



RICHMOND
THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
IN LONDON

Admissions Policy & Summary of Practice

From Fall 2013 Entry

This document is available in hard copy and on the University portal and internet sites. Please contact the Marketing Recruitment and Admissions department if you have any difficulty in obtaining a copy that you can read, or find any aspect of these regulations difficult to understand.

Admission Policy & Summary of Practice

From Fall 2013 entry

Contents

Key Principles	1
1 Principles & Purpose	3
2 Roles & Responsibilities	4
2.1 Key Roles	
2.2 Training & Support for Staff	
2.3 Responsibilities of Applicants	
2.4 Confidentiality and Disclosure	
3 Dissemination of Information and Support to Prospective Students	7
4 The Admission Process	8
4.1 Routes	
4.2 Milestones & Service Levels	
4.3 Request to Defer a Place	
4.4 Use of Changed Course Offers	
4.5 Changes to Programmes	
4.6 Credit Transfer	
5 Assessment of Prospective Students	13
5.1 Setting and Monitoring Admission Criteria	
5.2 The Entry Criteria	
5.3 Information & Activities to assess Prospective Students	
5.4 Variations and Adjustments for Specific Groups	
5.5 Recording and Communicating Decisions	
6 Joining the University	16
6.1 Offering a Place	
6.2 Induction & Integration	
7 Feedback, Appeals & Complaints	17
7.1 Feedback	
7.2 Appeals	
7.3 Complaints	
8 Implementation, Dissemination, Monitoring & Review	18

Key Principles:

1. This policy provides prospective students, University faculty & staff and partner organisations alike with a guide to our *approach* to the admission of students to pre-sessional, foundation BA and Masters programmes, including individual applications from visiting students outside of exchange schemes.

Our priority for admissions is to match prospective students with the programme of study and entry point that best meets their academic and vocational needs and individual circumstances, while ensuring that our operating objectives are met. In achieving this, we make a commitment that our approach to the admission of students is:

- transparent
 - fair
 - honest
 - consistent
 - accessible
 - personalised
 - timely, and in particular
 - supportive to an international prospective student population
2. We are clear about who does what in admitting students, including who makes the decision on an application, our partners and the nature of their role. University staff and faculty are trained and updated for admissions roles. We also set out the responsibilities of applicants in turn.
 3. Our information and support to prospective students is:
 - honest, comprehensive and inclusive in coverage
 - personalised – identifying target audiences and meeting individual needs,
 - accessible - using clear language, appropriate media and alternative formats for prospective students from around the world, including those with disabilities or particular needs, without making assumptions about how people get information;

so that prospective students are able to make informed choices based on a thorough and accurate picture of what their time at university will entail in terms of academic and financial matters; student life and support; graduate outcomes and careers.

4. Undergraduate Applications to the University may be made through UCAS or the Common Application or directly to us where a prospective undergraduate does not wish to apply elsewhere. All Masters applications are made directly to the University. An application passes through clearly defined stages and we commit to making a decision within a specified number of working days.
5. Entry criteria and offer levels are set using defined evidence and published as a general entry requirement in our regulations and as typical offer levels on the University and UCAS websites. We define the range and relative weights of information we use in assessing applications. When considering applications from prospective students with disabilities or special educational needs, we make reasonable adjustments to the application process and to the delivery of programmes and services. Decisions are recorded on our student administration system.

6. We ensure that students are informed as to their academic, financial and general obligations in taking up our offer of a place. We inform students of the enrolment process in advance and ensure that an international student body is integrated via an effective orientation programme.
7. We are able to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants and have defined grounds and processes for appeals and complaints.
8. We have an annual process and performance indicators for monitoring the effectiveness and fairness of the admission cycle, including the implementation of this policy

These key principles are explained in more depth in the corresponding numbered sections of the Admission Policy and Summary of Practice as follows:

1 Principles & Purpose

This policy provides prospective students, University faculty & staff and partner organisations alike with a guide to our *approach* to the admission of students. As such, it is the framework we use to assure best admissions *practice*.

