



ADMISSIONS POLICY

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Version 1.3

the place of useful learning

The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, number SC015263

1. Introduction

The University of Strathclyde is committed to providing a high quality education and experience to all its students. We aim to inspire them to develop their full potential to succeed and thus be highly employable, capable of advanced study and research, and confident in their own abilities. Our [Graduate Attributes](#) embody the distinctiveness of the student experience at Strathclyde, and are embedded within our approach to learning. The University's Admissions Policy aims to support our aspirations and distinctiveness, and as such we welcome applications from talented individuals with the potential to succeed academically.

This policy underpins the University's approach to the admission of all students, to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and aims to provide clear detail on the key principles that guide this approach. The policy encompasses all aspects of admissions and is supplemented by a number of appendices relevant to areas where more detail is required.

The policy takes into account the recommendations from the Schwartz Report: "Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice (2004)", the precepts of Chapter B2: Admissions, of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's 'UK Quality Code for Higher Education', and the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) Good Practice Guidelines Admissions Policies: Guidance for Higher Education Providers.

2. Key Principles

In implementing this policy and managing the admission of students, the University will administer its admissions processes in a fair, consistent and transparent manner that is in line with our commitment to equality of opportunity and in line with our obligation to consumer law as it applies to Higher Education providers. In doing so we will

- Take appropriate account of relevant external curricula, policy, guidance and best practice in order to ensure effective streamlining and practice;
- Make sure that clear information on entry requirements including the academic qualifications, experience and skills that are required for entry, is provided;
- Provide clear, accurate and timely information for potential and prospective students, and their advisers at all stages of the admissions process, and in a way that ensures accessibility;
- Inform prospective students at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied and to advise promptly of the options available in the circumstances;
- Assess each application on an individual basis, acknowledging academic potential and motivation, considering a range of information within the decision making process;
- Admit excellent students with appropriate qualifications and high academic potential;

- Make sure that all staff involved in the admissions process are equipped to undertake their duties in a clear, consistent and appropriate manner through the provision of appropriate training and support, and the sharing of information.

3. Widening Access

The University has a long standing commitment to widening access, and the admission of students from the widest range of backgrounds remains a key area of our work and focus. We encourage applications from all prospective students who have the motivation and academic potential to succeed on their chosen programme, regardless of their social or economic background, and we make an explicit commitment to considering the educational context in which an applicant has studied through our policy on Contextual Data in Admissions (Appendix 1).

At present, our contextual offers only refer to applicants who are ordinarily resident in Scotland and who have undertaken, or are undertaking, SQA Highers/Advanced Highers. Candidates who are ordinarily resident in Scotland who exhibit the relevant contextual data and who are taking alternative qualifications will be considered by our Selectors on a case by case basis. In such cases, wherever possible our Selectors will endeavor to make an offer which takes prior educational context into consideration.

When students from the rest of the UK or abroad apply, our selectors will take a wide range of information into consideration when deciding which offer, if any, to make. This can include qualifications taken to date, qualifications pending, and also information provided by applicants in the Personal Statement, plus the academic reference.

The University also supports widening access through strategic and other types of agreements with external agencies such as FOCUS West and the Scottish Wider Access Programme. Where such an agreement exists in relation to admissions, the details of the agreement are implemented within our admission procedures.

More information about our contextual offers is available [online](#).

4. Flexible Pathways

The University of Strathclyde prides itself as a place of useful learning which strives to produce graduates with impact, combining breadth of experience and skills with depth of disciplinary knowledge and understanding.

We acknowledge the importance of enabling successful and smooth transition from previous study to higher education for all of our incoming students. All incoming undergraduates are invited to attend faculty-specific induction programmes during Welcome Week, with further, course-specific transition and induction activities designed and delivered by individual departments. In addition, incoming mature students and direct entrants to years 2 and 3 of undergraduate programmes are invited to a transition support day, 'Finding Your Way', in the August before they commence their studies, and students who have identified that they have spent time in care are offered the support and advice of a Named Officer for Care Leavers.

We confirm the University's commitment to a fair admissions policy that allows for "... equal consideration of candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills base irrespective of what routes they may have taken".

5. International Applicants

5.1 As a Leading International Technological University, we are committed to providing an excellent application and admission experience for international applicants, and to encouraging applications from appropriately qualified individuals around the world. As such, our admissions processes will

take account of a wide range of international qualifications, and will operate on the basis of best practice in terms of international recruitment and admission.

5.2 The University holds a Sponsor License under tier 4 of the UK Points Based System for Immigration (PBS). Where an applicant requires immigration permission to study in the UK the University must ensure that they meet a range of additional criteria in compliance with our Tier 4 License. These requirements will be considered during the admissions process. A student's admission/place will not be confirmed unless immigration compliance conditions have been met, after which a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) will be issued.

