

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 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, ethnicity (including race, colour, nationality), gender (including gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy or maternity), religion or belief, sexual orientation (including civil partnership status). All applicants are considered on an equal basis.

1.5 The University will review its Principles and Procedures annually in the light of experience, research, relevant legislation and best practice (e.g. 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 will be processed in line with the University's [Student Fair Processing Notice](#). The University will correspond about a decision only with the applicant, or their nominee with express consent from the applicant. Where an applicant is using an Agent (or Educational Representative) to complete their application, and the contact email address provided is that of the Agent, the University will communicate with and accept response(s) and information provided by the Agent on behalf of the applicant.

2.2 The University will publish a course profile for each course both in the University's own publications and through UCAS. This will include key information about the course, the typical offer, additional entry requirements, application process and deadlines. This

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

- 2.3 The University will publish the Admissions Policies and Procedures and an Admissions Statement for each course by 1 August each year for entry the following September.
- 2.4 Each Admissions Statement will explain the selection criteria and procedures for that course, including information on how applications will be assessed. This will include:
 - specific criteria against which the applicants will be assessed by the Admissions Team;
 - an indication of how different components of the application will be weighted;
 - the process for considering applications and assessing applicants, including any additional assessment requirements such as interviews, tests or written work.
- 2.5 All decisions on applications are made subject to strict quality assurance procedures, which will 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.
- 2.6 The University will make 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, e.g. consideration for another course.

3 How we assess an application

- 3.1 For many courses at the University, the number of applications from eligible applicants by far exceeds the number of offers which 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 in place to select which applicants receive an offer will support the University's Admissions Aims, be in accordance 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 fairly applicants applying with vocational and international qualifications, which are applied consistently for all courses. Equivalencies for many qualifications are published online and where this is not published, advice can be requested from the Admissions Team.
- 3.3 Applications will normally be 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 access to opportunities to take additional qualifications. The University does not consider performance in A-level General Studies or 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, this will be declared in their Admissions Statement.

- 3.4 A course's typical 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. If a course will consider making an aspirational offer to applicants with predicted grades lower than the typical offer, this will be stated in the Admissions Statement for the particular course. Meeting these minimum requirements does not guarantee an offer.
- 3.5 The personal statement and reference provide important supplementary indications of ability, motivation and potential, as well as information about personal circumstances and social and cultural context. The Admissions Statement for each course will set out how the Personal Statement and Reference are considered in assessing an application, and which criteria they are assessed against.
- 3.6 Interviews may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. If interviews are required before any offer can be made for a particular course, this will be clearly stated in the Admissions Statement. Interviews may also be considered 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 non-typical qualifications have been taken. Any interviews will be conducted by at least two people, including a member of University staff who has undertaken training on fair and effective recruitment. Interview candidates will be advised of the criteria for measuring performance at interview and a record of the interview will be taken and submitted to the Admissions Team.
- 3.7 Supplementary written work may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. If this is the case for all applications to a particular course, this will be clearly stated in the Admissions Statement. Clear guidance on what is required, any deadlines and how work will be assessed will be provided. In certain circumstances, the University may invite an applicant to submit additional written information, eg an alternate personal statement. Additional information provided which has not been requested will not be considered.
- 3.8 Admissions tests (eg LNAT, UKCAT) may be required as part of the application process for particular courses. If all applicants must complete a test before their application can be considered, this will be made clear in the Admissions Statement, including how the test result will contribute to the overall assessment. Other applicants may also 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 non-typical qualifications have been taken.

4 Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.1 The University recognises that individual applicants' educational attainment and experience may be impacted by a range of factors, (eg illness, death of a parent, disrupted education, etc.) When acknowledging their application, all applicants are invited to provide the University with details and evidence of any circumstances they wish to be taken into consideration, and advised of the format for this information to be provided, documentation required and deadlines that apply. 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.
- 4.2 Extenuating circumstances may be considered when assessing whether to make an offer of a place or an interview, including in considering an applicant's academic attainment and their personal statement.

