

Admissions Policy

1 Preamble

1.1 The University of Worcester aims to provide fair and equal access to a university education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it. This policy is written to inform applicants, parents, carers and advisors, and University of Worcester staff of the policies and procedures involved in making an application to the University. It is intended that the Policy will be produced in full on the University website, and that relevant sections will be included in the Prospectus, with clear indication of how to find the complete version. Hard copy will be available on request, and details of how to obtain this will also be publicised on the University website and in the Prospectus.

1.2 The Admissions Policy relates to the University's key strategic objectives of providing an outstanding student experience (1), and generating knowledge and promoting enterprise (2).¹ It also addresses the institutional risks of: failure to offer inclusive education to a diverse range of applicants, leading to decline in levels of recruitment, retention and achievement, and student satisfaction (2), failure to achieve (and meet the needs of) a diverse student population (3), failure to comply with legislative framework (6), failure of the University to make a full contribution to its community (10)².

1.3 The Admissions Policy complies with relevant legislation and is guided by the principles outlined by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group, '*Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice*' and the QAA '*Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* – [Section 10: Admissions to higher education](#).

1.4 The QAA Code of Practice is reproduced in Appendix 1 of this document, and the relevant precepts for each section are indicated throughout the document.

2 Policy statement

2.1 The University welcomes applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications, traditional and non-traditional, academic and vocational. Our students come from diverse backgrounds and have a whole range of qualifications both from the UK and overseas. We consider applicants to our courses solely on the basis of their merit, ability and potential. We welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those traditionally offered who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level (e.g. an Access course) is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or other assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University Admissions Office staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process.

2.2 We will consider all information contained within the application form, or produced at interview or audition. This might include past academic performance, predicted grades, personal statements, academic and personal references and any other evidence of skills,

¹ University of Worcester – Strategic Plan 2007-12

² University of Worcester – Institutional Risk Register

aptitude and potential to succeed. Relevant experience (particularly for professional courses where this may be required) is particularly valued.

3 Principles

3.1 The admission of students is based on the reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to fulfil the objectives and achieve the standard required for the award for which they are registered.

3.2 Entry requirements should be explicit in identifying the knowledge, skills and competences required at admission and relating these to content, mode of delivery and outcomes of the award.

3.3 Selection criteria should set out the standards and means by which an applicant will be judged.

3.4 The University is committed to widening access to and participation in higher education (HE) by raising awareness and expectations in the pre-university community in order to increase the pool of candidates who can benefit from the provision on offer.

3.5 No student will be subjected to less favourable treatment on grounds of race, ethnic or national origins, colour, gender, sexuality, parental status, marital status, disability status, creed, political belief or social or economic background.

3.6 Support for disabled students can be negotiated through the Disability Co-ordinator who works from the [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#). Early contact is advisable to ensure appropriate levels of support from the outset of the student's course.

3.7 The University recognises the importance of the provision of accurate and appropriate pre-entry information and support to prospective students in order to ensure that all applicants will be given every opportunity to choose courses in an informed manner and to be admitted to a suitable course.

3.8 Constant monitoring and review of admissions practices and procedures is necessary to effect improvements as required and to respond to any changes in the institutional mission and external factors including changing patterns in the applicant market.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 1)

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibility for the University Admissions Policy and procedures lies with the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee, and is operationalised by the Admissions Office of Registry Services. Academic decisions are made by academic Admissions Tutors in collaboration with, and supported by, the Admissions Office.

4.2 Training for all involved in Admissions matters will be available through the Admissions Forum, Briefing Notes, Institute staff meetings and other appropriate means. Additional training may be offered through the University Staff Development scheme, if required.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 2)

5 Entry Profiles

5.1 The University will make available Admissions Profiles for all its academic courses. All admissions decisions will be made against the criteria detailed in the admissions profile. Each profile will specify:

- typical academic entry requirements
- other accepted experience and/or qualities.

5.2 Admissions profiles will be made available via the University website, the UCAS website for undergraduate full time courses and in the University's prospectus.