5.3 English Language Requirements

5.3.1 Applicants whose first language is not English, are required to provide evidence of their proficiency in English as part of the admission process.

5.3.2 The University will require to be satisfied that an applicant holds or will achieve an appropriate proficiency in English before an offer of a place on a programme of study will be made. In considering an application, the University will require to be satisfied that proficiency levels in English are acceptable both in terms of academic requirements and standards, and in relation to Home Office immigration requirements as appropriate.

5.3.3 The standard level of English required for degree level study is an IELTS minimum overall score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 5.5 in each of the four component areas (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking). The University will accept alternative qualifications to IELTS. A list of alternative qualifications is maintained by SEES in consultation with the Recruitment and International Office and is reviewed periodically to ensure that appropriate and widely recognised qualifications are included.

5.3.4 If an applicant's English language qualifications do not demonstrate the necessary level of proficiency for admission, in terms of either UKVI or academic requirements, successful completion of an appropriate University of Strathclyde English language programme may be accepted as evidence of the required level, and as an alternative to taking an additional qualification. Advice on this is provided to applicants by the Recruitment and International Office.

Students entering the UK with a Tier 4 visa under the points based system for immigration (PBS) must meet UKVI requirements for entry, which may include a requirement to present a secure English Language Test.

5.3.5 The University considers a range of evidence of English language ability to determine whether or not an appropriate level of proficiency has been achieved and the Recruitment & International Office, in conjunction with the central Admissions Team, provides advice on this to applicants.

5.4 Academic Progress

5.4.1 Immigration Rules stipulate that applicants who have had previous study in the UK, must satisfy the Rules for Academic Progression. Generally, the Rules state that for a course to represent academic progress it must be at a higher level than the previous course studied with Tier 4 (General) or Student leave (unless they meet the requirements to be exempt from this rule). The UKVI Compliance Team and the central Admissions Team provides advice on this to applicants.

6. Entry to the University

6.1 Undergraduate Programmes

- 6.1.1** Minimum entry criteria, including qualifications and any experience or skills which are essential or desirable, are published annually for each programme of study, and are made available and accessible through a range of means including the University website, and prospectus. Please note, the University does not admit based on the UCAS tariff.
- 6.1.2** Requirements for entry to each undergraduate programme are specified in terms of the grades required at SQA Higher and/or Advanced Highers, A Level, HNC/HND, National 5, and may also be specified in terms of named subjects. For all our courses, Highers and Advanced Highers in the same subject will be considered as separate qualifications. We also welcome a range of other qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate, Irish Leaving Certificate and BTEC. Details of entry requirements, along with additional information about specific programmes and departments/schools is made available on the University's website.
- 6.1.3** We acknowledge the importance of enabling flexible pathways to learning within schools and in the transition from school to higher education. We are aware that there will be a number of different models of study for Highers, whereby the study of a subject may span 1 or 2 years, exams may be taken at a single or multiple sittings, and an individual student's pathway may combine different modes. We also acknowledge that young people may be able to study a subject at SQA Higher level, without an earlier qualification at National 4 and National 5 in the subject.

In considering a student's pathway, we recognise that this may include the study of a Foundation Apprenticeship. In general, we will accept a named or un-named Foundation Apprenticeship in lieu of an un-named Higher. Acceptance is based on the completion of the award. Specific details and any courses exempted will be published in our prospectus and on our web site on an annual basis.

- 6.1.4** The University welcomes applications from candidates with qualifications from overseas institutions and advice on accepted qualifications is provided both through University's website and the Recruitment & International Office.
- 6.1.5** All undergraduate and first-degree applications to the University require to be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the University is required to comply with the UCAS Application and Recruitment Policy, as well as the other conditions of UCAS membership.
- 6.1.6** The University also operates a direct application process in relation to some programmes of study or applicant groups, and where appropriate applications from non UK applicants will also be accepted from other appropriate and agreed sources or application schemes, providing the application process meets our internal requirements.
- 6.1.7** Offers are made in accordance with specified entry requirements although admission to undergraduate programmes is considered on a competitive basis and entry requirements stated are normally the minimum level required for entry. Whilst offers are made primarily on the basis of an applicant meeting or exceeding the stated entry criteria, admission to the University is granted on the basis of merit, and the potential to succeed. As such, a range of information is considered in determining suitability. In exceptional cases, where an applicant does not meet the competitive entry standard, evidence may be sought in the personal statement or reference to account for performance which was affected by exceptional

circumstances, and which in the view of the judgement of the selector would give confidence that the applicant is capable of completing the programme of study successfully.