From the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 it is our vision: “To be an international university offering high quality undergraduate and postgraduate education, research excellence and public engagement”. While the University’s mission: “...is to pursue the following commitments:

- A commitment to internationalism, cosmopolitanism and diversity in all endeavours of the University.
- A commitment to excellence in teaching and learning and the provision of a high quality student experience for an international student body.
- A commitment to high quality interdisciplinary research and scholarship.
- A commitment by faculty, staff and students to provide service to the community and to the development of globally active citizens.
- A commitment to engage with local, national and international business and to develop graduates prepared for employability and leadership in the global economy. “

This Policy ensures that our approach to the admission of students: i) is appropriate to our mission; ii) helps us to achieve our strategic aims and operating objectives; and iii) is informed by sector best practice and relevant legislation.

Our priority for admissions is to match prospective students with the programme of study and entry point that best meets their academic and vocational needs and individual circumstances, while ensuring that our operating objectives are met. In achieving this, we make a commitment that our approach to the admission of students is:

- transparent
- fair
- honest
- consistent
- accessible
- personalised
- timely, and in particular
- supportive to an international prospective student base

The remainder of this policy lays out how we and our partners deliver these commitments and what we expect in return from the prospective student.

2 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Key roles are as follows:

Setting and monitoring of admission criteria and target numbers.

Following recommendations from the Admissions & Recruitment Policy Committee (ARPC), via the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Executive, the President sets an annual target for the number of places available on programmes leading to a University award. This is published as an appendix to the Marketing and Recruitment Strategy and subsequent recruitment against target is monitored by ARPC. Following recommendations from ARPC, SMT determines the minimum academic and English language criteria and offer levels/thresholds for entry to University programmes, published on the University and UCAS websites. Admissions Officers advise on the general acceptability and equivalence of a range of entry qualifications.

Assessing and communicating with applicants

Our Admissions offices in London and Boston MA receive all applications according to territory. The Head of Admissions is the University's UCAS correspondent.

The decision to offer a place and an estimate of credits/time to completion is made on the basis of the written application and supporting documentation by the Admissions Officers against criteria approved by ARPC. Entry credit is confirmed by the Academic Registry, normally within ten working days of receipt of final academic transcripts evidencing previous study. Where an applicant's profile falls outside the above criteria, Admissions Officers refer the case to relevant Associate Dean (or to the Academic Registry in the case of novel entry credit scenarios) before proceeding.

Prospective students who are neither UK/US residents nor nationals may choose to apply through one of our appointed referral partners overseas who will provide them with information and assist them in preparing the necessary paperwork and communicating with the University. Partners may carry out initial verification of documentation, but all decisions to admit and sponsor a student are taken by Admissions Officers in the light of primary documentation. We only work with those partners approved by the Vice President (Strategic Development); recruited via standard University procedure, involving an interview, questionnaire, references and contract; and monitored by the Head of Recruitment on a semester by semester basis.

Following initial application or enquiry, all communication with prospective students is made via the Admission Officers. However, prospective students are also encouraged to speak with Faculty and current students in order to get more information about study and student life at Richmond, and to contact the Student Affairs department for information concerning housing, services and support for students with disabilities or special educational needs. Prospective students holding the offer of a place will be invited to a University open/taster day to assist them in deciding whether Richmond is right for them. As part of this, and to help faculty prepare for the new intake, prospective students may, on occasion, be given the option of preparing audition pieces, submitting portfolios etc.

The Student Affairs department provides prospective students with University joining instructions and associated materials, once academic, English Language and student migration conditions are met. The standard University communication flow for prospective students is appended to this Policy.

Publication of Information, recruitment and outreach

Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions staff are located within a single department (MRA). In a co-ordinated approach, the Marketing section publishes information for prospective students in University and external media, both web and print-based, while Recruitment staff represent the University at recruitment fairs and school visits in the US, UK and worldwide. MRA work with Faculty in running on-campus open/taster days.

