director of Admissions.
       - if the case is straightforward, an offer to the applicant will be approved at this stage.
       - if the case requires further consideration, it will be considered by the Director of Admissions and, if appropriate, the Registrar and Secretary of the University. A third party, such as a probation worker or referee, may be contacted to aid the decision making process and/or for verification purposes. Permission will be sought from the applicant before any such contact is made. The applicant may also be subject to a criminal convictions disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Communication of the decision

Following consideration of the case, the applicant will be contacted in writing with the University’s formal decision. Decisions will normally be one of the following:

- To permit an offer to be made without additional non-academic conditions
- To permit an offer to be made with the stipulation of certain non-academic conditions
- To reject the applicant

The applicant has the right to appeal a decision which has been made. Appeals must be made in writing to the University Registrar and Secretary within 14 days of receiving the written notification.

Details relating to an applicant’s criminal history may be held confidentially by the Deputy Director of Admissions. They will not normally be disclosed to departments in the University with the exception of rare cases where relevant colleagues in certain departments, such as the Accommodation Office or Security, will need to be made aware.

Admissions Office
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