- 6.1.8** Interviewing or requesting additional work in support of an application is not standard practice across the University in relation to undergraduate admission. However, it may be deemed appropriate by individual academic departments/schools and where this is the case, applicants will be advised of the specific requirements in relation to their application.
- 6.1.9** For some individual programmes, students may be offered advanced entry to undergraduate study on the basis of an appropriately high level of attainment in a suitable set of subjects at Advanced Higher, A Level, Higher National or equivalent qualifications.
- 6.1.10** Where a well-qualified applicant is unsuccessful in meeting the entrance requirements for their initial choice of programme, the University may refer their details to other programmes which might be of interest, and for which the applicant's qualifications meet the minimum entry requirements. Applicants will be informed if this referral process is undertaken.
- 6.1.11** Where an applicant is unsuccessful in applying for advanced entry to a particular programme, an offer of admission at a lower point of entry may be made. Moreover, offers may on some occasions, and by certain Academic Departments/Schools, be made to an applicant for two different points of entry to a particular programme.
- 6.1.12** Articulation into the University through one of the established routes and agreements that exist is managed by relevant Academic Departments/Schools and students undertaking an articulating programme are routinely advised of the appropriate application route for admission to the University of Strathclyde.
- 6.1.13** All applications for undergraduate programmes submitted by the published UCAS deadline, which is normally 15th January, are given equal consideration. Applications received after this date are generally still considered but are subject to availability of places on individual degree programmes.
- 6.1.14** For undergraduate applications, a "Gathered Field" approach to admissions processing and offer-making may be taken in relation to individual programmes for certain admissions sessions. Therefore, some decisions about individual applications may be taken after the published UCAS deadline, when all applications submitted within the deadline (normally 15th January) can be considered as a group. All applicants whose applications are part of a gathered field approach are notified by the University upon receipt of their application to explain the process and the estimated duration of decision-making process.
- 6.1.15** Where an applicant accepts an offer of a place on a programme of undergraduate study, by accepting the offer, the applicant will be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions associated with the offer.

6.2 Undergraduate Confirmation

- 6.2.1** The University endeavors, wherever possible, to conclude decision-making on applications for admission upon receipt of examination results within 2 working days of these examination results being released to applicants where any conditions of offer have been met, and within 7 working days where conditions have not been met.

6.2.2 Where results are received before 31st August, the University confirms all successful places for the forthcoming academic session. Where results are received after 31st August, the University confirms places on a case-by-case basis subject to places still being available for the forthcoming sessions, and may consider deferring places until the following academic session.

6.3 Examination Appeals

6.3.1 Where an applicant appeals their examination results, and this appeal is upheld resulting in a candidate satisfying the conditions of an offer of admission, the University confirms the applicant's place for the forthcoming session if results of the appeal are received by the University before 31st August.

6.3.2 If an appeal is upheld resulting in a candidate satisfying the conditions of an offer, and the results arrive at the University after 31st August, the University confirms places on a case-by-case basis subject to places still being available for the forthcoming session. Where places are not available in these circumstances, an applicant will be offered an unconditional place for entry in the following academic session.

6.4 UCAS Clearing and Adjustment

6.4.1 Due to the number of applications the University receives, we do not routinely enter UCAS Clearing.

6.4.2 During the confirmation period however, where places remain unfilled, the University may decide to offer these places through Clearing to those applicants who could be considered as being eligible for admission to the particular places available.

6.4.3 UCAS Adjustment allows applicants who have met and exceeded the terms of their conditional firm offer and have been accepted on that programme to be eligible to enter an adjustment period to allow them to find a programme of study at another institution whilst still holding their confirmed place. Applicants who enter adjustment but do not find a new institution keep their place at their original firm choice institution. The University engages with UCAS Adjustment and considers applicants interested in obtaining a place at Strathclyde through it.

6.5 Postgraduate Taught Programmes

6.5.1 The University admits students to Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes with a range of both academic and professional qualifications. In addition to an appropriate academic qualification (generally an acceptable undergraduate degree, or equivalent qualification), some programmes require relevant professional or work experience. The University welcomes applications from candidates with degrees or other qualifications from overseas institutions and advice on accepted qualifications is provided through the Recruitment & International Office.

6.5.2 Application for taught postgraduate study is an online web-based process and applicants are required to complete the application and upload supporting documentation via this online system.

When an application is received, the relevant Academic Selector takes into consideration all of the information supplied including qualifications to date, any which are pending and

references. The Selector may decide to contact an applicant should additional information be required.

