

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ADMISSIONS

CONTENTS

Section 1

- 1.1 Purpose
- 1.2 Core Admissions Principles
- 1.3 Responsibilities and delegated authority in the admissions process

Section 2

- 2.1 Criteria for selection
- 2.2 Responsibilities of the University
- 2.3 Responsibilities of the applicant

Section 3

- 3.1 Appeals against decisions
- 3.2 Complaints

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 This document sets out the principles and practices which underpin the University's admissions process. It applies to all programmes of study.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that the University has in place clear and transparent admissions processes which are reviewed on a regular basis and meet the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as articulated in Chapter B2.

1.2 Core Admissions Principles

- 1.2.1 The University upholds the key principle that the policies and procedures governing the admissions process should be fair, transparent, implemented consistently and are compliant with all relevant legislation and regulations.
- 1.2.2 The University's policies embrace its commitment to equal opportunities and any conditions for entry to a programme will only be imposed if justifiable on academic grounds.
- 1.2.3 The University is committed to ensuring a diverse student population. It embraces the principles of widening participation and fair access and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified applicants who, in the University's judgement, are able to demonstrate their potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study.
- 1.2.4 The University ensures that admissions decisions are made by those members of staff who have been trained and are equipped to make such judgements.
- 1.2.5 The University seeks to ensure that admissions policies and procedures work effectively to support its strategic objectives.

1.3 Responsibilities and delegated authority in the admissions process

- 1.3.1 The authority to regulate the admission of persons to courses of study in the University, subject to the Ordinances of the University, is invested in the Senate (Ordinance 10.7).
- 1.3.2 This authority is devolved through Heads of Departments/Schools, to a nominated member of the academic staff who takes on the role of admissions tutor. The admissions tutor may delegate their responsibility to an appropriate member of the non- academic staff. In these circumstances, selection criteria are agreed which include not only the expected level of qualifications upon entry, but also other qualitative criteria that may influence a selection decision. Any decisions that need to be made outside these criteria are referred to the admissions tutor.
- 1.3.3 The Student Recruitment Admissions and Widening Participation Committee advises the University on undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment and admissions policies, strategies and objectives, and monitors their implementation. It is chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) and includes College representatives and key officers in corporate services who are responsible for student recruitment and admissions.
- 1.3.4 The Director of Admissions is responsible for ensuring that admissions are conducted in a fair and equitable manner and for the management of the admissions process.

2.1 Criteria for Selection

- 2.1.1 Every student will at least meet the entry requirements, articulated in Senate Regulation 2 for taught programmes or Senate Regulation 9 for research degree programmes. Exceptionally, a case can be made for special entry which must be agreed by either the Pro-

Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) for taught programmes or the Graduate Dean for research degree programmes. Specific requirements for individual programmes are specified in the University prospectuses and detailed in the relevant programme specification.

- 2.1.2 Every student will at least meet the English language requirements as specified in Senate Regulations.
- 2.1.3 For some programmes the offer of a place may be dependent upon satisfactory performance at interview. In addition, for some subjects there is a requirement to sit an admissions test, the results of which will influence the selection process.
- 2.1.4 In the case of applications for programmes which carry professional recognition, the decision to admit may also be informed by the relevant professional body's requirements for pre-registration screening (e.g. Fitness to Practice).
- 2.1.5 If the nature of the programme involves the student coming into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, the offer of a place will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a check with the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).
- 2.1.6 Admission for some applicants will be dependent upon the applicant having met Home Office requirements to study in the UK.
- 2.1.7 When selecting between applicants with broadly similar qualifications, admissions tutors consider other indicators of merit and potential to succeed, such as evidence of personal initiative or team working abilities. In order to make such judgments, admissions tutors are made aware of the impact of cultural diversity and the variation of opportunities available to applicants to demonstrate such potential.
- 2.1.8 If an applicant declares a criminal record, the University will request further information. In certain circumstances, this information may influence the decision to offer a place on a course or a place in University accommodation.
- 2.1.9 Applicants who request exemption from particular modules of a programme on the basis of prior learning must provide suitable evidence to support their request in accordance with the University's policy on the Procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning.

2.2 Responsibilities of the University

- 2.2.1 The University regularly reviews its promotional activities, literature and website to ensure that they are accurate, relevant, and allow applicants to make an informed choice about both the University and the relevant programme. In the case of undergraduate courses, the University maintains detailed and accurate information on the UCAS website.
- 2.2.2 The University maintains clearly documented procedures that govern the admissions process for each level and mode of study. Applications are dealt with promptly, allowing time for the collection of further information, if required, and decisions are communicated to applicants as soon as possible. Any offer of a place will specify the level of fee to be paid. The University complies with Home Office guidelines on the assessment of an applicant's fee status. For overseas students, the outcome of this assessment is explained in the letter which offers a place.
- 2.2.3 Details of registration and induction are sent once any conditions are met. Campus based students receive details of arrival arrangements.
- 2.2.4 All applications are dealt with confidentially and are only seen by those staff who make decisions or administer the admissions process.

