

Admissions Principles and Procedures for undergraduate courses

1. Aims

1.1 The University of Bristol aims to:

- maintain the high academic standards for which it is known;
- create a student body that is balanced and diverse in terms of background and experience, with all the educational and cultural benefits that this brings;
- recruit students who will engage with and contribute to the intellectual and cultural vitality of the University community.

1.2 The University will achieve these aims by:

- encouraging applications from all those with the motivation and academic ability to thrive at Bristol, whatever their background;
- assessing each application carefully and fairly;
- offering places to suitably qualified applicants who have the potential to do well at Bristol.

1.3 To ensure consistency and fairness, the general principles and procedures set out in this document will be followed by all those involved in the admissions process.

1.4 The University is committed to creating a diverse learning environment where all students are valued for their individual differences and contribution, with equal opportunities for all irrespective of age, disability, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. All applicants are considered on an equal basis in line with the [University's Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

1.5 The University will review its Admissions Principles and Procedures annually in the light of experience, research, relevant legislation and best practice (in line with organisations such as the Quality Assurance Agency, Supporting Professionalism in Admissions, UCAS).

2 Transparency and consistency

2.1 All data requested and held by the University through the application process is processed in line with the University's [Student Fair Processing Notice](#), and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2.2 The University only corresponds about an application or decision with the applicant, unless the applicant has given express consent to the University to correspond with a nominated contact (family member, agent, representative).

2.3 The University publishes a course profile for each course both in the University's own publications, online course finder and through UCAS. This includes key information about the course, the typical offer, additional entry requirements, application process and deadlines. This

information is published early in the year in which the application cycle begins, and is finalised by 1 August for entry the following September.

- 2.4 The University publishes the Admissions Policies and Procedures and the course-specific Admissions Statements by 1 August each year for entry the following September.
- 2.5 Each [Admissions Statement](#) explains the selection criteria and procedures for that course, including information on how applications are considered. This includes:
 - specific criteria against which applicants are assessed by the admissions team;
 - an indication of how different components of the application are weighted;
 - the process for considering applications, including any additional assessment requirements such as interviews, tests or written work.
- 2.6 All decisions on applications are made subject to strict quality assurance procedures, which include the following:
 - regular consultation with school admissions and recruitment officers to ensure compliance with selection criteria;
 - routine spot checks to ensure assessment consistency and compliance with legal and policy requirements;
 - regular reviews of selection criteria and outcomes;
 - monitoring of turnaround times to ensure that applications are assessed in a reasonable timeframe.
- 2.7 The University makes every effort to run courses advertised in the current admissions cycle. However, if it is necessary to change or discontinue a course, the University will contact applicants in a timely manner and offer alternative options, for example, consideration for another course.

3 Method for assessing applications

- 3.1 For many courses at the University, the number of applications from eligible applicants by far exceeds the number of offers that can be made. The number of offers available may be specific to the year of entry and the fee status of applicants. The selection criteria are put in place to select which applicants receive an offer; these criteria support the University's admissions aims (see section 1), align with the principles and procedures in this document, and reflect what is set out in the relevant course Admissions Statement.
- 3.2 Actual and/or predicted performance in public examinations is a key indicator of academic potential for degree-level study. The Admissions Office sets equivalencies to assess candidates applying with vocational and international qualifications in a fair and consistent manner for all courses. Equivalencies for many qualifications are published online; where this is not the case, the admissions team can provide advice.
- 3.3 The University may request further information about qualifications studied or predicted grades. Failure to provide this information within a specified timescale may result in the application being made unsuccessful.
- 3.4 Applications are normally assessed on the basis of three eligible A-levels and eight GCSEs, or equivalent qualifications, as the University recognises that not all applicants will have had opportunities to take additional qualifications. The University does not consider performance in A-

level General Studies, Critical Thinking, or similar qualifications, in the admissions process. If a course discounts achievement in a specific subject or a particular combination of subjects, or wishes to weight subjects differentially, such caveats are declared in Admissions Statement.