- 6.5.3** There is no formal closing date for most postgraduate applications but applicants are advised through a range of communication means, to apply as soon as possible, preferably by the end of March for entry in September. Applications are considered and decisions given on a rolling basis by most Departments/Schools; exceptions to this will be specified in the relevant programme entry. Applicants who wish to be nominated by the University for any scholarship or funding are advised to apply as early as possible.
- 6.5.4** Applications for the full-time Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) require to be made through the UCAS process, while applications to complete the PGDE on a part-time basis can be made directly to the University. Specific details of these application routes, and the admission process relevant to PGDE are provided on the University website.
- 6.5.5** Where an applicant accepts an offer of a place on a programme of taught postgraduate study, by accepting the offer, the applicant will be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions associated with the offer.

6.6 Postgraduate Research Programmes

- 6.6.1** Postgraduate research programmes are offered across all four Faculties of the University, and a full list is provided in the postgraduate research programme list available through the website.
- 6.6.2** In addition to an appropriate academic qualification (such as an acceptable undergraduate degree, Masters degree, or equivalent qualification), some programmes require relevant professional or work experience. The University welcomes applications from candidates with degrees or other qualifications from overseas institutions.
- 6.6.3** Application for postgraduate study by research is an online web-based process but prospective applicants are encouraged to contact departments directly to discuss possible research areas before submitting a formal application.
- 6.6.4** Applicants are required to create and verify a Research User Profile and to choose the Academic Department/School in which they wish to undertake research. A brief research proposal may also be required.
- 6.6.5** There is no formal closing date for research applications and it is possible for students to commence study at any time during the year, in agreement with the relevant Academic Department/School.
- 6.6.6** When an application is received the relevant Academic Selector takes into consideration all of the information supplied including qualifications to date and any which are pending, the research proposal and references. The Selector may decide to contact an applicant should additional information be required.
- 6.6.7** Where an applicant accepts an offer of a place on a programme of postgraduate study by research, by accepting the offer, the applicant will be deemed to have accepted the terms and conditions associated with the offer.

6.7 PVG Checks

- 6.7.1** Some UK applicants to the University will be required to register with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG Scheme) and therefore undergo a background check on any previous criminal convictions.
- 6.7.2** Where this is the case the University makes arrangements for applicants to be advised of this requirement and of the process involved in registering with the PVG Scheme.
- 6.7.3** EU and international applicants who are applying to a programme for which a criminal records check is necessary as part of the University's admissions process will be required to undergo a criminal records check in their own country and provide the University with a Certificate of Good Conduct.

7. Withdrawal of Offers

- 7.1** It is a condition of admission to a programme of study that the applicant has accurately and truthfully presented all the relevant facts in their application. The University retains the right to withdraw an offer of a place should it subsequently come to light that the information provided by an applicant within or in support of their application was inaccurate or incomplete, a misrepresentation of the applicant's academic and other achievements, or fraudulent in nature.
- 7.2** Any offer of admission is made without prejudice to the right of the University to vary or withdraw it if information comes to the notice of the University (whether relating to events occurring before or after the date of the offer) which could reasonably have influenced the University's decision if known at the time the offer was made.
- 7.3** The University of Strathclyde reserves the right to withdraw, vary or amend any aspect of an offer of admission if it is found that an error or mistake has been made. In such cases a revised offer of admission will be issued or confirmation made that the offer is to be withdrawn. The University will accept no liability for financial or other loss incurred by the applicant in the event of such an issue arising. Where an applicant has applied through UCAS, any revision or withdrawal of offer will be made in line with the UCAS UG Admissions Guide for the relevant year of entry.
- 7.4** Where an offer states that it is conditional upon the applicant demonstrating that they have fulfilled the relevant entry criteria, the specified offer conditions must be fulfilled in their entirety prior to the start date stated or agreed in the offer. Moreover, where an applicant has not met the specified conditions, within a stated or agreed time period, the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer.
- 7.5** Where an applicant fails to provide required information or documentation in relation to an application for admission, within a stated or agreed time period, the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer.
- 7.6** Applicants holding a conditional offer should note that their place on the specified programme is not confirmed until all offer conditions have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the University.

7.7 An offer of admission does not imply that any financial assistance will be available from the University or any other source. Applicants wishing to be considered for a scholarship, bursary or other award should make an application directly to that scheme.

7.8 The University reserves the right to make variations to the content or availability of programmes and/or modules, or to discontinue programmes and/or modules as it deems appropriate. Where the University discontinues a programme or module, it will use its reasonable endeavours to provide an alternative, but this may not be possible in all circumstances. The University will also inform prospective students at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied and to advise promptly of the options available in the circumstances.

7.9 The University cannot accept responsibility, and expressly excludes liability, for loss or damage to applicants' and students' property. This includes such documentation as may be submitted by the applicant in order to secure admission (for example, but not limited to, degree certificates, transcripts and references).

