

# ADMISSIONS DIGEST

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## 1 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- 1.1 This Digest is designed to summarise the principles and processes used for considering applications to the University of Gloucestershire, and to link these with the principles articulated by the University Admissions Policy, and section 10 of the QAA Code of Practice, which provides guidance on admissions and recruitment.

## 2 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The University of Gloucestershire, in its Charter and Mission Statement, recognises its responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all potential students during the enquiry, recruitment and selection process. The University is committed to social justice and inclusivity, widening access, encouraging educational participation and to lifelong learning.
- 2.2 The University will adopt measures to combat discrimination on grounds of age, gender, health, marital status, ethnicity, disability, nationality, social class, religious belief and sexual orientation. The University Marketing and Recruitment Committee has institutional responsibility for the admissions policies of the University, which are operationalised through the Student Recruitment Office (SRO).
- 2.3 The University is committed to the elimination of all kinds of discrimination. It will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly by showing appropriate sensitivity to individual differences and that decisions about recruitment, selection, admission and progression to University programmes at all levels are based solely on objective academic and non-academic criteria that have been made available to applicants prior to application.

- 2.4 The University will ensure that staff involved with admissions are aware of the issues affecting fair treatment of potential students and applicants.
- 2.5 The University will seek to promote and develop diversity of its student body by:
- i) Treating each applicant on his/her own merit;
  - ii) Identifying student potential as well as acknowledging past academic and other achievements;
  - iii) Ensuring that all publicity campaigns and material, correspondence and application forms reflect the diversity of the student population and potential application group, avoiding inappropriate images or descriptions of the student body or University life;
  - iv) Providing information and advice to enquirers or, where appropriate, referring the applicant to external specialist providers such as UCAS, GTTR, Career Organisations and Schools and Colleges.
- 2.6 The University will regularly review this Digest in light of changes in the national admissions and recruitment environment and in response to institutional and market changes. Review will be initiated through and approved by the Marketing and Recruitment Committee.

### **3 MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

- 3.1 Information contained in prospectuses, website, leaflets or brochures will be available pre-application. Taken in aggregate this information should be comprehensive and will cover the following areas.
- programmes offered, details of programme structures, duration, mode of attendance and end qualifications;
  - academic entry requirements, including any specific proficiency for a particular course or programme;
  - details of tuition and other fees and payment arrangements where these have been determined in advance of publication of materials;
  - accommodation available on and off campus;
  - advice on sources of financial assistance (internal and external), including scholarships and bursaries;
  - institutional policies on equal opportunities;
  - student support and guidance facilities;
  - methods of application;
  - open days;
  - students' union;
  - disability advisers; and
  - international student enquiries;
- 3.2 The following information is made available pre-arrival:
- the cost of accommodation and application procedures;
  - academic and other support services available;

- institutional services available during vacations and weekends;
  - general guidance, for example, University rules and regulations, UK immigration and entry requirements;
  - advice on culture, social activities and living costs;
  - details of tuition and other fees.
- 3.3 Promotional material should not contain statements about other institutions, except with their prior approval.
- 3.4 Promotional materials should, on request, be provided in alternative formats.
- 3.5 University staff should follow the basic principle of responsible recruitment. All staff involved in the recruitment process should work closely together to ensure they are fully aware of the information that should be made available to applicants.
- 3.6 The University will respond to all enquiries as quickly as possible and normally no later than 5 working days after receipt of an enquiry.

## **4 APPLICATION PROCESSES**

### **4.1 Applications**

- (i) All applicants for entry in the September of each year to full-time degree and HND places, including entry with credit, must apply through UCAS, or GTTR as appropriate.
- (ii) All other applicants should use the appropriate University Application Form (for postgraduate study, part-time study, for Associate registration, foundation degrees or full-time study starting in Semester 2). These application forms should be returned to Student Records before circulation to the appropriate Admissions Tutor for decision.
- (iii) Internal University applicants wishing to top up their award from Diploma to Degree level are required to complete an APEL3 form which may be obtained from Academic Registry. Students on Art & Design Foundation courses wishing to apply for Degree courses at the University, must do so via UCAS. Postgraduate students wishing to apply for Initial Teacher Training courses must do so via the Graduate Teacher Training Register (GTTR).
- (iv) Applications received on University Application Forms for:-
  - postgraduate part-time study and full-time entry
  - Associate study
  - Research degrees
  - Foundation degrees

are entered onto the University's student records system (SITS) and forwarded to the relevant Admissions Tutor. Monitoring of the processing times of these forms is the responsibility of the Director of Student Recruitment and Access.

