

Guidance for Applicants with Criminal Convictions

This document explains clearly how the University will manage your application if you have disclosed a criminal conviction, or if the University is informed of your conviction by the police or criminal justice social work team.

What is this about?

Some degrees at the University involve working closely with children or vulnerable adults. These degrees are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which means we must check criminal convictions carefully.

Degrees covered by this procedure:

- Medicine (MBChB)
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Initial Teacher Education (PGDE, Primary Education with Gaelic, Physical Education)
- Learning in Communities
- Counselling and Psychotherapy
- Other programmes with placements involving children or protected adults
- If your chosen degree involves working with children or vulnerable adults, you must join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

What is the PVG Scheme?

The PVG Scheme, managed by [Disclosure Scotland](#), ensures that people working with children or protected adults are suitable for these roles. From April 2026, Membership lasts five years, with continuous background checks throughout. You must join this scheme if your degree requires it.

What will happen after you disclose a conviction?

1. Initial review

- We assess your application academically first, just like all other applicants.

- If you meet the academic requirements, we will then ask you for details about your conviction(s).

2. Providing additional information

- You will have around three weeks to send us details about your conviction(s).
- If you ticked the box by mistake, confirm this in writing, and your application will continue normally.

3. Assessing your information

- If your conviction is minor (e.g., minor traffic offences, breach of peace), your application will usually proceed normally.
- If your conviction is more serious, we will require you to join the PVG Scheme or update your PVG Scheme membership.
- If you've lived abroad for 6 months or more in the last five years (or since age 16), you'll need equivalent overseas criminal record certificates.

4. Reviewing serious or complex cases

- Serious or complicated cases will be reviewed by the Student Disclosure Assessment Panel (SDAP). The SDAP evaluates whether an applicant or current student can safely and appropriately undertake roles involving children or protected adults. Examples of serious or complex cases include:
 - Use or supply of Class A drugs
 - Sexual offences
 - Violent crimes
 - Serious fraud or theft
- SDAP will carefully assess whether your conviction(s) could pose risks to others. The panel may request further information, conduct interviews, and make recommendations on suitability. You'll be kept informed about the process and notified clearly of any decisions or necessary actions.
- You may be invited to provide further details such as additional context or evidence, or character references.

What happens if the police inform the University of a conviction?

If the police or criminal justice social work team inform the University about your conviction or pending charges, your case will automatically be reviewed by the SDAP. You will have the chance to provide information to the SDAP and will be kept informed about the process

Possible outcomes from SDAP review:

- Admission with no conditions.
- Admission with specific conditions (e.g., restrictions on placements or accommodation).
- Application refusal due to unacceptable risk.

Important notes for all applicants:

Inform the University immediately if you receive any new convictions after applying. If you fail to disclose a conviction, your application may be considered fraudulent.

The University's decision to admit you does not guarantee professional registration after your degree, where professions are covered by fitness to practice regulations (e.g. [Medicine](#), [Nursing](#), [Social Work](#), [Initial Teacher Education](#), [Counselling and Psychotherapy](#)).

Data protection and confidentiality:

Information you provide about your conviction is kept confidential. Disclosure information will be securely stored and only accessible by those assessing your application.

Need further help?

Contact the admissions office for your chosen programme if you have questions or need further guidance.

Last updated: July 2025

Next Review date: January 2028