

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

As set out in our Student Success Policy Statement we are committed to providing transparency, fairness and consistency in our admissions processes and practices and ensuring that a quality service is given to all applicants. This procedure sets out the process we will follow in determining admission to the University so that we can make sure we act in line with this commitment.

### **The Admission Process**

#### Application

1. Applications for full time undergraduate programmes and PGDE Primary and Secondary programmes are made via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).
2. Applications for all other programmes, i.e., Postgraduate, Part-time Undergraduate and Research programmes are made directly to the University via the UWS online application.

#### Acknowledgement of Application

3. Once a prospective student applies to us - within 24 hours of receiving their application an automatic email acknowledgement is sent to the applicant plus specific information relating to their application i.e., audition and/or interview. UCAS will subsequently send the applicant an invitation and further details of the selection process (audition/interview) within 28 days. For research applications, the Admissions Team and where relevant The Doctoral College or PGR Co-ordinator will communicate with applicants during the recruitment cycle. Research applications will be considered on published timelines depending on the point in the year.

#### Fees

4. If the correct applicant information is supplied UWS ensures that applicants know the rate at which they would pay fees prior to enrolment (Home or Overseas). Normally the fee rate is confirmed on the offer letter. For Research programmes, the fee rate is published in the Fee Schedule but details of stipends or scholarships offered will only be confirmed at the time of the offer being issued.

#### Requests to Defer a Place

5. An applicant can only defer a place by one year, regardless of whether this was determined before or after offer. The opportunity to defer an offer is not available to all programmes. Applicants intending to defer are therefore advised to check with the Admissions Office prior to applying. Places secured through Clearing or in the UCAS Adjustment period are valid only for that year

of entry and may not be deferred. While applications for research programmes may be deferred depending on circumstances, offers of funding, stipends and scholarships cannot be deferred except by written agreement in exceptional circumstances.

#### Widening Participation and Transition

6. UWS is actively involved in working with applicants from courses/initiatives designed to support transition e.g. the Top-Up Programme; Articulation provision, Care Leavers, Routes for All; Step-Up; Lothians Equal Access Programmes for Schools; Access to Primary Education and Scottish Wider Access Programme. Applicants must confirm their involvement in Access provision on their application.

#### Advanced Entry

7. Applicants are invited to consult the University's **Recognition of Prior Learning Handbook**. An applicant seeking advanced entry is considered on an individual basis taking into account previous study, experience and RPL where appropriate, e.g., HNC, HND, A Level. Applicants who wish to be considered for advanced entry should state this clearly on their UCAS applications *Point of Entry section* and ensure sufficient information is included in the application to enable a decision on advanced entry to be taken. Applications for advanced entry to research programmes will only be considered where the applicant has been a registered research student at another institution.

#### Additional Measurement of Potential/Contextualised Admissions

8. To attract and retain students (from a wide and diverse community) who have the potential to complete their programme of study successfully and benefit from the experience, UWS identifies additional means of assessing potential to demonstrate an ability to meet selection criteria, e.g., Top-Up profiles, successful Summer School completion.

#### Applicants with a disability

9. The University strives to be an inclusive learning environment and welcomes and encourages applications from persons with a disability. A web site link to the disability service will be in all offers encouraging them to disclose any disability they may have. Applicants who have specific support needs are encouraged to detail and make these known to the University's Disability Team as soon as possible so that any appropriate support arrangements can be made in advance of enrolment.

#### Procedure for applicants disclosing a criminal conviction

10. The Criminal Convictions and Charges Procedure will apply.

## Fraudulent Statements/Omissions

11. Admission to the University is subject to applicants disclosing all facts and information relevant to their application. If, during the consideration of an application, an applicant is discovered to have omitted any information requested in the instructions or the application form, or has made any misrepresentation or given false information, the University reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place and/or dismiss their application.

## Bribery

12. The Bribery Act 2010 introduced offences for acts of bribery by individuals or by persons associated with relevant commercial organisations. Responsibilities regarding the prevention of bribery and the procedures to be followed when bribery is suspected are set out in the University's Accountability Code of Practice.