7.10 The University retains the right to withdraw an offer or refuse admission in a situation where an applicant has demonstrated, through interactions with the University and its staff during the admissions process, conduct that does not meet the requirements of admitted students of the University, as specified within the Student Discipline Policy and Procedure, or that is not in line with the Dignity and Respect Policy.

8. Deferred Entry

8.1 The University is prepared to consider requests for deferral on an exceptional basis and where an acceptable reason is provided in relation to the request.

8.2 Whether or not requests for deferred entry can be accepted is determined within each programme of study and as such applicants interested in this option are required and directed to contact the relevant Academic Selector to determine the potential for such a request to be considered.

8.3 Where a request for deferred entry is submitted, the applicant may be required to meet the conditions of entry by a specific date of which they will be advised.

8.4 Where a deferral is approved, this will be for one admissions cycle only and as such, where an applicant is unable to commence studies at the specified point, they will be required to re-apply.

9. Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

9.1 In line with our commitment to fairness and transparency, the University routinely provides a reason for rejection to unsuccessful applicants, and where requested, additional feedback is given. Where an applicant indicates that they may wish to re-apply in a later cycle, guidance can be given as to how it might be possible for the applicant to improve their application.

9.2 Requests for feedback are dealt with in line with data protection legislation and as such are only considered from the applicant themselves or from the authorised contact named on the application form. In providing feedback, University staff follow the good practice guidance that is provided.

10. Applicants with Disabilities

10.1 In line with our commitment to equality of opportunity, the University is committed to promoting equal opportunities and actively encourages applications from students with disabilities.

10.2 The University, in accordance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, does not discriminate against applicants with disabilities during the admissions process. On this basis, and in all cases excluding those described under exceptional circumstances below, the University does not include an applicant's disability within the consideration of their potential to successfully undertake the programme of study.

10.3 Although there is no obligation for an applicant to disclose a disability, the University encourages applicants to disclose at an early stage in order that discussion around support that may be required, and reasonable adjustments that may be determined, can take place in a timely manner.

10.4 The Disability & Wellbeing Service contacts applicants who disclose a disability or medical condition during the application process in order to commence discussions about reasonable adjustments and support requirements.

10.5 The Disability & Wellbeing Service team is able to engage with applicants who disclose a disability in order to support an applicant's consideration of study choices in terms of any associated support requirements. Staff within the team are therefore available to applicants at early opportunities in the admissions cycle to discuss approaches to support at Strathclyde, and adjustments that could be possible.

10.6 Academic Selectors do not include the applicant's disability within the consideration of their potential to successfully undertake the programme of study, and the University makes every reasonable effort to accommodate an individual's support needs. In exceptional circumstances, if a Selector has strong concerns about the applicant's ability to undertake the programme due to a disability (i.e. where it may be impossible to make the required adjustments to the academic programme to meet an applicant's needs) or on the basis of Health and Safety Legislation, further discussion with the applicant and the Disability & Wellbeing Service may be required prior to an offer being made. The Academic Selector will ensure that advice is sought from the Disability & Wellbeing Service in all such instances.

10.7 Applicants are encouraged to contact the Disability & Wellbeing Service at any time during the application process to discuss matters relating to disclosure, support requirements or programme suitability.

10.8 Applicants who disclose a disability are assured that the information provided is treated sensitively and in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.

11. Applicants with a Criminal Conviction

- 11.1 The University welcomes applications from a people from a diverse range of backgrounds and aims to consider applications from individuals with a criminal conviction in a transparent manner and in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974).
- 11.2 To ensure an appropriate balance between the fair consideration of all applications and the appropriate management of risk within the University community, there are procedures in place to undertake an assessment where a criminal conviction has been declared. The current procedure is provided in Appendix 2 but is currently under review.
- 11.3 Applicants to professional and vocational programmes need to satisfy both academic and professional suitability criteria to gain admission. Additionally, the appropriate Professional or Regulatory Bodies may require the University to operate modified screening procedures and admissions criteria for particular programmes. Usually these programmes are where the student would have substantial unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults during a period of professional work placement and those where the final award is essentially a licence to practise professionally.
- 11.4 The sensitivity of personal data acquired for screening purposes is reflected in the manner in which the information is stored, considered and disposed of by the University.