- 3.5 A typical course offer and additional requirement criteria may include minimum overall grades and specified attainment in a particular subject at A-level and GCSE level, or in an equivalent qualification. For some courses, the University may consider making an aspirational offer to applicants with predicted grades lower than the typical offer; details relating to such offers can be found in the relevant course-specific information accessed via the [course finder](#). Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee an offer.
- 3.6 The personal statement and reference provide important supplementary indications of ability, motivation and potential. The Admissions Statement for each course sets out how the personal statement and reference are considered in assessing an application, and which criteria they are assessed against.
- 3.7 Interviews may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. Any such requirement will be clearly stated in the relevant course Admissions Statement. Interviews may also be required for other courses where it is not possible to make a decision based on the information in the application, for example if there has been a gap in education or the applicant has non-standard qualifications. Interviews are conducted by at least two people, including a member of University staff who has undertaken training on fair and effective recruitment. Interview candidates are advised of the criteria for measuring performance at interview and a record of the interview is submitted to the admissions team.
- 3.8 Supplementary written work may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. Any such requirement will be clearly stated in the relevant course Admissions Statement. Applicants are provided with clear guidance on the nature of the work, deadlines and assessment criteria. In certain circumstances, the University may invite an applicant to submit additional written information, such as an alternative personal statement. Additional information that has not been requested will not be considered.
- 3.9 Admissions tests (for example LNAT, UKCAT) may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. Any such requirement will be clearly stated in the relevant course Admissions Statement, including details of how the test result will contribute to the overall assessment. Other applicants may be offered the opportunity to take an admissions test where it has not been possible to make a decision based on the information in the application, for example if there has been a gap in education or the applicant has non-standard qualifications.
- 3.10 Applicants must respond to requests for interviews, supplementary written work or admissions tests within the required timescales; any waivers to requirements or deadlines are considered in conjunction with the Extenuating Circumstances process (see section 4).
- 3.11 Applicants who do not hold nationality of a majority English-speaking country (as defined by the UK Home Office) are required to provide evidence of their English language proficiency by meeting the relevant English language profile outlined in the course-specific information accessed via the [course finder](#).

4 Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.1 The University recognises that individual applicants' educational attainment and experience may be affected by a range of factors. Those applicants whose education has been significantly disrupted through health, personal problems, disability or specific difficulties with schooling can provide additional information and documentation relating to their situation by submitting an Extenuating Circumstances form. The form, and further details on the process, can be found [here](#).
- 4.2 All staff involved in the admissions process are expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual applicants and must operate in a way that is consistent with the University's Admissions Aims. However, submitting an extenuating circumstances form does not guarantee that the University will make the applicant an offer, or that the University will accept the applicant if offer conditions are not met. Extenuating circumstances are not considered when assessing the personal statement, interview performance or any additional tests such as UKCAT.
- 4.3 Where a decision is made to offer a place, the University may decide to make an offer different from the published typical offer where this is considered an appropriate response to the extenuating circumstances.
- 4.4 Extenuating circumstances provided prior to the release of exam results may be considered when assessing offer holders who have not met the terms of their offer in full.

5 Contextual offers

- 5.1 The University acknowledges that applicants from groups underrepresented at the University may apply with qualifications that do not accurately reflect their abilities and potential, and may have access to fewer opportunities than other applicants. All staff involved in the admissions process are expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual applicants and must operate in a way that is consistent with the University's Admissions Aims.
- 5.2 An applicant will be considered eligible for a contextual offer if they meet one or more of the following criteria:
- attending (or having attended last year) a state school or college where, in the previous year, the school or college was ranked in the bottom 40 per cent of all state schools and colleges in England or Wales or 20 per cent in Scotland in relation to the average score per A-level entry, the average score per A-level entrant or the percentage of students applying to higher education;
 - having a home address in a Polar 1 or 2 category;
 - having spent more than four months in local authority care after age 14;
 - having participated in a University of Bristol widening participation programme.
- 5.3 Educational disadvantage will be taken into account when considering whether to make an offer of a place or request an interview, including in assessing an applicant's academic attainment and personal statement. Where a decision is made to offer a place, applicants from underrepresented groups will normally be eligible for the published contextual offer for their course.
- 5.4 Educational disadvantage may also be considered after examination results are published, when assessing offer holders who have not met the terms of their offer in full.