## **Selection and Decision Making**

13. Offer decisions are made by Admissions Office<sup>1</sup>(Recruitment, Admission and Participation Service), Academic Admissions Officers (School based), School Enhancement Development Officers and the Doctoral College/Directors of Study in line with clearly stated selection procedures and are applied consistently. Selection procedures are available, on request, from the Depute Head of RAPS and cover –
  - Undergraduate admissions;
  - Postgraduate admissions;
  - Research admissions.
14. All admissions staff (academics and admissions team) involved in decision making are subject to regular professional development, including diversity and unconscious bias training.
15. For the majority of programmes our assessment methods focus on the information contained in the application and assess the applicant's suitability for study in terms of their academic qualifications (actual and predicted) in relation to agreed entry criteria, relevant work/life experience and subject interest. If we require further information with which to make our decision we will contact applicants directly about this.

## International Students

16. The University accepts a broad range of international qualifications and each application is assessed on an individual basis from each country to ascertain the equivalence to UK qualifications. Requirements will also depend on the subject area to be studied and the level of entry applied for.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 – Role of Admissions Office/Role of Academic Admissions Officer/Graduate School

17. The Admissions Office also liaises with the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom (NARIC) when assessing international qualifications. More information on Non-EU Applications is available at <http://www.uws.ac.uk/International>

#### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

18. Recognition of Prior Learning is the process by which applicants to UWS can have their prior learning considered for entry or advanced standing. The University recognises both certificated and experiential learning. Accordingly, the University will accredit alternative forms of learning, provided these can be evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level. UWS requires a credit rating to be assigned to all learning imported into a programme of study through RPL. For credit to be transferred into a programme of study it must have been subject to reliable and valid methods of assessment. See the **Recognition of Prior Learning Handbook** for further information.

#### Use of Changed Programme Offers /Changes to Programme during Admissions Cycle

19. If we cannot offer a place on the programme applied for, we may offer an alternative programme instead. This can happen at the initial application stage or at confirmation. We take all steps to avoid changes to a programme after it has opened for applications however, when changes do occur, the Admissions Team and/or Academic School contacts each applicant and provides alternative options for consideration.
20. Where an applicant already holds an active offer for the programme/year concerned, we do our best to ensure that the applicant's study intentions can be met. In this case the Admission Team will facilitate one or more of the following options as circumstances allow:
- entry to the original programme/year as planned;
  - deferring our offer by one year;
  - transferring our offer to an alternative programme for the original year of entry;
  - transferring the offer to the same or similar programme at another University;
  - or if all of the above options have been exhausted, cancelling our offer.
21. The applicant will also be advised and supported through the necessary UCAS procedure, where relevant.

## Decision

22 Our initial offer decision will be one of the following:

- An unconditional offer; or
- to offer a place conditional on the results of
  - academic assessments and/or;
  - English language tests and/or;
  - satisfactory background checks, and/or ;
  - additional measurements of potential/contextual data
- Not to offer a place (unsuccessful decisions).

For all Programmes of the University except international foundation, research and doctoral Programmes a minimum IELTS score of 6 or above (5.5 in each component) is acceptable as evidence of proficiency in English. The programme specification will outline the English language requirements for the international foundation programme. For research and doctoral programmes a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or above (with a minimum of 6 in each component). The English Language test should be current, in line with UKVI Approved Test Listing, and is passed no more than 2 years prior to the date of visa application.

23. Applicants should normally receive our initial decision within 28 working days of receipt of application for programmes that select on application alone (standard offers), or will be contacted by UCAS or the Academic School for an interview/assessment within 28 days where further selection activity is used (non-standard offers). Applicants are informed either through UCAS or directly by the Admissions Office by email – dependent on the original type of application used.

### Sponsorship under Tier 4 of the Points Based System

24. Full time applicants from outside the EEA who require Sponsorship under Tier 4 of the Points Based System, are assigned with a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) by UWS normally within 48 working hours of receipt of the following: applicant's firm acceptance of our unconditional offer along with a usable image of the relevant pages of their passport, relevant deposit (full fee if applicable), acceptable evidence of funding & TB certificate (if applicable). Prospective students from outside the EEA who do not request Tier 4 sponsorship are required to provide us with evidence of their right to enter and remain in the UK and appropriate UK Visa & Immigration approved English language entry requirements.

## Reply

25. Applicants who are offered a place must tell UWS, by a given date, whether they intend to take up the place. This date is determined either by UCAS, or in the case of direct UWS applications within ten working days of issue of our initial decision. UCAS applicants may accept our offer either as their firm or their insurance choice.