Appeals & complaints

Appeals and complaints relating to the admission of students are handled in the first instance by the Vice President (Strategic Development) and the Director of US Admissions/Head of Admissions (according to territory) respectively. Where matters are not resolved to the satisfaction of the prospective student, they are referred to the Provost and Vice President (Student Affairs) respectively.

Monitoring & Review

Monitoring and review of the admission cycle for each programme is undertaken by Faculty within the Annual Programme Evaluations, periodic review/revalidation exercises and MSCHE self studies. ARPC draws on the outcome of this to review the cycle University-wide and consider the wider effectiveness of the Admission Policy and its implementation as practice.

2.2 Training and Support for Staff and partners

All staff working in admission, recruitment or marketing roles are recruited to specific posts having met the relevant person specification. When taking up such a role, University staff participate in a programme of preparation, professional updating and sharing of good practice, including relevant components from the following:

- in-post training overseen by an experienced manager
- subscription to NARIC in assessing international qualification equivalencies
- the opportunity to take units of the UCAS CPD programme, and with potential to progress to the AUA Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice (higher education administration and management) with a specialist admissions route.
- regular team meetings and briefing events
- biennial University recruitment conference
- external development and updating events

Active overseas Referral Partners are encouraged to undertake British Council training and will receive in country training and support from University Recruitment staff and an invitation to attend the University's biennial recruitment conference.

2.3 Responsibilities of Applicants

In order to operate the admission process in a fair, effective manner, we place certain obligations upon the applicant, namely:

- to provide complete and accurate information to timescale as required on the UCAS, Common Application and University application forms, so that the application can be properly assessed
- to participate in further assessment activity, where relevant to the programme concerned
- to update us as soon as possible if personal details or study intentions change
- when offered a place, either directly or through UCAS/Common Application, to reply promptly to positively accept or decline the offer within the required timescale (see 4.2 below).
- to provide any additional information required in a complete and accurate form prior to enrolment, including details relating to nationality, student migration, eligibility to pay tuition fees and verification of entry qualifications.
- to pay tuition and other fees to the value and schedule required by the University

2.4 Confidentiality & Disclosure

All applications are created as an electronic record on our student administration system. Subject to the provisions of data protection, the information provided by applicants is only shared with those University staff and faculty directly involved with processing the application or undertaking related management activity such as the administration of surveys and market research, compilation of statistics and the provision of further information about the University. It is implicit that where referees are named, we have the applicant's permission to approach these; however where we need to undertake further checks involving a third party, we will seek the applicant's permission beforehand, whilst noting that we may not be able to proceed with an application without such permission.

3 Dissemination of information and support to prospective students

Our information and support is:

- i) honest, comprehensive and inclusive in coverage
- ii) personalised – identifying target audiences and meeting individual needs,
- iii) accessible - using clear language, appropriate media and alternative formats for prospective students from around the world, including those with disabilities or particular needs, without making assumptions about how people get information

so that prospective students are able to make informed choices based on a thorough and accurate picture of what their time at university will entail in terms of academic & financial matters; student life & support; graduate outcomes and careers.

We prioritise the following *topics* in our information and support to prospective students:

programme content, teaching and assessment methods and subsequent employment and further study opportunities – summarised in programme and School webpages, printed and downloadable prospectuses and programme specifications, with full course descriptors accessible online and via printed and downloadable Catalogues;

selection criteria – academic and English language prerequisites and typical offer levels, including key international entry qualifications, are summarised on the University website, in the prospectus, and published in external guides, including by UCAS for FT undergraduate study;

fees, housing & financial support – we ensure that prospective students understand the financial commitment involved in taking up a place at Richmond, including the cost of tuition and housing, together with when and how this is payable. On receipt of our offer the prospective student is directed to the University's housing and scholarship offer and to information on fees and external sources of financial aid, including via the relevant sections of the University website. Prospective students are also offered the opportunity to seek advice from University financial aid advisors at this point;

Support for students with disabilities and special educational needs – we ensure that prospective students understand our approach to supporting students, via the relevant sections of the University website. On receipt of our offer (see 5.4), applicants declaring a disability or special educational need are provided with additional information, from the Student Affairs department, as to what support the University can provide.