6 Responding to individual applicants' situations

- 6.1 The course profile and admissions statement will confirm whether a course accepts applications for deferred entry. Any applications submitted for deferred entry will be considered in the cycle they

are submitted, and under the policies in place for that cycle. The number of places available for deferred applicants may be limited.

- 6.2 The University welcomes applications from disabled students. Such applications will be considered against the same academic criteria that are applied to all applicants. During the admissions process, applicants are encouraged to disclose any disability that may require adjustments; this will not affect the chances of receiving an offer from the University. [Disability Services](#) can provide further advice as necessary. In the unlikely event that the University cannot reasonably make the adjustments required to support an applicant during their education, it will contact the applicant directly to relay its decision.
- 6.3 Applications who are not applying directly from, or within a year of leaving, school or college, who have non-standard qualifications or who wish work or life experience to be taken into account as part of their application, are considered on an individual basis, in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions Principles and Procedures. Any requirements for formal study within a particular recent period are detailed in the course Admissions Statement.
- 6.4 Participants in University of Bristol widening participation programmes, including nominated applicants from Merchants' Academy (the school co-sponsored by the University), are guaranteed an offer of a place at the University if an interview is not otherwise required and provided that they are taking and/or have achieved qualifications which would enable them to meet the offer in full. Where an interview is required, such applicants are guaranteed an interview if their predicted or achieved grades meet the applicable typical offer for that programme. In certain circumstances, an offer may be made for an alternative related course rather than the course for which the applicant originally applied. Any offer may include a condition of successfully completing the relevant programme. Information on eligibility for these programmes is available on the University's website.
- 6.5 Participants in University's Bristol Scholars programme are guaranteed an offer of a place at the University if an interview would not otherwise be required and provided that they are taking and/or have achieved qualifications which would enable them to meet the offer in full. Where an interview is required, such applicants are guaranteed an interview if their predicted or achieved grades meet the applicable typical offer for that programme. In certain circumstances, the offer may be for an alternative related course rather than the course for which the applicant originally applied. Due to the nature of the programme, the offer made to Bristol Scholars will usually be lower than either the standard or the contextual typical offer for that course. Any offer may include a condition of successfully completing the Bristol Scholars programme.
- 6.6 Applicants with criminal convictions should check the University's policy on [the recruitment of students with a criminal conviction](#).
- 6.7 Applicants who are under the age of 18 on registration as a student of the University are required to complete a form signed by a parent/guardian as a condition of registration. This provides confirmation that the parent/guardian understands the University's responsibilities, and gives details of an emergency contact in the UK.
- 6.8 The University has a risk assessment for applicants who are under the age of 18 on registration (or under the age of 18 at the beginning of any academic year), which considers steps that need to be taken to admit and support such applicants, and fulfil safeguarding duties.

- 6.9 The University reserves the right to refuse applicants on the strength of information believed to be either fraudulent or plagiarised, and reserves the right to reject an application or cancel an offer made under these circumstances, as outlined in the University's statement of policy on [fraudulent applications](#).
- 6.10 International applicants should indicate whether they require the University to act as a sponsor for the purposes of a visa application. When considering an application, the University will take into account a student's eligibility to meet the necessary [UK visa requirements](#) for the full duration of their course. The University reserves the right to reject an application, in circumstances where these requirements cannot be met. Further information may be requested from applicants to enable the University to consider such their situation.
- 6.11 A small number of undergraduate MEng and MSci courses require Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance. Non-EEA/Swiss nationals who hold offers for one of these courses will require ATAS clearance prior to registering at the University. For more information on the scheme and how to apply for clearance, please visit the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) website.
- 6.12 Applicants who submit multiple applications, either within a cycle or across admissions cycles, will have each application considered separately, unless an application has been withdrawn by the University in line with these policies and procedures.
- 6.13 The University reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered unsuitable for a place on a particular course or for attendance at the University, in accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy, Acceptable Behaviour Policy, or any other relevant policy.