*Sections 4.2 to 4.9 refer to Undergraduate applications only*

- 4.2 Applications sent to the Student Recruitment Office will be circulated as quickly as possible to the appropriate Admissions Tutor. It is sometimes necessary for the Admissions Tutor to seek additional information before processing the form.

When the Admissions Tutor has made a decision Conditional (C) including the conditions clearly stated, Unconditional (U), Reject (R) with reasons, or Interview (I), the forms must be initialed with the date and returned to SRO. The decision is logged by SRO and then recorded by Student Records and transmitted, if appropriate, to UCAS/GTTR/SWAS. A standard letter, where appropriate, will be generated and sent to applicants who are to receive an offer. The offer will include details of how to apply for accommodation, visit the university at open days and provide contact information for candidates wishing to gather further details about their course or the University.

Interviews are a normal part of the decision making process in areas such as Art & Design, Social Work and Initial Teacher Training, but any programme or course may choose to carry out selection interviews, particularly if the applicant is mature, without formal qualifications, or is seeking entry with credit from previous experiential and/or certificated learning. Interview criteria will be provided for all courses using this process as a method of selection. These criteria will be available to applicants upon request and through the University website. The Admissions Tutor will need to arrange administrative support through either the School or SRO if an applicant needs to be interviewed before an offer can be made.

- 4.3 The results of applicants who have accepted conditional offers and who are studying tariff listed courses are sent to UCAS by the Examination Boards. UCAS informs the University by computer file of these results. Candidates outside the UCAS system will be asked to send official confirmation of their results and applicants may be asked to present their certificates at Registration.
- 4.4 Applicants who meet the conditions of their offer are automatically confirmed. It is the responsibility of the Director of Student Recruitment and Access, in consultation with Faculty Deans, Heads of Department and Admissions Tutors, to adjust the entry requirement at Confirmation in accordance with field entry targets.
- 4.5 Students are sent details of registration and induction once their place is confirmed, including details of the academic calendar and the contact details of key staff who will be available to support students during the induction period. The terms and conditions of the University are publicly available on the University website.
- 4.6 The Director of Student Recruitment and Access in conjunction with Deans of Faculties or their representatives will consider applicants who do not meet the

conditions for a particular course, but meet the minimum entry requirements at the Confirmation period. As a result of this deliberation, applicants are accepted or rejected and they must firmly accept or decline.

- 4.7 Applicants who are firm in the UCAS system may subsequently seek to release themselves from their commitment to us or to change their field combinations. Applicants are asked to write in (letter, email or fax) for these alterations. These can only be authorized by the Director of Student Recruitment and Access. Any applicant, who is not in receipt of an offer, may apply in Clearing for a vacant place.
- 4.8 Applicants during the normal cycle of recruitment who have been rejected for their first choice field or combination will have their applications reviewed by the Director of Student Recruitment and Access and, if appropriate, will be offered an alternative course. Letters have been developed in the Student Recruitment Office (SRO) to promote this practice. If the applicant is interested in the alternative course, they will be invited to attend an Open Day so that they may be made fully aware of the nature of the new course.
- 4.9 The process described in 4.7 also applies to those applicants whose course may have been changed or is no longer operating due to academic or resources constraints. The University will give students in this position the opportunity to withdraw their application at this stage in order to secure a position at an alternative provider and will support such students in their search for alternative courses.

## **5 SELECTION CRITERIA**

- 5.1 Entry routes for all programmes of study will include the widest possible range of criteria to enable each applicant's capabilities to be fully assessed. The following factors, not in order of importance, will be used when deciding whether to make an offer for a particular course.
- applicant's past academic performance
  - objective assessment of any factors that affected past performance
  - ability of applicant to benefit from the proposed course of study
  - work and/or life experience or skill-based knowledge
  - past educational history and academic potential in this context
  - applicant's understanding of the course applied for and the appropriateness of their application
  - number of places available
  - applicant's attendance at a compact partner institution, and
  - applicant's experience related to the course or HE generally.
- 5.2 The University may make differential offers to students based on the criteria identified in 5.1 above. The range of offers for a particular subject should not normally exceed the maximum tariff points attributable to a single element of level three assessment as measured by a standard four-unit award.