5.3 The University aims to make university education accessible and welcomes applications from all those interested in higher education. In addition to traditional academic qualifications the University recognises prior learning of applicants, either as a basis for entry to a course or to exempt applicants from some of the requirements, as explained in the Academic Regulations.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 3)

6 Minimum entry Requirements

6.1 The Regulatory Frameworks for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes contain the agreed minimum entry requirements for courses, and can be found on the Registry Services webpages. Appendix 2 shows the minimum entry requirements for undergraduate courses.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

7 Decision Making

7.1 Undergraduate Full Time

With the exception of some International applications, all full-time undergraduate applications should be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service ([UCAS](#)) who forward applications to the University of Worcester's Admissions Office.

7.2 Undergraduate Part Time

Applications to undergraduate part-time courses should be made directly to the University via the University's paper application form. An online application form is currently being developed.

7.3 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

All applications for PGCE courses should be submitted through the Graduate Teacher Training Registry ([GTTR](#)) who forward applications to the Admissions Office.

7.4 Postgraduate

Applications to postgraduate courses are submitted directly to the University using the institution's paper application form or via the [Graduate Prospects](#) website.

7.5 The Application Process

7.5.1 On receipt, applications will be distributed to the Admissions Officer with responsibility for the particular subject area who will:

- check that the application is correctly completed and that all necessary information has been included. Where further information such as a transcript, reference or personal statement is required, a written request will be made to the applicant
- check the applicant's fee status and where appropriate send a Fee Assessment Form
- forward applications to the relevant Admissions Tutor. Once a decision has been made, the Admissions Tutor will return the application to the Admissions Office for processing, normally within ten working days
- applications through UCAS: Transmit the decision to UCAS, either through the University's own record system, or online using UCAS Weblink. Once a decision has been entered it is available to be viewed by the applicant through UCAS Apply
- direct online or paper-based applications: Issue a formal offer letter by mail to the applicant. This letter will detail any outstanding conditions and further instruction where appropriate.

7.5.2 Those applicants not meeting the selection criteria of their chosen course may be considered for, and offered, an alternative course. If an application is unsuccessful the reason for rejection is recorded to provide applicants with feedback if requested.

7.5.3 Significant changes to advertised programmes (between an offer being made and registration) must be conveyed to applicants as a matter of priority. Where the University decides to terminate a programme the correct procedures as indicated in the procedure document must be followed.

7.5.4 Applicants will be expected to know the obligations placed on them if they accept an offer of a place at the University, or on a collaborative programme. This information is made available at the time an offer of a place is made.

7.5.5 All successful applicants will be sent information on arrangements for enrolment, registration and induction of new students. This will be co-ordinated by the Admissions Office, and will include information from all relevant services within the University.

(QAA Code of Practice Precepts 5, 6, 7 and 8)

7.6 International Applications

7.6.1 Applications from prospective International students will be considered and processed consistently with Home/EU applications.

7.6.2 Those applicants offering overseas qualifications will be expected to have achieved the equivalent of the quoted minimum entrance requirements to enrol. Assessment will be made using both UK NARIC and the UCAS Guide to International Qualifications.

7.6.3 International applicants must be proficient in English in order to be admitted to a course. The University will normally accept one of the English Language qualifications set out in the table below, though some courses may demand this at a higher level than specified below.

Undergraduate	Postgraduate
GCSE O Level/IGCSE grade C	GCSE O Level/IGCSE grade C
International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) 6.0	International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) 6.5
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) 550 (CB 213)	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) 580 (CB 237)
Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English Grade A	Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English Grade A
Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English Grade C or above	Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English Grade C or above
Oxford – Arels examination (higher level) Merit or Distinction	Oxford – Arels examination (higher level) Merit or Distinction

8 Deposits and Visas

8.1 There is a compulsory deposit requirement for overseas applicants. Those applicants requiring entry clearance to enter/remain in the UK, and who have not been recruited via a University-appointed agent, will be required to pay a £4250 deposit as a condition of the release of their CAS. Applicants recruited via a University-appointed agent are advised of the amount of deposit required.

8.2 Applications from overseas students will be processed as per the normal admissions procedures. However, wording contained within conditional offer letters and unconditional offer letters will signal to students the necessity of making payment of the compulsory deposit once the applicant has reached “unconditional firm” stage.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 6)

9 Similarity Detection

9.1 The UCAS similarity detection service reviews all personal statements within incoming applications. These are checked against a library of all personal statements previously submitted to UCAS and sample statements collected from a variety of web sites and other sources including paper publications. Each personal statement received at UCAS is added to the library of statements after it has been processed.