12. Governance and Monitoring

- 12.1 The implementation of this policy is overseen by the Admissions Management Committee.
- 12.2 The processes and procedures for the admission of undergraduate and postgraduate students are also overseen and developed by the Admissions Management Committee.
- 12.3 The University complies with data protection legislation in respect of the use of applicant data. Further information about the University's Data Protection Policy can be found on the University's website.
- 12.4 This policy supports the University's obligation to consumer law as it applies to Higher Education. If an applicant considers the University to be in breach of this, a complaint can be made through our [complaints handling procedures](#).
- 12.5 In underpinning the University's approach to the admission of all students, this policy has provided clear detail on the key guiding principles outlining an admissions process that is fair, consistent and transparent, and in line with our commitment to equality of opportunity. Our [complaints handling procedures](#) is also available to those applicants who wish to appeal any aspect of our recruitment, selection and admission processes in instances that do not relate to academic judgement.

13. Data Management

- 13.1** Information provided by applicants during the admissions process will be used for the purpose of assessing suitability to undertake a programme of study at the University and returning a decision to an applicant.
- 13.2** If the applicant is successful a portion of this data will be used to create the initial student record, which will be checked and supplemented when the student completes registration. Student records are retained in line with the University's retention policy, which can be found on the University website.
- 13.3** Information provided by applicants that do not complete the application process, are ultimately unsuccessful or that do not take up their place will be retained in the admissions system for the prescribed period, set out in the University's retention policy, before being confidentially deleted.
- 13.4** Further information is available in the University Privacy Policy for Students and Applicants, the Data Protection Policy and on the relevant pages of the University website regarding records retention.

Appendix 1

Policy on Contextual Data in Admissions

The University of Strathclyde is committed to widening access and to encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to study with us. In line with this commitment, and the responsibility placed on the University by the Scottish Funding Council to recruit students from a range of backgrounds and with specific characteristics, contextual information is used within our agreed admissions processes. This helps to better inform decision-makers of applicants' socio-economic backgrounds, and any educational disadvantage that may have been experienced. The use of this data assists in ensuring that we consider applications fully and fairly, and that we effectively take account of the context and particular circumstances in which educational attainment has been achieved. This approach supports the effective consideration of applicants' potential to succeed at Strathclyde.

The following key principles underpin the policy:

- It is implemented at institutional level, and takes account of University strategic priorities and requirements;
- Contextual data is used consistently and transparently, only to supplement existing entry requirements and selection procedures;
- It focuses on a limited number of measures to ensure that it can be implemented effectively and is readily understood both internally and externally;
- It is explained in clear, unambiguous terms and information is provided in the public domain so that applicants and their advisers know what data is used and how and when it is applied;
- It is subject to annual monitoring and review to evaluate its effectiveness.

For applicants applying for entry to the University either during or after completing their secondary education, the University will use contextual information alongside the UCAS application in order to create a full and rounded view of circumstances, achievement and potential. This is simply additional information considered by admissions decision-makers, and no decisions will be made on the basis of this information alone. In the case of applicants who indicate that they are care experienced, we guarantee that an offer will be made if they have already met the academic contextual entry requirements, or are studying appropriate qualifications which would allow them to potentially become academically qualified following a conditional offer.

The three items of contextual information to be used are drawn from the application form and used alongside publicly available datasets:

1. Postcode:

An assessment is made of the postcode provided by the applicant as their home address, using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data set. A contextual data flag will be applied to an application where the postcode falls within the SIMD40 category (i.e. the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods as identified by the Scottish Government).

2. School HE Progression Rate:

Where the applicant's school, where they undertook their Higher qualifications, is part of the SFC-funded SHEP (Schools for Higher Education Programme), a contextual data flag will be applied. In

addition, candidates undertaking Highers at Scottish secondary schools which are not part of SHEP but which have a median progression to Higher Education rate of 30% or lower will have a contextual data flag applied. For information on which years of progression data are currently being used to determine the latter, contact wideningaccess@strath.ac.uk.

3. Care Background:

Where applicant information received via UCAS indicates that the applicant has been in care or looked after by a local authority, a contextual data flag will be applied.

Where an application carries a data flag for any or all of these factors, it will be considered as being eligible for consideration on the basis of a contextualised offer. The academic selector considering the application will reduce the requirements of the offer to be made to the applicant by at least one grade, in comparison to any other applicant being made an offer in the same year. Any offer made to a candidate with a contextual data flag will be in line with our contextual offers which are published on our website. The grade reduction will not normally be applied to a subject that is essential within the overall admission requirement. Details of the current year's contextual offer requirements are available [here](#).

Restrictions on Contextualised Offers

The approach to using contextual data within admissions does not mean that all applications that are flagged must be made an offer.

If an application, through information contained in sections including qualifications, the personal statement and reference, provide evidence that the applicant is not suitable to be considered for admission to the particular degree programme, even with the flexibility that a contextual offer provides, an offer cannot be made.

Offers from the University can only be made in line with any constraints placed by the SFC on numbers of funded places, and in the context of overall demand.

