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## Chapter 2 –Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning

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## **Chapter 2**

### **Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning**

#### **Introduction**

- 2.1 This regulation governs the admission of students to all programmes of study leading to the University's academic credit and awards, except for Research Degrees and Doctoral Programmes, which are covered in Chapter 4.

#### **Principles of Admission**

- 2.2 There shall be a reasonable expectation that any person admitted to a programme of study will be able to fulfil the educational aims and learning outcomes of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award.
- 2.3 In considering each application for admission to a programme of study, evidence shall be sought of personal, professional and educational qualifications and/or experiences that provide indications of an applicant's capacity to successfully complete the programme.
- 2.4 To support the admission of students from wide and diverse backgrounds, UWS considers a range of additional contextual indicators as a means of assessing candidates' suitability for entry to programmes. For example, applicants who have care experience; applicants that live in priority postcode such as SIMD 20/40; applicants that are progressing from Schools for Higher Education or similar; and applicants that have successfully completed access and participation programmes. **(See Admissions procedure)**
- 2.5 An applicant whose qualifications do not conform to the general entrance requirements but who presents other evidence which indicates an interest in personal educational advancement and an aptitude for academic study at the level concerned may be admitted to a programme of study at the discretion of the University. (See RPL below).

#### **General Entry Requirements**

- 2.6 All applicants shall be expected to provide evidence of proficiency in Mathematics and the English language, normally at least one of which subjects shall be at Higher Grade or equivalent.
- 2.7 The University's general entry requirement for admission to a programme of study at degree level shall be passes in the Scottish national Qualifications in five subjects including three at H level or other academic, vocational or professional qualifications deemed to be equivalent.

- 2.8 The University's general entry requirement for admission to a taught postgraduate programme is an undergraduate degree. Some Masters programmes require at least an Upper Second Class (2:1) degree and some may specify the relevant subject required.
- 2.9 The University's general entry requirement for admission to CertHE/DipHE and Graduate Certificates and Diplomas will be considered in accordance with the qualification descriptors and equivalencies in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- 2.10 In addition to the above, programme documentation will set out appropriate requirements for specific prior qualifications and/or experience, and any competitive entry requirements. The University's equality and diversity policies apply, and equivalent qualifications and/or experience will be accepted in place of those specified. Programmes which provide entry into specific professions may be obliged to meet particular requirements on admissions set by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) for entry, for example for Protection of Vulnerable Groups.
- 2.11 School Academic Admissions Officers, Admissions team or Education Guidance Advisors will assess potential entry qualifications and their suitability for individual programmes of study. Guidance on qualifications can be found in UCAS publications on UK and International Qualifications. Students may be offered a programme of study that includes pre-sessional English language training in addition to their formal academic programme. The University also subscribes to the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) which provides definitive information on the comparison of international qualifications in relation to those of the UK. (See RPL below)

### **English Language Requirements**

- 2.12 For all programmes of the University, except for International Foundation, research and doctoral programmes a minimum IELTS comparable score of 6.0 or above (with a minimum of 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. Chapter 4 sets out the requirements for English Language for Research Degree and Doctoral programmes.

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

- 2.13 Appropriate learning, wherever acquired, provided that it has been subject to reliable and valid methods of assessment may be accepted for the purpose of gaining academic credit by a person towards an award of the University.

This may take the form of:

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)  
APL refers to certificated learning for which there is an agreed, general credit rating or recommendation and may also be given for parts of academic qualifications completed successfully.
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)  
APEL is defined as learning which has its source in experience, for example at work or in the community.

- 2.14 The assessment of APEL shall normally be undertaken by the academic staff of the University.
- 2.15 All claims for APEL shall be double marked.
- 2.16 APEL assessments shall be open to external examination and confirmation by School Assessment Boards (see Regulation 3.44) on the same basis as the formal assessment and examination of students.
- 2.17 Detailed information on the University's APL arrangements and procedures is available in the University's **RPL Handbook**.