9.2 Any statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service team. Universities will be notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Applicants will also be notified that the UCAS Similarity Detection Service has found that their personal statement merits investigation. The decision about what action, if any, to take regarding notified cases rests with the University.

Full details can be found at

<http://www.ucas.com/students/startapplication/apply09/personalstatement/similaritydetection>

9.3 Personal statements referred to the University by UCAS reporting similarity of 10% or greater will be dealt with as follows:

- cases with reported similarity of **50%+** will be forwarded to the Admissions Tutor to telephone the applicant, discuss the case and request re-submission of personal statement
- cases with reported similarity of **20-49%** will be forwarded to the Admissions Tutor for consideration. If required, the Admissions Office will contact the applicant to discuss the case and consider requesting re-submission of personal statement
- cases with reported similarity of **10-19%** will be reviewed by the Admissions Office but will not be followed up unless there is due cause.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

10 Interviews and Portfolios

10.1 Admission to some courses may require additional stages to the selection process such as interviews or the requirement of a portfolio. In these cases, any additional requirements will be clearly stated in the University prospectus and Entry Profiles. Some examples of courses with additional requirements include:

- suitable applicants to Pre-Registration Nursing, Midwifery, Paramedic and Social Work courses will be required to attend an interview as part of the selection process
- suitable applicants to Initial Teacher Education courses will be required to attend an interview as part of the selection process
- those applicants not meeting minimum entrance requirements who are advised to undertake the Exploratory Essay, must be invited to interview
- applicants to Art & Design and Digital Media courses will be required to submit a portfolio as part of the selection process.

10.2 Applicant interviews may be introduced as part of the selection process for any course offered at the University, provided this is communicated to applicants via pre-entry publicity (UCAS website, University website and prospectus). The purpose and conduct of interviews will also be publicised. The outcome, including feedback for unsuccessful applicants, should be returned to the Admissions Office along with all paperwork relating to the applicant.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

11 Feedback Policy

11.1 In order to support transparent admissions systems the University acknowledges an applicant's need to know why their application was deemed unsuccessful. Initial summary feedback will be provided via UCAS Track for those applying via UCAS. Feedback may also be provided on an individual basis in response to a formal request (written or emailed) from the applicant **within** 6 weeks of the decision being made. The request must include:

- UCAS Personal Identification Number
AND
- full Name
- date of birth
- course applied for.

11.2 Feedback will only be given in written format (not over the telephone or in person) within 8 weeks of receipt of the request. The Admissions Office will not consider an application that has been re-submitted in the same cycle in light of the feedback provided for the same course, but the application may be considered for an alternative course.

11.3 In line with Data Protection policies the University will not be able to provide feedback to anyone other than the applicant unless the Admissions Office has been advised to do so. The feedback will be sent to the email address the applicant has provided on their application form. Therefore applicants should be sure to inform the Admissions Office of any changes.

11.4 The University of Worcester does not allow appeals against an admissions decision, and the Complaints Procedure should be followed, if an applicant is unhappy with the feedback received.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 9)

12 Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)³ and Occupational Health

12.1 Courses requiring CRB and Occupational Health checks will have this clearly stated in their University prospectus entry and Entry Profiles. Some examples of courses requiring CRB and Occupational Health checks include:

- successful applicants to Pre-Registration Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions courses will be required to complete an Occupational Health check demonstrating fitness to practice before being allowed to enrol
- successful applicants for Social Work programmes must complete a self declaration of fitness to train and practice in order to enrol
- successful applicants to Initial Teacher Education will be required complete an Occupational Health check demonstrating fitness to practice before being allowed to enrol
- successful applicants to all the above courses will be required to undergo police record checks, carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau, before being allowed to enrol
- successful applicants to all the above courses will be required to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority before being allowed to enrol.

12.2 Other courses may also require one or more of these checks, and this should be indicated in all pre-application publicity.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

13 Applicants with Criminal Convictions

13.1 UCAS advice states:

'An applicant who has a relevant criminal conviction that is not spent is required to state this on their application. 'Relevant' is defined in Apply as offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, or offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking.

³ Please note that the ISA requirements are currently under review by the government [July 2010]

Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant. Certain courses, for example, teaching, health, social work, veterinary medicine, veterinary science or courses involving work with children or vulnerable adults, do not come under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.'