- 5.3 Candidates will normally be expected to have achieved GCSE English Language grade C and GCSE Mathematics grade C by the time they commence their course. Appropriate alternative level 2 qualifications will be accepted at the discretion of the relevant Admissions Tutor.
- 5.4 The University subscribes to the Fair Enough criteria, developed by Universities UK. These are:
- Self-organised
  - Works well independently
  - Motivated to learn
  - Interested in subject area
  - Ability to work with others

All candidates will be expected to meet these criteria, which can be demonstrated either in the personal statement or by an appropriate referee.

- 5.5 Where possible the University will make conditional offers to students using the UCAS tariff. The University is committed to accepting all qualifications within the UCAS tariff at their full tariff value, including the new Diplomas.
- 5.6 The use of these criteria will be monitored by the Director of Student Recruitment and Access and overseen by the Marketing and Recruitment Committee.
- 5.7 Admissions procedures should not unfairly discriminate against any individual or group.
- 5.8 There will be occasions on which conditional offers are based on non-academic criteria, such as criminal records bureau clearance and medical health. The Admissions Tutors for courses making such offers will be responsible for identifying objective ways in which these criteria can be assessed and for notifying SRO of these assessment tools. SRO will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the appropriateness of these non-academic criteria across the University to ensure institutional equity.
- 5.9 All applicants are entitled to ask for feedback about their application, regardless of its outcome. In the first instance requests for feedback should be addressed to the Student Recruitment Office (SRO). Requests for feedback will normally be responded to within ten working days of receipt.
- 5.10 The University does not make use of data relating to family background for selection purposes, but may use this data for monitoring the effectiveness of access initiatives.
- 5.11 Where applications contain information that has been identified by the UCAS system as having been copied from the web or from other applications the University will write to the applicant for an explanation of this circumstance. Where an applicant fails to provide a response within ten working days, the University will reject the application and notify UCAS accordingly. Where a reasonable explanation is received the University will consider the application

after the copied data has been removed. The University may ask for additional information from candidates in these circumstances.

- 5.12 Where an applicant requests a re-mark or an appeal on an assessment that is critical to their acceptance, the University will hold the applicant's offer open until the final "reject by default" date in the September of the year of entry. In these circumstances the University will normally grant a deferral of their entry in order to allow sufficient processing time for the re-mark or appeal.

## **6 APPLICANTS WHO ARE QUALIFIED BY EXPERIENCE**

- 6.1 The University is committed to widening access to all students who will benefit from a course of higher education. The University recognizes that some applicants may not hold the minimum qualifications required for entry but may have relevant work and life experience that enables them to benefit from higher education. Applicants in this position may be invited to an advisory interview with the Director of Student Recruitment and Access or an appropriate Admissions Tutor before applying.

### **6.2 Qualifications-**

If applicants are identified after advisory interview to be under-qualified in terms of general education (e.g. one or two 'O' level/GCSEs or GNVQ Intermediate/Level 2 or NVQs Level 2), they are normally advised to complete one of the following to qualify for entry:

- (i) take an Access to HE Course
- (ii) take specified modules at University of Gloucestershire as a part-time Associate Student
- (iii) take any qualifications needed to meet professional requirements (e.g. GCSE Science for teacher training applicants).

- 6.3 Access Courses are for students with few or no formal educational qualifications who want to qualify for entry to higher education. The award of the Access Certificate, issued by an Authorised Validating Agency acting under licence from the QAA, is recognized nationally as meeting the general entry requirements for higher education. The University of Gloucestershire accepts Access to HE Certificates as meeting the general entry requirements for foundation degrees, diplomas and degree courses. The University is a signatory to the Western Access Progression Agreement (WAPA) and implements its principles for all courses within the modular scheme framework.

## **7 INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS (NON-UK/EU)**

- 7.1. International applicants include all applications from non-UK domiciled individuals. Some of the information in this section may be relevant to applicants who have been educated in other countries but who are now domiciled in the UK.

- 7.2. Admissions Tutors should liaise with the Head of International Recruitment for information and advice about European qualifications for all non-language field applications so that they can build up their knowledge and there can be a standard approach to overseas qualifications.
- 7.3. Members of the International Development Centre should be consulted on general matters or individual cases, including visa renewal, difficulties relating to cultural adjustment, language difficulties or financial problems.
- 7.4. All students both EU and non-EU whose first language is not English should have met our minimum English language requirement before commencing the course. The standard IELTS requirement for undergraduate programmes is 6.0 (TOEFL – CBT 213, TOEFL – IBT 80) and a minimum of 6.5 for postgraduate programmes (TOEFL – CBT 232, TOEFL – IBT 90). Individual fields, courses and programmes may require higher English language requirements for entry, where agreed with the Head of Student Recruitment.