### Recognition for Credit

- 2.18 Recognition for credit is defined as the process whereby a judgement about the extent to which qualifications or experience may be accepted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for a given academic award
- 2.19 Students are expected to build on or broaden prior learning. Recognition for credit up to the maxima stated in Regulation 2.22 can only be transferred into a programme where that programme broadens or develops the learning that the student has already acquired. This includes prior learning gained through successful completion of UWS programmes and modules.
- 2.20 Students may not normally use the same credit towards more than one qualification as this would constitute double counting of credit.
- 2.21 Where credit has been achieved at UWS a current or former student may transfer credit into a programme greater than that allowed in paragraph 2.22 below, to allow completion, providing the learning is current, they are continuing on the programme previously studied or, where this is not possible, there is a direct 'fit' between prior and current study.
- 2.22 Where credit has been achieved external to UWS a maximum of half the credit points required at the level at which the applicant wishes to complete the programme of study with an academic award may be

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awarded through RPL. Imported specific credit should be directly relevant to the student's proposed programme of study.

- 2.23 As RPL is not graded it cannot be imported into a programme at Honours level.
- 2.24 Normally the following maxima for importing credit to postgraduate awards will apply:
- Postgraduate Certificate 30 points at SCQF level 11
  - Postgraduate Diploma 60 points at SCQF level 11
  - Masters Award 120 points at SCQF level 11
  - Doctor of Business Administration 120 points at SCQF level 11
  - Professional Doctorate 120 points at SCQF level 12
- 2.25 Prior to an admission direct to the dissertation stage of a Masters or MBA programme, the relevant Admissions Officer must give consideration to the following:
- the appropriate research underpinning to undertake the dissertation;
  - the equivalence of core modules or learning outcomes;
  - the need to consult with relevant subject experts to establish if appropriate underpinning is in place and academic guidance on what additional modules might need to be taken;
  - consideration of the title of the UWS award in relation to the prior study taken at another institution;
  - the availability of resources for dissertation supervision;

### **Admission with Prior Learning**

- 2.26 An applicant who has successfully completed a programme of certificated learning at a recognised UK awarding institution shall be considered for admission with specific credit, at an appropriate point on the programme of study for which entry is being sought.
- 2.27 An offer for direct entry to SCQF level 8 of a programme will normally be on condition that the applicant holds 120 credit points at SCQF level 7. Applicants holding an HNC of 96 credit points will be admitted with advanced standing.
- 2.28 Where there is an agreement to admit to SCQF level 8 of a programme (and all stipulated grading requirements have been met) an HNC, three Advanced Highers or A Levels will be deemed to be equivalent to SCQF level 7 of a programme and 120 points at SCQF level 7 will be entered as prior learning into the student's academic transcript.

- 2.29 Qualifications such as Scottish Baccalaureate; International Baccalaureate; European Baccalaureate; DUT or qualifications considered comparable vary in volume and the level of credit and may fall short of the 120 credit points normally required for entry directly to level 8. Therefore, where there is an agreement to admit to SCQF level 8 of a programme, *Next Steps to University* (or equivalent module) may be recommended in order to prepare students for study at SCQF level 8.
- 2.30 Specific credit awarded for RPL towards a programme of study will be entered onto the student's record.
- 2.31 An offer for direct entry to level 9 of a programme will normally be on condition that the applicant holds 240 points, at least 100 points of which are at SCQF level 8 or above.
- 2.32 The maximum specific credit awarded for a first degree towards a subsequent non related degree is 120 points at level 7 plus 60 points at SCQF level 8.
- 2.33 It is not normally permitted to count credit from a first degree towards a lower level qualification, e.g. DipHE.
- 2.34 Specific prior credit when incorporated into a programme of study does not carry a grade or mark. Therefore, award with distinction cannot be granted for awards where credit is transferred in at SCQF level 9 or level 11. This must be made clear to applicants by the School/Programme Admissions Officer or Education Guidance Advisors (see Regulation 3.26).
- 2.35 Where students have been admitted with prior learning, minor differences in credit points (see Regulation 1.21) will be tolerated (up to 5 credit points) and added to the transcript at the point of admission.
- 2.36 Credit from a partially completed postgraduate programme of study may be imported in line with the maxima allowed (see Regulation 2.24). Imported credit should be directly relevant to the student's proposed undergraduate programme.

### **Re-admission on Completion of Awards**

- 2.37 Students who have been deemed eligible for the award from the School Board of Examiners will not be considered for re-admission to the same award at that level with a view to improving their marks, the eligibility for the award of distinction or the classification of honours.