



Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Adult Returners to Higher Education

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To set out principles and procedures for the management of applications for admission to the University of Edinburgh from mature students and adult returners to higher education.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Adult returner** - a student who has had a continuous gap of at least three years at some point in his/her formal education, and who has not already gained a degree
- 2.2 **Mature applicant** – an applicant who will be 21 or over at the start of his/her undergraduate degree programme, as defined for HESA returns.

3. Policy

- 3.1 The University of Edinburgh welcomes applications from students returning to education after an absence of at least three years. Many of these applicants will be defined as “mature” students. However, the University recognises that not all mature students will be defined as adult returners. In addition, some adult returners may be under 21 years old.
- 3.2 Adult returners and mature students will be applying to the University from a range of backgrounds, with a variety of different qualifications and having had very different life experiences prior to their application. The University will value the contribution that such students make to the diversity of the student community.
- 3.3 Where there are more qualified applicants for an undergraduate programme than there are places available, priority will normally be given to applicants who are applying to study for their first degree, except for courses where there is an established graduate entry route, for example Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Law. Other graduate entry routes are published on the appropriate pages of the degree finder.

Adult Returners

- 3.4 Adult returners of any age will be expected to provide evidence of recent relevant academic study. Depending on the specific programme applied for, this will normally have been within two or three years of their anticipated date of entry to the University. Applicants are advised to discuss the requirements for any individual programme with the appropriate admissions office prior to application.

3.5 Adult returners who meet the University's minimum entry requirements for the course to which they are applying will be entered into the selection process. Adult returners may demonstrate that they meet the minimum academic entry requirements through qualifications other than SQA Highers/Advanced Highers or GCE A'Levels. These might include:

- Higher National qualifications (HNC / HND)
- Approved Access course
- Participation in a recognised widening participation programme such as the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)
- Relevant professional qualifications
- Open University modules

Adult returners are advised to speak to the relevant admissions office prior to application to discuss whether the qualifications they are taking, or plan to take, are appropriate for entry to the programme they wish to apply to, and what grades would be required.

- 3.6 Recent relevant non-academic experience may be taken into account alongside academic qualifications for some specific courses. Adult returners who believe that they have experience which is relevant to their application should discuss this with the appropriate admissions office prior to submitting an application.
- 3.7 Where an application from an adult returner is based on non-standard qualifications, or on non-academic experience, the University may require further evidence to assess both academic potential and the relevance of life/work experience, e.g. sample written work, an interview, a test or assessment, or an additional reference provided in the Spring.
- 3.8 No applicant is guaranteed to receive an offer from the University of Edinburgh. However, the University recognises that applicants have differing backgrounds and experience and that they do not all have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their potential. An adult returner whose application includes evidence of disruption or disadvantage during the education process will have his/her application considered in that context and may receive an offer which reflects that disadvantage.

Mature Applicants

- 3.9 The University of Edinburgh recognises that mature students may require support through the application process and when they join the University. The College admissions offices are happy to offer advice, and there is further guidance available on the University website at:
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/mature/undergraduate/home>

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