## **8 APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- 8.1 The University seeks to ensure equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities.
- 8.2 The main feature of the policy relevant to this Digest is to encourage people with disabilities to apply for places. The University also recognises a responsibility to local residents with special requirements who need to study close to home. The policy also seeks to ensure that those responsible for the recruitment of students do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly against people with disabilities.
- 8.3 Applications received by Admissions Tutors must be considered in the normal way for specific subject requirements. The application will be photocopied in the Admissions Office and forwarded to the disability advisors to organise a preliminary visit in conjunction with Admissions Tutors for those applicants who have not already visited the University.
- 8.4 In some cases, it may be possible or preferable to use normal Open/Visitors' Days. The disability advisors should brief Admissions Tutors on students so that any special arrangements required can be made for formal interview.
- 8.5 The disability advisor maintains contact with applicants to ensure that equipment and/or residential needs and preparation (including further visits) are attended to.

## **9 ADMISSIONS WITH ADVANCED STANDING**

- 9.1 The accreditation of prior experience and certificated learning (APE/CL) is a standard and important feature of University entry. The University has a

separate AP(E/C)L policy which available from the Student Recruitment Office, Academic Registry or the University website.

- 9.2 The AP(E/C)L policy is administered through the Academic Registry to whom applications for credit should be made. An application form can be downloaded from the website or obtained directly from the Academic Registry.

## **10 REVIEW OF A DECISION ON ENTRY**

- 10.1 This section describes the processes that should normally be invoked in the event of an applicant requesting the review of an admissions decision.

- 10.2 Applicants may seek a review of a decision where additional information is available that was not presented on the original application form.

- 10.3 A review of a decision for entry will take place on receipt of a written request from the applicant and the process outlined below will be followed.

- 10.4 The review is actioned by the Director of Student Recruitment and Access, who will first consider any additional information provided and if satisfied that any of the following points apply will take appropriate action.

i) the entry and selection criteria have been met but an applicant has been rejected by the University;

ii) all relevant extenuating circumstances have not been taken into account before rejecting an applicant;

iii) there has been maladministration by the University in dealing with the application;

iv) there has been a breach of University policies in dealing with the application.

- 10.5 Should the applicant not accept the solution provided by the Director of Student Recruitment and Access then a Review Panel will be drawn from members of the Marketing and Recruitment Committee. The Panel will consist of a minimum of three representatives and be chaired by the Academic Registrar. No member of a review Panel shall consider an application in which he or she has an interest. The decision of the Panel will be final.

- 10.6 The review process must be completed within a reasonable timeframe to enable the applicant to commence studies at the beginning of the appropriate semester, and should take no longer than 15 working days.

- 10.7 Notice of an intention to appeal must be given to the Student Recruitment Office by the applicant within 10 days of the date on the letter with the decision on the application.

## **11 TRAINING and DEVELOPMENT**

- 11.1 All University staff who are involved in the recruitment, selection, interview and admission of applicants will receive training in equal opportunities for admission and will receive a copy of this manual.
- 11.2 Regular staff development events will be organized and coordinated through SRO and will incorporate consideration of electronic admissions systems, entry qualifications and disability issues.

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## 12 LINKS TO THE QAA CODE OF PRACTICE

12.1 The table below indicates for each of the precepts contained in the QAA Code of Practice on Admissions to Higher Education which element of this Digest documents compliance with the precept.

Precept identified by QAA code of practice	Relevant section of Digest
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.	Entire Digest.
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.	4.2 and Section 11.
Institutions' promotional materials and activities are accurate, relevant, current, accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.	Section 3.
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.	Sections 4 and 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.	This Digest describes the operational procedures in section 4. The Digest is available on the University website and in hard copy and electronic forms.
Institutions inform applicants of the obligations placed on prospective students at the time the offer of a place is made.	4.2. and 4.5
Institutions inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place on that programme is made and registration is complete, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.	4.9.

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 means of integrating the entrants fully as students.	4.5.
Institutions consider the most effective and efficient arrangements for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.	5.9.
Institutions have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process and should ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the policies and procedures.	Section 10.
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.	Section 10.
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.	2.6.