7 Offers and decisions

- 7.1 Decisions on applications will be communicated to the applicant by email and via UCAS Track.
- 7.2 When an application is selected for offer, the offer made may be unconditional (if the entry requirements have been met in full) or conditional (where certain conditions must still be met).
- 7.3 A conditional offer is normally made at the typical offer level published, or the published contextual offer level if relevant. Participants on the Bristol Scholars scheme are eligible for the specific offer relevant to that scheme.
- 7.4 Offers are specific to a course, entry point and year of entry. Any request to change course or year of entry will be considered by the University but not necessarily agreed.
- 7.5 The University has two main tuition fee levels: a 'home' fee and an 'overseas' fee. For most applicants, this tuition fee status is determined through information provided in the application form, and is communicated to students when an offer is made. Tuition fee status is assessed in line with the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 and the Student Fees (Qualifying Courses and Persons) (England) Regulations 2007, and based on guidance provided by UKCISA, the UK Council for International Student Affairs.
- 7.6 Where a fee status cannot be determined from the information provided in the application form, the University may request specific information from an applicant via a fee status questionnaire, usually after an offer is made but occasionally beforehand. Applicants have the right to request that their fee status be reviewed once after the decision has been made, but such requests must be submitted within four weeks of the offer being made, and no later than 31 July in the year of

application. For offers made after 31 July, any review request must be submitted within seven days of the offer.

- 7.7 The University has the right to review a fee status if it considers any information in the application to be inaccurate. A change in fee status may result in the offer of a place on a course being reconsidered.
- 7.8 A conditional offer may include additional requirements, such as meeting the relevant English language profile, completing administrative or immigration compliance tasks, gaining occupational health clearance or verifying qualifications. Where this is a condition of the offer, the offer will not be considered to have been met until applicants provide evidence of meeting the requirements.
- 7.9 Where an application is not successful for the original course, the University may offer the applicant a place on an alternative course for which they are eligible. Such an offer will only be made once the original application has been made unsuccessful. The University will communicate with the applicant to explain the reasons behind any alternative course offer.
- 7.10 Where an applicant to a full-time undergraduate course is unsuccessful, the University will email the applicant to explain the reasons for the decision in general terms, by providing contextual data about competition levels and the admissions procedures followed. The email will be sent at the time the decision is sent to UCAS. Requests for further, individual feedback can be made if the reason for the unsuccessful decision is still unclear. The process for requesting feedback can be found in the [Applicant Appeals, Complaints and Feedback policy](#).
- 7.11 The University monitors the numbers of applications, offers and acceptances for each course carefully, in order to make the number of offers expected to deliver undergraduate intake targets for each course. All applications received before the UCAS equal consideration deadline will be considered on the same basis, although offers will begin to be made before of this deadline.
- 7.12 Applicants who receive an offer from the University may consider whether or not to accept it by a given deadline. Once an applicant declines an offer, the University is not obliged to honour the original offer if the applicant then asks to change their response. Applicants should contact the admissions team as soon as possible if they wish to change their response, and any reconsideration may be subject to agreement from the University and any other institutions affected.

8 Meeting the terms of an offer

- 8.1 All applicants who firmly accept an offer from the University (or accept an offer as Insurance and are not confirmed by their Firm choice) and who meet the terms of their offer in full will have their place confirmed.
- 8.2 Applicants who firmly accept an offer from the University (or accept an offer as Insurance and are not confirmed by their Firm choice) who do not meet the terms of their offer in full may still be considered for a confirmed place, depending on the individual application and results, and the availability of places on the course. Decisions are made in line with the principles outlined in this document.
- 8.3 All offer holders are required to provide confirmation of their results, with formal translations where necessary, for any qualifications listed in their offer by the stated deadline, either automatically from their exam board or directly to the University. Where results cannot be verified by the University, offer holders may be required to provide the University with original

documentation in order to register or maintain their registration as a student.

- 8.4 In the event of exceptional circumstances that make it impossible to assess whether applicants have met the terms of their offer, the University reserves the right to use alternative assessment methods, including, but not limited to, use of prior assessment and/or scoring of applications, or any other method(s) deemed most appropriate, to decide which firm offer holders' places to confirm. Should such steps be required, the University will make every effort to offer places to firm offer holders who had achieved the terms of their offers but who had not been allocated a place under the alternative assessment methods.

University of Bristol, July 2018