

Policy for consideration of challenging circumstances that have impacted an applicant's pre-application education

Purpose of Policy

To clarify what information about challenging circumstances that have impacted an applicant's education can be taken into account in the admissions process, and what mitigations may be applied.

Overview

Some undergraduate applicants will have faced challenges during their pre-application education which have had an impact on the qualifications they have been able to take, or the grades they have been able to achieve.

This policy is designed to provide applicants with information about the types of impact that can be taken into account, and the adjustments which could be applied by admissions selectors.

Scope: Mandatory policy

This policy applies all Home, EU and Overseas applicants to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Contact Gillian Simmons Head of Admissions Gillian.Simmons@ed.ac.uk

Document control

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Approving authority Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group

Consultation undertaken College admissions practitioners, Student Recruitment Management Group

Section responsible for policy maintenance and review Student Recruitment and Admissions

Related policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy

UK Quality Code 2018 Core practices: *The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.*

Policies superseded by this policy None

Alternative format If you require this document in an alternative format please email SRA.Adteam@ed.ac.uk

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Policy for consideration of challenging circumstances that have impacted an applicant's pre-application education

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To clarify what information regarding challenging circumstances that have impacted an applicant's pre-application education the University will take account of in the admissions process, and how this information may be used.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies all Home, EU and Overseas applicants to undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research programmes, and relates to circumstances or challenges which have impacted on a student's education prior to application.
- 2.2 It does not cover circumstances which have occurred after application and which may impact a student's performance in their entry qualifications. We expect students to use the appropriate processes offered by awarding bodies in these circumstances.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Academic performance is an essential part of identifying students with the potential to succeed on a University of Edinburgh degree. Our entry requirements include the minimum attainment a student needs to be successful, and specify required subjects where specific pre-requisite knowledge is needed.
- 3.2 However, we recognise that some applicants will have faced challenges during their pre-application education which may have impacted on their ability to take the qualifications or achieve the grades required. The University will be flexible in considering such applicants providing this does not undermine their chances of being successful on their chosen degree.
- 3.3 Information about the educational impact of any challenging circumstances must be provided by the relevant undergraduate application deadline, or must be included in a postgraduate application. Information provided after the undergraduate deadline or provided after a postgraduate application has been submitted may not be taken into account. Failure to provide relevant information cannot be used as grounds for an admissions appeal or complaint later in the process. We expect examination boards, at either school or university level, to take circumstances that have had an impact on final examinations or assessments into account and reflect these in the final grades awarded.
- 3.4 Challenges that applicants have faced may relate to a serious, acute or chronic illness, disability, specific learning disabilities, significant caring responsibilities, serious disruption to family life, or difficulties faced due to estrangement from their families, or serious disruption to educational provision. This is not a definitive list.

- 3.5 The types of educational impact that can be considered are:
- Restricted subject options.
 - Restricted options for placements or practical work.
 - Different patterns of attendance or attainment such as taking a reduced number of courses in one year.
 - Inability to take the number of subjects we ask for in one set of exams.
 - Exam performance, so the student has had to take resits.
 - Non-attendance at school, college or university over an extended period of time or taking an interruption of studies during a degree programme.
- Again, this is not a definitive list.

- 3.6 The University will consider any information provided by an applicant in the admissions selection process. Where there is evidence of challenging circumstances that have had a detrimental impact on an applicant's education, appropriate flexibility will be given, which may include agreeing alternative means of meeting entry requirements, making an aspirational or adjusted offer, or considering an applicant for an alternative programme of study, entry point or mode of study. Requirements for specific pre-requisite knowledge are unlikely to be waived. Note: some requirements are set by professional standards registration boards and cannot be flexed by the University.
- 3.7 In no circumstances can evidence of challenging circumstances waive the need for applicants to demonstrate their suitability for the programme to which they have applied, or guarantee the offer of a place.

4. Procedure

- 4.1 Information about any challenging circumstances should be included in the personal statement and/or the reference, or can be provided by email to the relevant admissions office, by the undergraduate application deadline for the degree applied to, or as part of a postgraduate application. This information should cover both the challenges the applicant has faced and the impact this has had on their education. We reserve the right to request additional evidence to verify the information provided.
- 4.2 Information provided will be processed in accordance with the University's [Privacy Statement for Applicants](#).
- 4.2 Admissions staff will take account of any information provided by the deadline in their selection processes.

5. Approval and review

- 5.1 The University of Edinburgh's *Policy for consideration of challenging circumstances that have impacted an applicant's pre-application education* was approved by the Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group.

Policy approved: 17 May 2021
Review date: May 2022