The following are our priority *media* for delivering information and support:

- The University website - including programme, admission, finance and student affairs pages, plus downloadable prospectuses, course catalogues and programme specifications
- Printed Media including prospectus, catalogues, and brochures
- External listings services, including those provided by Unistats, UCAS and the Common Application.
- Selected third party websites and publications
- Open & Taster days
- Face to face student recruitment and outreach activity
- The national Key Information Set and “Unistats” website for data on student entry, satisfaction, progression, achievement and employment

All publication and dissemination of information on our programmes, including by/at referral and other partners, must adhere to our guidelines.

4 The Admission Process

4.1 Application to the University must be made through one of the following routes, as appropriate:

- a. UCAS (<http://www.ucas.ac.uk/>) – for entry to Richmond BA programmes, typically used by a prospective student who is also applying to other UK Universities. This includes:

Extra – an applicant who has received no offers or who has declined all offers from their original applications can make further applications, one at a time, for programmes which still have vacancies (end of February to end of June)

Clearing – a UCAS applicant holding no current offers of a place can apply for a place at the University (July onwards);

Adjustment - an applicant holding an existing place through UCAS firmly and unconditionally, who exceeded the conditions for that place, can look for a preferable place at the University (A level results day to end of August);

Adjustment & Clearing are normally initiated by a telephone enquiry from the applicant, but can only be completed through the UCAS process and for entry that year.

- b. The Common Application (<https://www.commonapp.org/>) – for entry to Richmond BA programmes, typically used by a prospective student who is also applying to other US universities.
- d. Online application form on the University website – *Graduate* for entry to Richmond Masters programmes, or *Undergraduate* for entry to Richmond Foundation and English language or to Richmond BA programmes where the prospective student does not wish to be considered by other Universities.

4.2 Milestones and service levels

Once a prospective student applies to us, the following summarises i) the main stages through which the application progresses; and ii) our commitment to inform the applicant within a given timescale:

On receipt of an application, we make the following initial checks:

- provisional assessment of a prospective student's eligibility to pay tuition fees at the applicable rate;
- where an applicant declares a disability or special educational need, this is referred to our Student Affairs department who work with the applicant and the Faculty to determine the appropriate level of support to be provided by the University for the chosen programme(s), and that this will be achievable with reasonable adjustments. Where appropriate support cannot be provided even with reasonable adjustments, this will be discussed with the applicant and, where relevant, alternative programmes explored. We also ensure that any reasonable adjustments to the applicant assessment process are put in place.
- where an applicant declares a criminal record, this is considered by our Student Affairs department with appropriate professional input and in relation to the programme applied for, to decide whether we can proceed with the application;
- Whether the applicant has previously applied or is a current or past student: the outcome of previous applications to or periods of study at the University may be relevant to the outcome of the current application.

Invitation to selection activity - where a programme requires applicants to participate in further selection activity (e.g. submit a portfolio, attend an interview or audition, undergo a placement test), we send the applicant an invitation and details of the selection process normally within ten working days of receipt of their application and not less than ten working days before the date or deadline of the activity.

Decision – our initial decision will be one of the following:

- to offer a place without conditions; or
- to offer a place conditional on i) the results of outstanding academic assessments and/or English language tests; and/or ii) submission of references, transcripts or other documentation, or
- not to offer a place

Applicants should normally receive our initial decision within twenty working days of receipt of application and wherever possible within ten working days. Applicants are informed either through UCAS or directly by us, in line with how they applied.

Reply – applicants who are offered a place must tell us, by a given date, whether they intend to take up the place. For UCAS applicants, this date is set within the UCAS system and candidates may accept our offer either as their firm or insurance choice. In order to secure their place, prospective students applying via the Common Application or directly to us and holding an unconditional offer must firmly accept that place by the end of May (or within 10 working days of the date of unconditional offer if made after May); in the case of those from outside the EU, this must be accompanied by a non-refundable tuition fee deposit.

Fee status – we ensure that prospective students know the rate at which they will pay fees prior to enrolment, providing they in turn supply us with the necessary information as and when we require.

