



# **University of Brighton**

## **Admissions Policy and Procedures**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Scope**

This policy covers programmes leading to approved awards of the University of Brighton. This policy will outline the University's commitment to the admissions of students to taught programmes who will benefit from a rewarding university experience.

#### **1.2 Purpose**

This policy provides the framework for admission procedures relating to applications across the University. It is intended to provide guidance to University staff, applicants, parents, teachers and any other interested party on the University's procedures for admitting students.

The Policy supports the University's strategic goals relating to the recruitment of students as detailed in the Corporate Plan.

#### **1.3 Admissions Statement**

The University of Brighton is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and to benefit from study at undergraduate level. Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, gender identity, marital status, family responsibilities, disability, age, sexuality, political or religious beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction.

The University's admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applicants are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

### **2 ENTRY CRITERIA AND THE SELECTION PROCESS**

#### **2.1 Roles and Responsibilities**

The University operates a centrally run admissions function for all UGT, PGT and PGR courses. The Admissions Department holds responsibility for UGT and PGT and the Doctoral College holds responsibility for PGR. Both these departments sit within Academic Services which has overall management of all aspects of admissions processing with the exception of small, bespoke CPD courses that some Schools still retain.

University Schools work in a collaborative arrangement with Academic Services and are responsible for setting entry and assessment criteria for each programme at the beginning of each admissions cycle. Faculties and schools have overall responsibility for ensuring that the University recruits its target number of students in each admissions cycle.

Student number targets will be set by the Management Group after discussions between Deans and the Strategic Planning Office (SPO) and will be disseminated by the SPO. These are confirmed during the Spring Term following publication of the Higher Education Funding Council, Teaching Development Agency and Department for Health student numbers allocation to institutions.

Heads of Schools are responsible for setting admissions targets with Admissions Tutors in order to achieve overall target numbers.

## **2.2 Entry Criteria**

The University has documented minimum standard entry requirements for all programmes.

These entry requirements and typical offers for each course are published annually in a hard copy prospectus, on the University website at [www.brighton.ac.uk](http://www.brighton.ac.uk) and on the UCAS website for undergraduate programmes. These criteria are set by the Faculties and Schools in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The University reserves the right to amend its entry requirements before the proposed starting point of admission cycle. Amended entry requirements will be published on the University website and the UCAS website for undergraduate applicants.

The University considers a wide range of UK, EU and Overseas qualifications for entry to all programmes. The University is committed to giving full and fair consideration to all entry qualification presented by individual applicants.

Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated in an English-speaking environment (country and/or institution) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of IELTS 6.0 or equivalent to be admitted to a first year undergraduate programme. The minimum entry requirement for direct entry to the second year of an undergraduate or entry onto a postgraduate programme is IELTS 6.5 or equivalent. Some course may require a higher level and this will be indicated on our website. A lower English requirement may apply to foundation level study. The University accepts a range of English language qualifications as being equivalent to IELTS.

The University welcomes applications from those with previous academic credit, provided that it is clear that an applicant has fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the programme of study by means other than attendance on the planned programme, and will be able, by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the objectives of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, the applicant may be admitted to an appropriate point in the programme at the discretion of the School offering the programme.

The University has a formal Credit Accumulation and Transfer System to facilitate the progress of non-traditional entrants, to provide enhanced opportunities for continuing professional education and to further the incorporation of employment-based learning for credit. Details of the System are laid down in the University's Common Academic Framework.

The University also welcomes applications from those who have significant work or life experience and who may not necessarily meet the published academic requirements for their chosen programme. Applicants will be required to provide evidence of motivation, skills, experience and attitude, as expressed in his/her personal statement and the academic reference. The Admissions Tutor must be satisfied that an applicant's work or life experience is equivalent to the qualifications that other applicants will be studying. The University will only offer a place where there is evidence that an applicant is capable of completing their chosen programme with a good final classification.