Appendix 2

Procedure for processing applications with Criminal Convictions within Admissions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University is required to undertake modified assessment procedures and admissions criteria for certain programmes, which may require applicants to provide information on spent or unspent criminal convictions. The data acquired during this process will be held, shared and disposed of in accordance with relevant legal and best practice requirements, including data protection legislation.
- 1.2 A spent conviction is a conviction which, under the terms of Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, can be effectively ignored after a specified amount of time. The amount of time for rehabilitation depends on the sentence imposed, not on the offence. The more serious the conviction, the longer the period of rehabilitation. For example, for a prison sentence of more than four years, the conviction will never become spent, but cautions become spent immediately (apart from conditional cautions, which become spent after three months).
- In most cases, once a conviction is spent the convicted person is not required to reveal the conviction. The University cannot refuse or dismiss an applicant on the basis of spent convictions.
- 1.3 However, certain courses may be exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, for example courses working with children or vulnerable adults, courses that lead to certain professions such as healthcare or pharmacy. This means that the applicant would be required to disclose cautions and both spent and unspent convictions.

2. Application Process

- 2.1 During the application process, either via UCAS or a direct application route, applicants **may** be asked whether they have a criminal conviction at the time of their admission to the University. At this point only a Yes / No response is required. Applicants should **not** answer yes if the conviction is for motoring offences for which the penalty was no greater than a fine and/or three penalty points.
- 2.2 If an applicant does not provide a response to this question if posed, they will be contacted by the Admissions Team for clarification.
- 2.3 Where an applicant answers "Yes" to this question, the Admissions Team will contact the applicant to ask for further details.
- 2.4 Some programmes may require a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme Enhanced Disclosure check and/or registration with a Professional Regulatory or Statutory

Body (PRBS). The University's prospectuses and web site will publish information on those courses that require these external enhanced checks. All applicants applying to such courses will be sent literature regarding these checks and any specific requirements by the relevant Course Team.

3. Considering and Responding to Applications

- 3.1 Academic Selectors should not take any account of a declared Criminal Conviction when considering an application and making their decision.
- 3.2 If a Selector wishes to make an offer to an applicant who has declared an unspent conviction, the applicant will be contacted via email by Admissions and asked for details of the unspent criminal conviction.
- 3.3 On receipt of the applicant's response, there are a number of possible outcomes:
- 3.4 If the applicant indicates that they provided a 'yes' response to the question regarding criminal convictions in error, Admissions Team staff will correct the error within all relevant systems and records.
- 3.5 If an applicant fails to respond to requests for further information regarding their criminal conviction, the University reserves the right to withdraw the application(s).
- 3.6 Where an applicant responds and provides with further details of an unspent conviction that they hold, an initial assessment of the information will be undertaken by a member of Admissions Team staff on the basis of the information supplied by the applicant and any further information that may be deemed necessary.
- 3.7 This initial assessment covers the
 - the nature of the conviction;
 - any potential risk that the applicant could pose within the University community based on the conviction, and;
 - any impact that the conviction may have on the overall suitability of the applicant to undertake the programme of study.
- 3.8 Based on the initial assessment, a decision will be taken by the Admissions Team as to whether or not the offer can proceed.
- 3.9 Where the assessment concludes that an offer should proceed, this will be ratified by the Admissions Team Leader before the offer is made.

- 3.10 If the assessment highlights any need for further enquiry, or information, or if the staff member conducting the assessment has any concerns, the application will be referred initially to the Head of Admissions and Student Lifecycle Services for information, and then to a Designated Group (comprising the relevant Academic Selector, the Faculty Manager/VDA, SEES (Admissions)) for a final decision to be made.
- 3.11 Where an application is referred to a Designated Group, this will be accompanied with a range of guidelines, general information, and the risk assessment proforma to support the decision making process, where required.
- 3.12 In these circumstances, the applicant will be asked to provide the name of at least one referee who is willing to provide a character reference in support of their application.
- 3.13 The final decision on the application will be made based on all the information supplied by the applicant and will take into account:
- The relevance of the conviction to the applicant's suitability to become a member of the student body and the University community;
 - The length of time since the offence was committed;
 - Whether or not the applicant has reoffended or shown any pattern of reoffending;
 - Any significant changes to the applicant's circumstances since the conviction;
 - An assessment of any potential or actual risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the University community that may be posed by the applicant becoming a student. This risk assessment will include the consideration of any possible mitigation of risk identified, and whether or not any identified risks would be at an acceptable or manageable level.
- 3.14 The Designated Group may make the decision to admit the applicant, although the offer may be conditional on restrictions and/or monitoring related to a criminal conviction. Full and specific details of the restrictions and/or monitoring arrangements should be communicated to the applicant in a communication separate from the offer letter. The University will confidentially retain a factual note of the process that has been applied, the risk assessment that was undertaken, the decision that was made, any conditions of admission and the reasons for them while the student is in attendance until it is confidentially destroyed in line with the University's retention policy.
- 3.15 Where the Designated Group make a decision not to admit the applicant, the applicant must be informed by the Admissions Team. For UCAS applicants, this will be a communication that is separate from the reject message relayed via UCAS track. In all cases the letter will detail the reasons for a place not being offered, and also the opportunity to appeal the decision to the University within 8 days of the issue of the rejection letter. Applicants will be advised to make any such appeal through the [University's Complaints Handling Procedure](#).