Normally, prospective students who both hold citizenship and are settled residents (for the 3 years immediately prior to the start of their Richmond programme) of an EU member state are eligible to pay tuition at the Home/EU sterling rate; as are those in the UK who have been granted indefinite leave to remain, or have refugee or humanitarian protection status. Otherwise, students normally resident in North America (Alaska to Panama inclusive) are eligible to pay tuition at the US dollar rate; all other students are eligible to pay tuition at the International sterling rate.

All prospective students are provided with a provisional assessment of the tuition rate payable at offer, together with details of how to query this if necessary, and are asked to provide us with a copy of their passport as further verification after accepting their place. In exceptional cases UK nationals without a passport may provide evidence via national insurance number and birth certificate instead. Final verification of fee status is at enrolment.

Housing – if not normally resident within the M25 all new BA students (other than those transferring after completing one or more years at another University) are usually required to live on campus for their first two semesters. An advance deposit is required from all students to secure University housing

Confirmation - if the applicant accepts our offer of a place, made conditionally on the results of academic and/or English language assessments yet to be taken, the applicant is told our final decision normally within five working days of our receipt of the complete results for those assessments.

Sponsorship under Tier4 of the Points Based System – the offer letter details what we will require in order to issue a Certificate of Acceptance for Studies (“CAS”). Normally, a CAS is issued to the visa nationals concerned within five working days of accepting our unconditional offer firmly and our having received the following:

- i. advance payment for the first two semesters’ tuition fees;
- ii. a useable image of the relevant passport page(s); and
- iii. copies of previous academic qualifications and most recent secure English language test results.

Prospective students from outside the EU who decline Tier4 sponsorship are required to provide us with evidence of their right to enter and study in the UK.

Joining instructions – applicants who have accepted our unconditional offer firmly will normally receive joining instructions from us, at least twenty working days before the start date of the programme or within five working days of firmly accepting our unconditional offer if this is within twenty working days of the programme start date.

4.3 Requests to defer a place

Whilst the majority of prospective students apply within 12 months of their proposed start date, some may wish to apply from the outset to start a year later, whilst other may choose to defer their place to a subsequent semester once after they have received our offer. Normally, intended semester or year of entry is not taken into account in assessing an application; this is, however, at our discretion. Once they have received our offer, a prospective student may defer a place by one semester automatically; deferral by two or

more semesters is at the University' discretion. Places secured through Clearing or Adjustment are only valid for entry at the first available semester and may not be deferred. Prior to their intended start date, we contact applicants holding a deferred place to check that they will take up that place. If we do not receive positive confirmation within ten working days of our enquiry, we reserve the right to withdraw that offer.

4.4 Use of Changed Course Offers

If we cannot offer a place on the programme applied for, we may offer an alternative programme instead. This can happen at the initial application stage or at confirmation (see above) for prospective students who have not met the conditions of their offer. Where this happens at initial application, the appropriate member of staff normally contacts the prospective student to discuss the alternative before the offer is processed, within the decision timescale specified in 4.2 above.

4.5 Changes to programmes during the admissions cycle

We take all steps to avoid changes to a programme after it has opened for applications for a given entry year and, in particular, suspension of a programme, alteration of intended professional recognition or exemptions, or variation to published study mode or duration within 3 months of intended start date. However, when changes do occur, the Admissions Officer provides written details and options to each active applicant.

Where an applicant already holds an active offer for the programme and semester concerned, we do our best to ensure that the applicant's study intentions can be met. In this case the Admissions Officer discusses the options directly with the applicant and offers one or more of the following options as circumstances allow:

- entry to the original programme/semester as planned
- deferring our offer by one or more semesters
- transferring our offer to an alternative programme for the original entry semester
- transferring the offer to the same or similar programme at another University;
- or if all of the above options have been exhausted, cancelling our offer.

normally within the decision timescale specified in 4.2 above. The applicant will also be advised and supported through the necessary UCAS and Common Application procedure, where relevant.