## 2.3 Assessment and Selection

The University is committed to equal consideration of all undergraduate applications received by the UCAS deadline of 15<sup>th</sup> January in each admissions cycle. The University observes all rules and procedures laid down by UCAS when processing undergraduate applications.

Each application is considered on an individual basis against the assessment criteria for each programme that are set by academic staff within the Faculties and Schools in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor. These criteria are set at the beginning of each admissions cycle and cannot be amended once the offer process has started. Assessment is based on the information provided by the applicant on the UCAS application form or the University of Brighton on-line application form.

In accordance with the University's commitment to fair admissions, each application is considered individually by an Admissions Tutor or dedicated administrator, who will determine whether an offer should be made on the basis of academic achievements to date, predicted academic achievement and other evidence of the applicant's ability and potential to complete the programme for which s/he has applied. This includes evidence of the applicant's motivation, skills, experience and attitude, as expressed in his/her personal statement and the academic reference. For applicants who may require sponsorship in order to study in the UK, admissions decisions will be informed by the University's *Sponsorship Policy for International Students*.

The University is committed to the WP agenda and aims to encourage and support a diverse student population. Therefore, the Admissions Tutor may use other contextual data provided by UCAS in their decision making.

The Admissions Tutor may take into account any extenuating circumstances which have affected an individual applicant when deciding whether an offer should be made.

Based upon this information the Admissions Tutor will decide whether to consider the application further. Entry to the university is competitive and the university receives far more applications than there are places for most of its courses so not every applicant will receive an offer of a place.

Applicants to particular courses will be invited to attend an interview as part of the selection process. Individual applicants to other courses may also be invited to interview if their application is based on significant work or life experience or if they have non-standard qualifications.

Applicants who have been made an offer without attending an interview will normally be invited to attend an admissions day as this provides applicants with an opportunity to make an informed choice about whether they would like to study at the university.

## 2.4 Offer-Making

Where the University decides to make the applicant an offer, this is communicated to undergraduate applicants via UCAS Track and via the University of Brighton Admissions Portal and in writing by letter from the University. The offer will set out any conditions that the applicant must meet.

If an applicant is currently studying towards academic qualifications it is likely that a conditional offer will be made that will require the applicant to fulfil certain requirements either academic or otherwise before a place is confirmed. If an applicant has already achieved the requirements for admission an unconditional offer of a place will be made.

The offer sets out the specific entry requirements that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her place to be confirmed. The offer will be expressed in terms of A level grades or the equivalent for applicants who are taking alternative qualifications. Where appropriate the offer will include the English language requirement that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her place to be confirmed.

The University normally makes the Standard Conditional Offer for the course. However, Admissions Tutors may make a lower offer in individual cases.

The offer may also set out non-academic conditions that the applicant must meet before admission to the course can be confirmed. These may include satisfactory completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau check) and an occupational health check.

Confirmation decisions are made based on the information provided by UCAS via the Awarding Body Linkage (ABL) process where the applicant has a conditional offer based on qualifications that are provided in the ABL. In all other cases decisions are made based on the results sent in by the applicant or by their school/collage/university. Applicants are responsible for providing their results to the University by 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year in which they have applied.

### **3 ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1 Admission of Disabled Applicants**

The University encourages applicants with a disability or long term health condition to disclose information about their condition as early as possible in the application process to ensure the necessary support arrangements can be put in place during the admissions cycle and before they arrive at the University.

No applicant judged academically suitable for a course should be refused admission on the grounds of disability without compelling and legally defensible reasons.

Applicants who declare a disability in their application are referred to the University's Disability and Dyslexia Team, which may issue advice and guidance or, where appropriate, make an assessment of the applicant's reasonable adjustment needs and what arrangements may be necessary to enable students to meet the course requirements. In individual cases the Disability and Dyslexia Team may invite applicants for an interview to support the assessment process. The Disability and Dyslexia's Team assessment of applications from students who declare a disability takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with standard policy.