- 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 to be an appropriate response to the extenuating circumstances.
- 4.4 Extenuating circumstances may also be considered after examination results are published, 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 The University will consider making a contextual offer to an applicant if they meet one of the following criteria:
- Attending (or 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.
 - Home address in a Polar 1 or 2 category
 - Having spent more than 4 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 an interview, including in assessing an applicant's academic attainment and their personal statement. Where a decision is made to offer a place, applicants from these 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. Applicants are encouraged to disclose any disability that may require adjustments to our admissions process; this will not affect your chances of receiving an offer from the University. [Disability Services](#) can provide further advice as necessary. In the unlikely event that the University decides that adjustments required to support an applicant during their education cannot reasonably be made, the University will contact the applicant directly to confirm this 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, will be considered on an individual basis, in line with the general aims and principles of the Admissions Principles and Procedures.
- 6.4 Participants in University of Bristol Widening Participation programmes, including nominated applicants from Merchants' Academy (the school co-sponsored by the University) will be guaranteed an offer of a place at the University if an interview would not otherwise be required and provided that they have are taking and/ or have achieved qualifications which would enable them to meet the offer in full. Where an interview is required, such applicants will be 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 will be guaranteed an offer of a place at the University if an interview would not otherwise be required and provided that they have are taking and/ or have achieved qualifications which would enable them to meet the offer in full. Where an interview is required, such applicants will be 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 The University will disregard any criminal convictions that are spent under the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, unless the course of study is likely to bring the student into contact with children or vulnerable adults. Where this is the case, a disclosure will be sought through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Where an applicant has an unspent (or spent in relevant cases) conviction, a decision on whether to offer a place will be made in accordance with the University guidelines for the recruitment of students with a criminal conviction.
- 6.7 Applicants who will be under the age of 18 on registration as a student of the University will be 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 When an applicant who will be under the age of 17 on registration as a student of the University is considered eligible for an offer, the School Admissions and Recruitment Officer will be required to complete a risk assessment on behalf of the department (or departments) responsible for their particular course. This will include considering any issues raised and steps which would need to be taken to admit the applicant. If the University decides that it is unable to adequately address any risks identified, the University reserves the right to not make an offer on this basis.
- 6.9 The University reserves the right to not admit 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 statement of policy on fraudulent applications.

- 6.10 As the University is held responsible for the immigration status of all students, the University reserves the right to not make an offer to an applicant where it is reasonably decided that the applicant may not receive an appropriate visa for the duration of their course. Further information may be requested from applicants to enable the University to consider such as situation.
- 6.11 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.
- 6.12 The University reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered to be unsuitable for a place on a particular course or for attendance at the University, in accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity policy, Acceptable Behaviour policy, or any other relevant policy of the University.

7 Offers

- 7.1 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).
- 7.2 A conditional offer will normally be made at the typical offer level published, or the published contextual offer level if relevant. Participants on the Bristol Scholars scheme will be eligible for the specific offer relevant to that scheme.
- 7.3 An offer made will be 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 will not necessarily be agreed.
- 7.4 When an offer is made, it will specify if the applicant is considered by the University to be have Overseas fee status. The University may request specific information from an applicant before or after an offer is made to clarify their fee status. An applicant may request that their fee status be re-assessed. The University reserves the right to withdraw or change an offer made on the basis of a particular fee status if that fee status no longer applies.
- 7.5 A conditional offer may include additional requirements, such as meeting the relevant English Language profile, completing an administrative task, receiving Occupational Health clearance, immigration compliance tasks, etc. Where this is made a condition of the offer, the offer will not be considered to have been met until evidence of satisfactorily completing this has been received.
- 7.6 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. This offer will only be made once the original application has been made unsuccessful. If this is the case, this alternative course offer will be communicated to the applicant and the reasons explained.
- 7.7 If an application is not to be made an offer and is instead made unsuccessful, the University will send an e-mail to the applicant explaining the outcome and the outline reason behind it. Applicants do not have the right to appeal against an admissions decision or to ask for it to

be reviewed, but may request further feedback on their application or, if the University's admissions principles and procedures have been incorrectly implemented, to make a complaint in line with the University's applicant feedback and complaints procedures.

- 7.8 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 the University's undergraduate intake targets for each course. All applications received before the Equal Consideration Deadline will be considered on the same basis, though offers will begin to be made before of this deadline.
- 7.9 Applicants who receive an offer from the University are able to consider whether or not to accept it by a deadline they are given. If an applicant declines an offer the University is not obliged to honour the original offer if the applicant requests to change their response. Any such request should be made to the Admissions Team as soon as possible, and may require agreement from the University and any other institutions impacted.

8 Meeting the terms of your 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 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. This will be based on the individual application and results, as well as the places available. Any decisions made will be in line with the University Admissions Aims and these Admissions Policies and Procedures.
- 8.3 All offer holders will be required to provide confirmation of their results in any qualifications listed in their offer by the stated deadline, either automatically from their exam board or directly to the University. Where this result cannot be verified by the University, offer holders will be required to provide the University with original documentation in order to register as a student.
- 8.4 In the event of exceptional circumstances which make it impossible to assess whether applicants have met the terms of their offer, the University reserves the right to use alternative 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 possible 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 emergency procedures.

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