

Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#).

Year of admissions cycle: 2015

Courses covered:

Single Honours:

BSc Politics and International Relations (L200)
BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods (L202)
MSci Politics with Quantitative Methods (L203)
BSc Sociology (L300)
BSc Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L302)
MSci Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L303)
BSc Sociology with Study Abroad (L301)

Joint Honours:

BSc Economics and Politics (LL12)
BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)
BA Politics and French (RL12)
BA Politics and German (RL22)
BA Politics and Italian (RL32)
BA Politics and Portuguese (RL52)
BA Politics and Russian (RL72)
BSc Politics and Sociology (LL23)
BA Politics and Spanish (RL42)
BSc Social Policy and Politics (LL42)
BSc Sociology and Social Policy (LL43)
BSc Sociology and Philosophy (LV35)
BSc Theology and Sociology (VL63)

Admissions process

1. Admissions team

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with admissions tutor/s.

2. Application assessment methods

All applications are considered on an equal basis. Applications are not segregated by the type of educational institution attended.

All applications that are received on time (in accordance with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applications are scored according to their (achieved or predicted) A-levels and their GCSE results (or equivalent), using the following weighting:

Course	A-levels	GCSE	Personal statement
BSc Politics and International Relations (L200)	30%	-	70%
BSc Politics with Quantitative Methods (L202)	30%	-	70%
MSci Politics with Quantitative Methods (L203)	30%	-	70%
BSc Sociology (L300)	100%	-	-
BSc Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L302)	100%	-	-
MSci Sociology with Quantitative Methods (L303)	100%	-	-
BSc Sociology with Study Abroad (L301)	100%	-	-
BSc Economics and Politics (LL12)	75%	25%	-
BSc Philosophy and Politics (VL52)	60%	-	40%
BA Politics and French (RL12)	30%	10%	60%
BA Politics and German (RL22)	30%	10%	60%
BA Politics and Italian (RL32)	30%	10%	60%
BA Politics and Portuguese (RL52)	30%	10%	60%
BA Politics and Russian (RL72)	30%	10%	60%
BSc Politics and Sociology (LL23)	30%	-	70%
BA Politics and Spanish (RL42)	30%	10%	60%
BSc Social Policy and Politics (LL42)	25%	-	75%
BSc Sociology and Social Policy (LL43)	100%	-	-
BSc Sociology and Philosophy (LV35)	40%	-	60%
BSc Theology and Sociology (VL63)	70%	30%	-

Applications will be assessed on the basis of their application form only; we cannot take into account any additional information received from an applicant or institution, unless we have requested it.

We do not consider any direct applications to the University.

All applications for Joint Honours courses are also assessed in relation to the other subject's selection criteria so the other relevant admissions statement should also be consulted.

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.

3. Interview or visit day

Applicants who receive an offer will be invited to a visit day in February/ March. Although applicants are actively encouraged to participate, attendance is not compulsory and does not affect the decision of the admissions team, nor does it form a part of the selection process.

4. Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an application's status will be sent by email.

All applications are acknowledged by email on receipt (starting in mid-September), to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed.

Applicants will then be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful, or to inform them that their application has been assessed but that we will not be able to make a final decision until later in the cycle.

Applicants who receive an offer will receive an invitation to a visit day.

5. Deferred applications

We will consider applications for deferred entry (i.e. 2016). Applications are treated in the same way as for those seeking direct entry.

Criteria for assessing applicants

1. Academic entry requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Baccalaureate, GCSEs) can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#). Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; [further information](#) is available.

2. Additional academic criteria

The School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies is interested in academic potential rather than simply academic attainment so far. Admissions tutors draw on actual and predicted attainment, the educational context, the personal statement and the reference in making this assessment.

Where appropriate the School will take into account contextual information such as school performance, educational disadvantage, or exceptional challenges which the candidate has faced. In so doing, reference may be made to information in the public domain concerning school performance, as well as information supplied by the applicant/referee.

For students who have not previously studied social science subjects, their personal statement should indicate how their chosen A-level (or equivalent) studies are relevant to the particular degree and/or explain why they are choosing to take a different academic direction for their degree.

A-levels in General Studies and Critical Thinking are not included in our assessment of applicants or in the terms of offers.