Occasionally the nature of an applicant's disability will conflict in essence with the nature of the course. For further information and guidance in these areas, please consult the Disability and Dyslexia Team.

It is important to note that any decision to offer, or not to offer a place to a disabled applicant must be made in the light of appropriate reasonable adjustment. An applicant may only be refused entry to a course on the grounds of disability if all reasonable support and adjustment has been considered and dismissed. This decision will be made by the Admissions Tutor and the appropriate member of staff in the Disability and Dyslexia Team, with guidance from other appropriate professionals where relevant.

#### **3.2 Admission of Minors**

Applications to all courses will be assessed using the standard entry criteria for each course, irrespective of the applicant's age on entry. Applicants who are under 18 should be aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the University while they are under 18. In accordance with University regulations, applicants who will be under 18 at the time of entry will be required to comply with University child protection procedures.

#### **3.3 Criminal Convictions**

Applicants are required by UCAS to declare criminal convictions that are not spent at the time of application. If the Admissions Tutor recommends that an offer be made, such applications will be referred for consideration in accordance with the University's Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. Formal offers of admission will only be made following consideration of the conviction and application in accordance with the Policy. Application of the Policy takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with standard admissions policy.

Applicants for specific courses, such as NHS-funded and Initial Teacher Training courses, may be required to declare spent criminal convictions and will be notified of this where appropriate.

### **3.4 Similarity Detection and Fraud**

Applications submitted via UCAS are subject to the anti-fraud procedures and checks carried out by UCAS. All personal statements submitted via UCAS are subject to the UCAS similarity detection procedure. Where a personal statement contains significant similarities to another previously submitted to UCAS the University is notified of this and of the extent of the similarity.

All applications highlighted by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service are sent to the Admissions Tutor for consideration. If the Admissions Tutor wishes to make a conditional or unconditional offer, the applicant may be invited to submit a revised personal statement by a specific date, normally within two weeks of the request. On receipt of the revised personal statement the application will be scrutinised by the Admissions Tutor and a selection decision will be made in accordance with standard procedures.

### **3.5 Deferred Entry**

The University recognises the advantages that some students can gain from a 'gap year'. An applicant wishing to apply to the university but defer entry to the following September, will normally indicate this on the application form. Applicants should be encouraged to provide a brief outline in the personal statement of the reason(s) for choosing to defer entry. Admissions Tutors will consider applicants on the same basis as applicants for the year prior to entry and applicants will receive correspondence during that year from the university.

The University will normally only allow deferred entry for up to a maximum of two years.

### **3.6 Fee Status Assessment**

Applicants are required to declare their fee status when they complete their application form, selecting from a number of options including UK home, EU or overseas (non-EU) fee status. The Admissions Team checks information in the UCAS application relating to fee status, including the nationality, country of residence, address and declared fee status of each applicant.

Where the combination of information provided suggests that the fee status declared by the applicant may be incorrect, the University carries out a fee status assessment. Fee status assessments are carried out by trained members of admissions staff in accordance with UK fees and awards regulations and guidance provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs ([www.ukcisa.org](http://www.ukcisa.org)). The University does not exercise discretion when determining applicants' fee status.

The University reserves the right to amend an applicant's fee status after the formal offer has been issued.

Confirmation of the applicant's fee status is included in the offer letter issued to the applicant.

### **3.7 Discontinuation or suspension of courses**

The University reserves the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued, but undertakes to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, are offered a place on an alternative course offered by the University.

#### **4. FEEDBACK, APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS**

The University strives to treat all applications fairly and without prejudice.

##### **4.1 Feedback**

The University will provide feedback on request to applicants who have not been offered a place. Applicants are able to request feedback at any time during the admissions year in which they are applying.

##### **4.2 Appeals**

An appeal refers to the decision reached rather than how the application has been dealt with.

The University considers each application on its own merits, in relation to published selection criteria and within the context of the number of places available on any individual course.

Due to the finite number of places available on any course, the University acknowledges that where a course is oversubscribed some, suitably qualified, applicants may not be offered a place.