13.2 A criminal conviction not yet spent shall not normally be a bar to entry to a course unless:

- the programme provides entry to employment in an occupation covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order 1975
- in the view of the University, the applicant might pose a threat to staff and other students
- specified by an accrediting Professional Body.

13.3 Where the applicant indicates a criminal conviction on the application form:

- the Admissions Office will write to the applicant and request information about the date of the conviction, the nature of the offence and the sentence
- the Assistant Registrar (Recruitment & Admissions) will discuss the case with the Head of Registry Services, and other relevant staff, where appropriate
- where admission to the programme is denied on the basis of the conviction, the applicant will be notified of the decision in writing.

13.4 The University's policy on Rehabilitation of Offenders can be found at http://www2.worc.ac.uk/registry/pdf/policy_on_recruitment_of_exoffenders.pdf.

13.5 All information supplied by applicants is kept in accordance with the University's policy on data handling: <http://www.worc.ac.uk/dpfoi/>.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

14 Fees and Finance

14.1 The University of Worcester offers its students considerable financial assistance in the form of scholarships, bursaries, charitable funds, loans and other financial support.

14.2 The most up to date information on financial matters will be available on the University's web site at <http://www.worc.ac.uk/student/finance/157.html>.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

15 Equivalent or Lower Qualifications (ELQ)

15.1 The University receives two elements of funding for many students: one is the tuition fee charged to students (and usually paid by the Student Loans Company, by the student themselves or by a Sponsor) and the other is an institutional grant received from the government via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for teaching those students.

15.2 In 2007, the government announced that it would no longer be providing this funding for students who studied for a second degree at the same, or a lower, level than a qualification which they already hold (this is referred to as the funding of Equivalent or Lower Qualifications, or ELQs).

15.3 This means that, for applicants who find themselves in this position, the University may have to charge a higher fee level, to make up the difference in funding that no longer comes from the government.

15.4 For 'ELQ' entrants in 2010, the University will not be charging higher fees, but such students will not be entitled to receive a University bursary. This will be reviewed in subsequent years in accordance with the conditions at the time.

15.5 The government has also agreed a number of exemptions to this policy. These include students studying Foundation Degrees; students in receipt of Disability Support Allowance (DSA); and students studying non-HEFCE funded courses such as Initial Teacher Training, Midwifery, Nursing and Social Work.

15.6 Further details about the government policy and a full list of exemptions can be found at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/funding/elq>
<http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/hefunding.html>.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

16 Disability and Dyslexia Support

16.1 Applications to University courses will be assessed purely on academic grounds. A disabled applicant's merits are assessed as they would be if any reasonable adjustments had been made. In some instances, an Admissions tutor may need to seek additional information from the student and/or liaise with the Disability and Dyslexia Service for the purposes of establishing if adjustments might be appropriate to support a student.

16.2 The Admissions Office will provide the Disability & Dyslexia Service with copies of application forms for all successful applicants who choose the University of Worcester as their Firm choice, and will send such applicants information provided by the Disability & Dyslexia Service.

16.3 Disability and Dyslexia Service will, guided by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), inform the applicant of the reasonable adjustments the University can make in relation to their disability. Based on this information, it will be the applicant's decision as to whether or not they wish to accept the offer of a place on a course. In the unlikely event that the University is unable to make a reasonable adjustment, the Disability Co-ordinator (or representative) will inform the applicant as soon as possible.

16.4 The University will be proactive in encouraging disclosure.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 4)

17 Monitoring and Evaluation

17.1 Policy is informed by the monitoring and evaluation of all admissions-related processes as follows:

- regular review of admissions processes, including consultation to review performance and efficiency
- annual review of entry profiles and decision making criteria, including new qualifications, plus ad hoc revisions where necessary
- annual review of application data to inform policy development.

17.2 This policy statement will be reviewed and updated annually.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 12)

18 Complaints Procedure

18.1 If an applicant wishes to make a complaint:

- they should contact the Assistant Registrar (Recruitment & Admissions) in the first instance. This can be done informally, in person, by telephone or via email
- should the applicant wish to make a formal complaint, then this should be put in writing. The applicant can expect a reply within 15 working days. If the applicant is not satisfied with the response, there is the right to appeal to the Head of Registry Services, who will investigate accordingly
- the University of Worcester reserves the right to make academic judgements on the suitability and potential of an applicant.