- 2.2.5 All applications received by the relevant deadline will be given equal consideration. Late applications will also be considered, depending upon the availability of places at that time.
- 2.2.6 The University provides appropriate feedback to unsuccessful applicants on request.
- 2.2.7 The University aims to provide the range of provision as advertised in promotional literature. However, if there are any significant changes after an offer is made, these will be communicated to applicants promptly and the options available will be explained.
- 2.2.8 The University complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. It also undertakes to make reasonable adjustments in order to ensure that students who have declared a disability can effectively participate in the selection process and pursue their studies after admission.
- 2.2.9 The University complies with the requirements of Data Protection Act (1998) and its own data protection policy, retaining an applicant's details as appropriate.
- 2.2.10 The University will complete an annual review of the policies and procedures which relate to the admissions process, to ensure that they continue to work effectively.

2.3 Responsibilities of the applicant

- 2.3.1 All applicants undertake to provide true and accurate information to support their application. The University may check any part of an application or supporting documentation at any stage of the admissions process or after a student has registered. If an application is found to include inaccurate or fraudulent information, during the admissions process and before an offer is made the University may withdraw the application from the process or reject it. If an offer has been made to an applicant, it will be withdrawn immediately. If an application is found to include inaccurate or fraudulent information, once a student has registered, their studies will normally be terminated and any fees paid will not be refunded.
- 2.3.2 Applicants undertake to allow any data they supply to be shared with staff involved in making selection decisions, and to provide the University with the information needed to compile student records.
- 2.3.3 Applicants are required to declare any previous period of study in higher education, including at the University.
- 2.3.5 Applicants should inform the University of any change of circumstance during the period of application (e.g. change of address).
- 2.3.6 If an applicant has a criminal record, they are obliged to declare this fact on their application form. The University will ask for further information, as appropriate (see 2.1.8 above).
- 2.3.7 Applicants with a disability which may affect their participation in the application process or their chosen programme of study are advised to declare this in their application. Suitable adjustments and support arrangements can then be put in place,.
- 2.3.8 Applicants are expected to behave in an appropriate way and engage with staff involved in the admissions process in a polite and reasonable manner. Inappropriate behaviour will be investigated by the University and where it considers that an applicant is behaving in an inappropriate or persistently vexatious manner it reserves the right to withdraw an application from further consideration.

3.1 Review of admissions decisions

3.1.1 There may be occasions where an applicant wishes to request that a decision be reviewed. In such cases an applicant should submit a case in writing to the relevant Admissions Tutor indicating the grounds for review and providing any supporting evidence. Admissions decisions will not be reviewed where grounds are simply that an applicant disagrees with the academic judgement applied in reaching the decision.

3.1.2 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the review and wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should submit an appeal to the Director of Admissions, specifying the grounds for their appeal, and including any relevant supporting documentation. The Director of Admissions will conduct an appropriate review. The applicant should expect to receive a written response within two weeks.

The grounds for appeal are as follows:

- there has been a procedural irregularity;
- new information emerges, which was not available at the time of application;
- there is evidence of bias or prejudice.

3.1.4 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may request a further review. The request for a further review should be made, in writing, to Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) detailing the grounds for the review. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor will conduct the review to ensure that all procedures have been correctly followed. The outcome of this review will be considered final.

3.2 Complaints procedure

3.2.1 The University endeavours to conduct a fair and transparent admissions process. If an applicant is not satisfied with a particular aspect of the process they may wish to make a complaint.

3.2.2 In the first instance, the applicant is encouraged to contact the relevant admissions tutor.

3.2.3 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the initial enquiry, they should write to the Director of Admissions, specifying their concerns, and including any relevant supporting documentation. The Director of Admissions will endeavour to seek a satisfactory solution to the matter by undertaking a prompt investigation. The applicant should expect to receive a written response within two weeks.

3.2.5 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may request another review by writing to the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience) who will conduct a further investigation. The applicant should expect to receive a written response within two weeks.

The outcome of this review will be considered final.

3.2.5 The University will not continue with the complaints procedure if the complaint is being pursued in an unreasonably persistent or vexatious manner. In this context 'unreasonably persistent' means, for example, that the complaint is being made in a way that is obsessive, prolific or repetitious, or might be considered to be harassment. A 'vexatious complaint' is one that the University considers is designed to cause disruption or annoyance, or makes demands for redress which lack serious purpose or value.