The University reserves the right to make independent academic decisions on applications to be admitted to any of its courses and will not enter into dialogue about any other individual applicant to a course.

An applicant who is considering making an appeal against the decision made upon their application to the University should initially seek feedback from the Admissions Tutor.

If the situation is not resolved, the next stage is to make a formal appeal, in writing, to the Head of School.

In responding to such cases, the Admissions Tutor or Head of School may wish to seek advice, if necessary, from the Admissions Manager (Academic Services).

It is advisable that any such appeal contains clarification of information already provided in the original application. Whilst additional information will be received, it must be acknowledged that this must not give the appellant an unfair advantage over other applicants who will not have had this opportunity through the normal application process.

Thereafter, if the applicant continues to be dissatisfied, the appellant should contact the Registrar & Secretary in writing. The decision of the Registrar and Secretary is final.

##### **4.3 Complaints**

A complaint is distinct from an appeal as a complaint refers to how the application decision was reached rather than the decision itself.

A complaint should be dealt with quickly and as close as possible to the point at which it arises. Applicants should be advised that, if they are not satisfied with the way in which an application has been considered, they should first write to or speak with the Admissions Tutor concerned.

If they remain dissatisfied, they should contact the Head of School.

In responding to such cases, the Admissions Tutor or Head of School may wish to seek advice, if necessary, from the Admissions Manager (Academic Services)

Thereafter, if applicants continue to be dissatisfied, they should contact the Registrar & Secretary in writing. The decision of the Registrar and Secretary is final.

## **5 DATA PROTECTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH APPLICANTS**

The Academic Services Admissions Department aims to operate in compliance with data protection legislation and good records management practice. Applicants' data is treated as confidential by all staff involved in the admissions process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately.

In accordance with University policy, staff involved in admissions, communicate only with applicants themselves, unless the applicant has given express permission for a third party to communicate on his/her behalf. Third parties may be parents, teachers, advisers or agents acting on behalf of applicants.

## **6 PUBLICATIONS**

The University seeks to provide clear, accurate and transparent information about its courses that is appropriate to the needs of prospective applicants in external publications regardless of the medium (i.e. printed, audio-visual, electronic etc.) enabling them to make choices in an informed manner.

All university and external publications, or university information in external publications which detail admission requirements, should be in accord with university policy and should be produced in liaison with the Marketing & Communications Office and Academic Services as appropriate.

All advertising of courses should be in consultation with the Marketing & Communications Office.

## **7 COMMUNICATION NETWORK**

There will normally be four meetings of the Admissions Process Group each year, which will provide the opportunity for discussion of admission issues, developments and good practice.

Membership will be: two representatives (or their nominees) from each academic school; the Director of Academic Services; the Admissions Manager (Academic Services Admissions); the Senior Admissions Officer (Academic Services Admissions); the Head of Marketing & Communications (or nominee) and the International Development Manager.

The meetings will be organised by the Admissions Manager (Academic Services Admissions) and will ideally be held in February, May, August and November of each year. The dates of the meetings are set a year in advance as part of the university calendar.

## **8 TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

The University is committed to providing a professional admissions service and to ensure that all admissions staff are fully trained in procedures and are kept aware of any changes in policy. The Academic Services Admissions Department provides training on request to both academic and support services staff, covering UCAS rules and Procedures, University policies and procedures, and University admissions software. The Academic Services Admissions Department also provided training on Confirmation and Clearing processes on an annual basis.

Admissions staff are encouraged to attend conference and training sessions organised by external bodies such as UCAS and SPA in order to develop their admissions knowledge and keep up to date with Government policy and UCAS procedures.

## **9 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Admissions Policy is approved by the Recruitment & Admissions Committee. Implementation of the policy is the responsibility of the Admissions Manager. It is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it continues to support the strategic objectives of the University and that it remains valid in light of changes to Government policy and UCAS regulations and procedures.

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