4.6 Credit transfer and entry with advanced standing

We welcome applications from prospective students holding qualifications which can be counted towards the accumulation of credit for a BA degree and provide exemption from specific Richmond BA modules. Such entry can only be assessed

- i) against the BA programme; and
- ii) on the basis of existing qualifications (APCL) and
- iii) noting that, as a minimum, a BA student entering with credit must achieve a minimum of 45 MSCHE credits/180 Open University credits from courses studied on campus.

There is no provision for credit transfer against the Masters programme, nor that derived from experiential learning. The University distinguishes between *Advanced Credit* being that awarded from University entrance level qualifications and *Transfer Credit*, being that awarded from previous University-level study. Common examples of Advanced credit awarded are as follows, all expressed as MSCHE credits and noting that exemption from specific courses is still subject to individual assessment:

Entry Qualification

Entry Qualification	Advanced Credit Allowed
each distinct A level (A2) subject	9 (grades C and above), 6 (grades D & E)
each distinct AS level subject at grade C or above	3
International Baccalaureate grades 4-7	6 (higher level), 3 (subsidiary level)
Advanced Placement (AP) grades 3-5	2 semesters: 6-8, 1 semester: 3-4
OCN recognised Access qualification pass with 45 credits at level 3 with merit	18
OCN recognised Access qualification pass with 45 credits passed at level 3	12
BTEC National Diploma	18

Application is via the normal routes as above, providing full details of qualifications held and to be taken. When offering a place, the University will provide an estimate of advanced or transfer credit to be allowed and of time to completion expressed in semesters. Final verification of credit allowed and study time to completion will usually be made by Academic Registry, using final transcripts, when the student joins the University during orientation week.

5 Assessment of prospective students

5.1 Our approach to setting and monitoring entry criteria

By entry *criteria*, we mean a minimum threshold of achievement that every prospective student must be expected to meet for their application to be considered; for example, to pass two A level subjects, or reach a certain standard of competency in English language, or have had a specific level of related work experience.

By *offer level*, we mean an approximate indication of the level of achievement we require in practice for entry to a specific programme from prospective students holding or expecting to hold specific entry qualifications. Where applicable, this can be expressed in terms of UCAS tariff points accumulated from a minimum number of separate subjects; or as a pass, specific grade or classification in a qualification and/or its constituent subjects. Unless indicated otherwise, this is expressed as a single *typical* offer (rather than a range); an approximate indication, but allowing for some variation, of the likely level of our offer to a prospective student yet to achieve these entry qualifications.

General criteria, offer levels and advance credit allowances for entry to each programme are set by the Senior Management Team following advice from Admissions and Recruitment Policy Committee (ARPC), with entry criteria outlined in programme specifications and typical offers published on the University website and through UCAS and other listings services.

In setting entry criteria and defining typical offers we use the following evidence:

- criteria and offer levels used by similar programmes at the University and elsewhere in the sector
- involvement of peers, validating bodies and external assessors to inform the setting of entry criteria at initial validation of programmes and ongoing offer levels at subsequent periodic monitoring and review
- at Annual Programme Evaluation, reflection on past student performance vs. entry criteria, offer levels and contextual information, drawing on quantitative and qualitative measure of student achievement and opinion.
- consideration over time of the changing characteristics of prospective students and levels of preparedness in relation to the University, school and post-compulsory curriculum
- available places vs. demand: places are limited by a number of factors and when coupled with high demand, entry to some programmes will be competitive and offer levels set to admit the *best* prepared candidates

In order to link major new entry qualifications into entry criteria and offer levels, Academic Registry undertakes a curriculum mapping exercise to determine how preparation for University study can be demonstrated. This is taken in turn to ARPC for recommendation of the overall acceptability of the qualification to the University, along with appropriate offer levels and award of advanced credit where applicable. Within its monitoring brief, ARPC considers, on an annual basis, how both established and new qualifications have subsequently prepared new entrants for study at the University, making recommendations to SMT for revision of entry criteria, offers levels and advanced credit allowances where necessary.

5.2 The Entry Criteria

Age: All applicants should normally be aged 17 years or over at the start of their proposed programme.