## Feedback to Unsuccessful Applicants

26. In order to support our transparent admissions process - feedback will be provided on an individual basis in response to receiving 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 where applicable; full name; date of birth and Programme name. In line with our Data Protection Code of Practice we will not be able to provide feedback to anyone other than the Applicant unless they have given us written permission to do so.

## Appeals

27. An Appeal is a request for a formal review of the outcome on an admission decision. Applicants who consider that they have valid grounds for appealing against the outcome of a selection decision should write to the Depute Head of RAPS, explaining fully, the reasons for the Appeal. If, in light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection is now available, an offer may be amended.

## Complaints Procedure

28. If you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. Full information on the University's complaints procedure is available at <https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/complaints/>

## **Confirmation**

29. If an applicant accepts our offer of a place, made conditionally on pending results of academic and/or English language assessments, they are told our final decision normally within fifteen working days of our receipt of final/confirmed results. In addition, in light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn.
30. The University reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent.

## **Enrolment, Joining Instructions and Induction**

31. Applicants who have accepted our unconditional offer firmly or whose conditional place has been confirmed will be directed to online enrolment web pages where they will access joining and induction instructions before the start date of their programme.

## Use of Applicant Data

32. A declaration of consent on the UCAS Application and direct entry application gives permission to the University to process personal and sensitive data (for example - ethnic origin, disability, criminal conviction). This enables those involved with the selection and admissions process to respond to identified additional needs and to enable the University to compile its internal student record. (See also para 10)

Procedure Author – <b>Head of Recruitment, Admissions and Participation</b>	Procedure Owner – <b>Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Marketing, Recruitment &amp; Engagement</b>
Parent Policy Statement - <b>Policy for Student Success</b>	Public Access or Staff Only Access – <b>Public</b>
Version 1 – <b>June 2018</b>	Changes and Reason for Changes – <b>New Procedure</b>

## Appendix 1

### Role of the Admissions Office/Academic Admissions Officer/Doctoral College

The Depute Head of RAPS is responsible for ensuring that admissions processes for all applicants are clear and updated regularly; The Admissions Office Team is responsible for –

- Training of Academic Admissions Officers to provide updates on emergent issues, good practice and sector developments, including input from UCAS,;
- Collation of standard entry criteria received from Academic Schools to be used for standard offer processing;
- Acknowledgement and consideration of all applications;
- Making of standard decisions according to agreed criteria;
- Forwarding of non-standard applications to Academic Admissions Officers for consideration;
- Processing of decisions for all non-standard applications;
- Adhering to agreed timescales for communicating with applicants;
- Checking of Criminal Convictions in consultation with Academic Admissions Officers where appropriate;
- Coordination of requests from applicants for feedback;
- Coordination of appeals against Admissions decisions;
- Ensuring accuracy with prospectus entries;
- Liaison with UCAS, other relevant external bodies; Doctoral College to support research application processing, Student Services regarding applicants with disabilities;.

**Role of the Academic Admissions Officer** – this role is key to the successful operation of the Admissions Procedures. The role is held by an academic member of staff in the appropriate School who will work closely with the Admissions Office. At the start of each cycle the Academic Admissions Officers (AAO) are responsible for –

- Providing the Admissions Office with details of entry criteria.
- Processing decisions for non-standard offers (those offers which have additional entry criteria ,e.g., portfolios, audition or interview of applicants)
- Making the decision (unconditional, conditional or unsuccessful) which the Admissions Office verifies. At the point of verification if further clarification re an offer decision is required the application is returned to the AAO for further consideration.
- AAOs are also involved throughout the year responding to enquiries from prospective applicants. Initial enquiries can be made directly to AAOs or filtered through the Applicant Enquiry Team. Contact may be via telephone, electronic sources (email or www) or by a personal visit.



- Contribution to the definition, monitoring and review of intake targets, entry criteria and offer levels;
- Mapping and reviewing the “fit” of new and established entry qualifications with the University curriculum.

**Role of the Doctoral College/Lead Supervisors**

- The Doctoral College will work with individual Lead Supervisors for prospective research programmes to consider and identify suitable applicants assessing them individually against agreed entry requirements. In addition the Doctoral College will update Self Service Banner after making decisions to either offer or reject applicants following the Admissions Office standard procedures, considering where appropriate individual research proposals from candidates. Offers to be made by Lead Supervisors will be approved by the relevant Dean of School or nominee and then processed by the Admissions Office.