3. Personal statement criteria

In cases where we refer to the personal statement and reference to differentiate between applicants with very similar academic profiles, the admissions team take into account the following when assessing personal statements:

- evidence of individual engagement with the course of study, as well as empirical evidence of a commitment to the subject that goes beyond the A-Level (or equivalent) syllabus;

- evidence of independent, critical engagement with the themes and controversies that underpin the discipline (ie what specifically is it that enthuses you about the debates you engage with, the books you read and the ideas you discuss?);
- a sense of the individual – what interests you and why;
- additional hobbies, interests and activities.

4. Reference criteria

References should ideally be from a school or college, from a personal tutor confirming the academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous achievement, evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

The reference will be included in the assessment of the personal statement and the criteria will include the following:

- accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in light of previous GCSE and AS level (or equivalent) achievement;
- evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies, and if there are any educational or special circumstances;
- evidence of the applicant's interest in, and commitment to, the discipline;
- evidence of the applicant's extra-curricular activities and responsibilities.

5. Additional tests

Not applicable.

6. Interview

In the majority of cases, admissions decisions will be made on the basis of the application alone. However, in some cases an applicant may be invited to attend an interview in order to further discuss their application, eg if the applicant has been out of education for a number of years, or if a non-standard qualification is offered.

7. Mature applicants

The school welcomes mature applicants. Although there are no fixed academic requirements, evidence of recent study and examinations is expected. In some cases mature applicants may be invited to interview (see **6. Interview** above).

8. International applicants

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here:

www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

We also consider applications for these courses through the Common Application system, and the same criteria and assessment used for UCAS applicants are applied. Applicants can only be considered through one application route; we cannot consider applicants through the Common Application who have also applied to Bristol and/or other institutions through UCAS.

9. English Language requirements for non-native speakers

All applicants are required to demonstrate that they have sufficient ability to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written English in order to benefit fully from their degree course.

English Language requirements for each course can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#) and are explained at www.bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

10. Contextual information

We take a holistic approach to all applications, ensuring that the educational and social context in which an applicant applies is taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement. This may include time spent in Local Authority care, information about which can be provided in the application.

As part of our commitment to the UK national agenda on widening participation, we consider the educational context in which grades have been achieved, particularly if there is evidence that an applicant's current school or college performs below a defined threshold.

When assessing whether applicants meet our academic requirements, contextual criteria may be applied to those who attend and apply from a school or college which in the previous year ranked in the bottom 40 per cent in any of the following categories:

- average score per A-level entry;
- average score per A-level entrant;
- percentage of students applying to higher education.

If an applicant meets one of these criteria, we will raise their predicted/achieved grades by one grade in our rankings; ie an AAB applicant will be awarded the same academic score as an AAA applicant. Applicants still need to satisfy specific subject requirements. Contextual offers are usually one grade lower than the standard offer.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage and low-performing schools each year and each case is considered on an individual basis.

We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include participation in higher education outreach activities, attendance at a University summer school or a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol or Realising Opportunities where applicants receive special consideration and in some cases, guaranteed and/or lower offers; please see the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#) for more information). We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant (e.g. independent school, state school, academy), or whether an applicant's parent has any experience of higher education.

Offers

Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the entry data in the online [undergraduate course finder](#). Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will

be made equivalent to the published A-level offer. Offer conditions may specify achievement in subjects most appropriate to the course of study (usually essay-based subjects appropriate to study in the social sciences).

We recognise that some applicants may achieve higher than their predicted grades, and so we may also consider applicants who are predicted to achieve one grade below the entry requirements (as long as this is in a non-specified subject). Any offer made would be at the standard level.

We may make lower 'contextual' offers based on whether an applicant is deemed to have experienced educational disadvantage, as defined in section 7.5 of the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#) (see also **Criteria for assessing applicants: 10. Contextual information** above).

Other

1. Transfers

It is occasionally possible to change degree courses at the end of the first year (either to joint honours or single honours), but there is no automatic right to do so. The factors that we take into account are academic merit as well as availability of places. If our degree courses are full, our policy is that we do not allow any transfers at all.

2. Additional information

The University can only guarantee places if the exact terms of the offer are met, however offer holders would not automatically be unsuccessful if the terms of the offer are missed by one grade. If offer holders do not meet the terms of their offer when exam results are released they may be considered as a 'near miss candidate'. All near miss candidates are reviewed mid-August after those who have met the terms of their offer have been confirmed. International offer holders may be reconsidered earlier depending when their exam results are released.

Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: socsci-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 928 8154.