Academic Qualifications:

BA or Foundation Programme entry: applicants should normally hold a US High School Diploma, GCE A2 and/or AS levels, the International Baccalaureate, BTEC or ABMA qualifications, or qualifications to a equivalent UCAS tariff value, or international equivalents as determined by the Vice President (Strategic Development) with reference to NARIC. Entry requirements are neither subject specific in terms of intended major nor entry qualifications offered.

Pre-sessional English language programmes: students normally intend to progress to BA or Foundation study so offer the same qualifications as above. When taken on a stand-alone basis, entry is via English language test scores (see below).

Masters entry: applicants should normally hold a Bachelors degree from an accredited US institution or a UK first degree with minimum second class honours or an international equivalent acceptable to the University, in each case in a discipline relevant to Masters programme applied for. Exceptionally, the University may consider candidates with substantial relevant work experience in lieu of a first degree; in such cases, the University may require the student to undertake some undergraduate courses prior to Masters study.

English Language:

Students who are neither nationals of a majority English-speaking country, nor graduates from a complete first degree programme taught in English in a majority English-speaking country, will be required to provide secure English language test results (SELT) to the following minimum standard on *each* IELTS element (*or University accepted equivalence from another SELT) prior to entry:

Pre Sessional English language programmes: from IELTS 4.0*

Foundation Year: IELTS 5.0*

BA: 5.5*

MA: 6.0*

We reserve the right to vary actual offer levels from those published but actual offer levels will be set before the start of the admissions cycle, adhered to during it, and applied consistently to all applicants. Prospective students are not guaranteed a place because they meet or are expected to meet our criteria and offer levels. Where places are limited and demand is high, we may use the information below to select the *best* prepared candidates:

5.3 The range of information and activities we use in assessing prospective students

The information and activity used to assess a prospective student will always include points 1 to 3 below and on occasion may encompass one or more from 4 to 8:

1. Actual and predicted entry qualifications (from initial application and subsequent verification)
2. Personal statement (from initial application)
3. Reference (accompanying initial application)
4. A submitted portfolio
5. Attendance at interview, audition and/or open day
6. Placement tests on campus
7. Work Experience (Masters applications only, as demonstrated at initial application and, where applicable, interview)
8. Academic & research skills (Masters applications only, demonstrated at initial application, in existing qualifications and, where applicable, at interview)

In most cases, the greatest weight is attached to **actual/predicted entry qualifications**. Where a specific programme uses **auditions or portfolios** as a matter of course, these are applied equally to all shortlisted applicants for that programme and will carry an equal weighting to entry qualifications in assessing a prospective student. In the majority of cases, applications are assessed on application alone; however, we may still invite specific applicants to interview or to undertake a placement test where there is insufficient information within the initial application on which to base a decision.

References, personal statements and (in the case of Masters applicants) work experience assume increasing importance for candidates who are less able to demonstrate preparation via our published entry qualifications and where we are seeking alternative evidence of commitment and motivation to study. Attendance at **Open Days** is purely optional, but recommended to assist prospective students in deciding if the University is right for them. Taster activity may be included to this end.

At **postgraduate** level, increasing importance is attached to the **level of achievement, breadth and depth of specific study from entry qualifications**, along with **references** and demonstrated **academic and research skills**.

5.4 Variations and Adjustments for specific groups of applicants.

Disability and special educational need – where necessary in taking forward an application, reasonable adjustment is made to the applicant assessment process. Implicit in our decision to offer a place is confirmation, following assessment via Student Affairs department, that we are able to provide the prospective student with appropriate support through the provision of reasonable adjustments.

5.5 Recording and Communicating Decisions

All decisions are entered onto our student administration system and communicated via a system-generated standard letter direct to the candidate and additionally through UCAS where applicable. In the latter case, offer conditions are not included in our direct letter.