- 3.16 Appeals will be accepted on the following grounds only:
- Fresh information
 - Failure by the University to comply with the procedures set down in this document
- 3.17 If an application or appeal is unsuccessful, the documentation used in coming to a decision should be retained for forty days after the issue of the rejection letter, or until any appeal (complaint) has been decided, and then confidentially destroyed.
- 3.18 If an applicant is accepted under the procedure set down in 3.14, relevant information (including any conditions imposed on the applicant) will be supplied in strict confidence to the Accommodation Services Manager so that they can make an informed response in the event of a request for student accommodation from the applicant.

4. Convictions Incurred after an Offer has been Made

- 4.1 If an applicant incurs a conviction after they have received an offer of a place at the University, and before they have registered as a student, they are required to notify the Admissions Team immediately. Admissions staff will then follow the procedure in section 3 above.
- 4.2 This process may result in the offer being withdrawn by the University.
- 4.3 If the conviction is incurred after a student has completed registration, the University's Student Discipline Procedure may be invoked.

5. EU/International Students

- 5.1 In so far as is practicable given differences in criminal justice systems and records across the world, the procedure detailed within points 2 to 4 should be followed in relation to applications from EU and International students.
- 5.2 Applicants to programmes that involve contact with vulnerable persons, such as teaching and social work, will be required to undergo a criminal records check in their home country and supply the University with a Certificate of Good Conduct or equivalent. If an applicant has applied for a programme where this is a requirement, the relevant department/school will contact the applicant directly.
- 5.3 Students who require immigration permission to enter or remain in the UK will be required to declare any criminal convictions of any severity, spent or unspent to UK Visas and Immigration during the immigration application process. Failure to declare a conviction can result in a refusal of immigration permission. However, the University will not be party to this declaration.

- 5.4 Where an international student discloses a conviction, staff within the Admissions Team will seek advice from the International Student Support Team on the immigration implications of the conviction.
- 5.5 Students seeking advice on criminal convictions in relation to the immigration application process should be referred to the International Student Support Team for support.

6. Programmes of Study with Entry to Professions

- 6.1 Where an applicant has applied to a programme where successful completion will result in qualification to practise in a particular profession (e.g. in teaching, educational psychology, law and some aspects of health care), an exemption from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and related legislation will apply, and therefore the applicant will be required to disclose all convictions whether spent or unspent.
- 6.2 In such cases the Programme Director or equivalent should ensure that applicants are informed in writing at the offer stage of any requirements the profession may have for screening in respect of criminal convictions. It should be emphasised that the criteria used by the PRB for entry to the profession/employment may be more stringent than those used by the University in screening for entry to the programme of study. Provided an applicant has been fully informed of the position, the applicant can normally be admitted even if there is doubt about eventual admission to the profession.

7. Professional and Vocational Programme Requirements

- 7.1 Any Professional or Regulatory Body (PRB) (or similar authority) that expresses concern about the admission of students with criminal convictions to programmes in their area of responsibility should be advised of the University's policy, standard procedures and guidelines.
- 7.2 Modification of the University's standard procedures should only occur when this is specifically required by a relevant PRB (or similar authority). This will normally only apply where the University award is essentially a licence to practise (i.e. there is no separate body governing access to the profession/employment) and/or where student placements involve substantial unsupervised access to children or other vulnerable people.
- 7.3 In these cases, a PRB (or similar authority) may seek modification of the University's standard procedures in the areas indicated below
- Ask applicants for information about spent as well as unspent criminal convictions
 - Make all offers conditional on the applicant confirming that they have declared all relevant information about criminal convictions and that they understand that failure to do so will result in their registration on the programme being terminated;
 - Ask each applicant to confirm at the time an offer is made that they will declare any criminal charges or convictions that occur during their programme of study and that they understand that failure to do so will result in their registration being

terminated.

- 7.4 Any proposal to modify the University's standard procedures in these or other areas must be agreed with the Director, Student Experience and applicants must be appropriately informed in writing about procedures that will apply.