(QAA Code of Practice Precept 10 and 11)

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Author of the document: Francesca Fairhurst, Assistant Registrar (Recruitment and Admissions)

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APPENDIX 1

QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Section 10 Admissions to higher education (precepts)

General principles

1 Institutions have policies and procedures for the recruitment and admission of students to higher education that are fair, clear and explicit and are implemented consistently.

2 Institutions' decisions regarding admissions to higher education are made by those equipped to make the required judgements and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

Recruitment and selection

3 Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

4 Institutions' selection policies and procedures are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously. Transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process for entry.

5 Institutions conduct their admissions processes efficiently, effectively and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the institution, applicants and their advisers.

Information to applicants

6 Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.

7 Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.

8 Institutions explain to applicants who have accepted a place arrangements for the enrolment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.

9 Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.

Complaints and appeals

10 Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.

11 Institutions have policies in place for responding to applicants' appeals against the outcome of a selection decision that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so,

on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered.

Monitoring and review of policies and procedures

12 Institutions regularly review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to higher education to ensure that they continue to support the mission and strategic objectives of the institution, and that they remain current and valid in the light of changing circumstances.

APPENDIX 2

Minimum entry requirements for Degree courses

4 GCSEs (Grade C or above) plus 120 Tariff points from minimum of 2 and maximum of 3½ A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications

Acceptable Qualifications (alone or in combination, to satisfy the Tariff requirements):

(For notes on these qualifications, please consult the current prospectus)

- GCE A Levels and AS Levels
- BTEC Nationals
- OCR Nationals
- Access to Higher Education Diploma
- Progression and Advanced Diploma
- AQA Baccalaureate
- Other qualifications within the UCAS Tariff
- Professional Qualifications
- NVQ Level 3/Modern Apprenticeship
- Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers
- Irish Leaving Certificate
- International Baccalaureate and European Baccalaureate
- International Qualifications

Other qualifications and Mature Students

We welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those shown in this section who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level (e.g. an Access to Higher Education Diploma) is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or other assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University Admissions office staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at HND or degree level or extensive experience may be considered eligible for Accreditation of Prior Learning.

Entry may be possible to Year Two or Three of the course, depending upon the qualifications or experience gained. Credit can also be given for individual modules.

Functional Skills (Key Skills/Essential Skills)

Key skills at Level 3 may be allowed to contribute to up to 20 UCAS tariff points towards meeting the condition of an offer, until they are removed from the UCAS Tariff. These skills do not satisfy the subject knowledge requirements for courses requiring specific GCSE subjects.

Minimum entry requirements for Foundation Degree and Higher National Diploma courses

4 GCSEs at Grade C or above plus 60 Tariff points from minimum of 1 and maximum of 3½ A Levels or equivalent Level 3 qualifications

Acceptable Qualifications (alone or in combination, to satisfy the Tariff requirements):

(For notes on these qualifications, please consult the current prospectus)

- GCE A Levels and AS Levels
- BTEC Nationals
- OCR Nationals
- Access to Higher Education Diploma
- Progression and Advanced Diploma
- AQA Baccalaureate
- Other qualifications within the UCAS Tariff
- Professional Qualifications
- NVQ Level 3/Modern Apprenticeship
- Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers
- Irish Leaving Certificate
- International Baccalaureate and European Baccalaureate
- International Qualifications

Other qualifications and Mature Students

We welcome applicants who hold alternative qualifications/experience different to those shown in this section who can demonstrate the ability to benefit from the course and show their potential to complete the course successfully. Although recent preparatory study at an appropriate level (e.g. an Access Diploma) is recommended, students may be considered on the basis of prior evidenced professional/work experience and/or other assessment procedures, and the assessment of personal suitability. University Admissions office staff will be able to offer information, advice and guidance on this process.

Accreditation of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at HND or degree level or extensive experience may be considered eligible for Accreditation of Prior Learning.

Entry may be possible to Year Two or Three of the course, depending upon the qualifications or experience gained. Credit can also be given for individual modules.

Functional Skills (Key Skills/Essential Skills)

Key skills at Level 3 may be allowed to contribute to up to 20 UCAS tariff points towards meeting the condition of an offer, until they are removed from the UCAS Tariff. These skills do not satisfy the subject knowledge requirements for courses requiring specific GCSE subjects.