6 Joining the University

6.1 When offering a place, we ensure that a prospective student understands:

- the obligations involved in taking up their place
- the opportunities for further advice and guidance before they join the University
- how to enrol

Our offer is accompanied by:

- a link to the University website through which the prospective student is advised to access the relevant award regulations; plagiarism and conduct policies; programme specification and module descriptors, details of fee, housing and financial support information, including scholarships
- a student contract to be signed and returned on take up of offer
- a programme-specific welcome pack including reading lists and outline timetable
- telephone number and e-mail address for a named enquiry contact in the Admissions Office
- details of how to progress the application, including verification of qualifications and other documentation and, if our offer is conditional, details of what to do if conditions are not fully met
- Detail of how to get further information to aid decision making, including open and visit days, telephone support from current students, Faculty and admissions staff.

6.2 Effective Induction and Integration

We offer an effective introduction to the University for all our new students through:

- A meet & greet service and “Orientation Week” of events at start of each entry semester
- Postgraduate induction events
- Inclusive curricula designed to meet the needs of students from a wide variety of backgrounds and entry routes
- Placement tests for academic literacy and numeracy
- Completion of pre-entry projects

7 Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

7.1 Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

We provide basic feedback (using standard coded categories via UCAS) to all unsuccessful candidates for full time undergraduate programmes, normally within the decision timescale in 4.2 above. On request we may also provide more detailed feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Where a prospective student with a disability or special educational need is unsuccessful because it is not possible to support them adequately, even with reasonable adjustment and after exploring alternative University programmes, the Student Affairs department will provide feedback which may include potential options elsewhere.

7.2 Appeals against the outcome of an application to study at the University

We only consider appeals which are i) against our final decision on an application; ii) made by the applicant in writing; iii) received by the University within twenty working days of the date on which the University first informed the applicant of the final outcome of their application; and iv) made on the following grounds:

- a. relevant and material information was not made available to us at the time of application, through no fault of the applicant; and/or
- b. the way we dealt with the application differed materially and significantly from our written policy and procedure.

Appeals are considered on the understanding that, should the appeal be upheld, any offer of a place will be either for the entry semester originally applied for or the following semester, at our discretion.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Vice President (Strategic Development), who acknowledges the appeal within five working days, investigates and makes a decision, responding to the appellant within twenty working days of receipt. The appellant and any faculty or staff associated with the decision on the application may be asked to attend an appeal hearing meeting. If the matter cannot be resolved at this point, the appellant has the option to then refer the appeal to the Provost, in writing within ten working days of the Vice President's decision date. Within ten working days of referral, the Provost will respond with their decision, which is final.

7.3 Complaints

We consider complaints relating to admission where these: i) relate to a submitted application; ii) are made in writing by the applicant within twenty working days of the events concerned; and iii) concern the way an application has been handled, the subsequent dissemination of information, and/or the conduct of a member of University or partner staff directly involved in processing the application. The complaints procedure cannot be used to appeal against the outcome of an application.

Complaints must be made in writing to the Director of Admissions for North America (applications from N America) or the Head of Admissions (applications from all other countries) who will acknowledge receipt within five working days, and investigate and communicate the outcome to the complainant within twenty working days. If the matter cannot be resolved at this point, the complainant has the option to refer the complaint, in writing within ten working days of the date of the above outcome, to the Vice President (Student Affairs), who will respond, within ten working days of referral, with their decision which is final. The UK Office of the Independent Adjudicator does not investigate complaints relating to Admissions.

8 Implementation, dissemination, monitoring and review

This policy was approved by Admissions & Recruitment Policy Committee (ARPC) on 22nd March 2013 and by Senior Management Team (SMT) on 23rd April 2013 and will be disseminated to University and partner staff and made available to prospective students via the University website and appropriate links in admissions correspondence.

Adoption of the policy has implications for some aspects of admissions practice to date; it is acknowledged that we will not necessarily be fully compliant with all aspects of this policy from the outset. However, the policy will have been adopted in full by the close of the academic year following approval.

ARPC has an overall brief for monitoring and review of the admission cycle, reporting to SMT and informed by the development of a series of key performance indicators. As part of this brief, ARPC is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation and further development of this policy and related practice.

---END 18/18---