



Recruitment and admissions

Policy No.	SRA-001	Version:	4.2				
.Title	University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy						
Description	The framework within which all University admissions policies and College and School policies and procedures are organised.						
Dates							
First approved:	01/07/2010	Last approved:	28/11/2023	Active from:	01/12/2023	Equality impact assessment:	27/07/2023
Last reviewed:	16/11/2023	Last amended:	28/11/2023	Next review:		01/03/2024	
UK quality code:	Core practices: The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.			Legal/regulatory driven		Yes	
Purpose							
This policy provides an overarching framework for University admissions policies and College and School policies and procedures.							
Scope						Mandatory	
This policy applies to the admission of all categories of students to accredited programmes of undergraduate and postgraduate study at the University of Edinburgh.							
Consultation carried out							
College admissions teams							
Responsibilities							
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Approving body:		Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group					
Related policies:		University terms and conditions					
Policies superseded:		None					
Keywords:		Admissions, selection, entry requirements					



University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy provides an overarching framework for University admissions policies and College and School policies and procedures.

2. Scope

- 2.1. Covers applications from all categories of students to accredited programmes of undergraduate and postgraduate study at the University of Edinburgh.

3. Abbreviations

- 3.1. BVM&S: Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine & Surgery
- 3.2. QAA: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- 3.3. SRA: Student Recruitment and Admissions
- 3.4. SRFSG: Student Recruitment and Fees Strategy Group
- 3.5. PGDE: Professional Graduate Diploma in Education
- 3.6. UCAS: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
- 3.7. VMCAS: The Veterinary Medical College Application Service

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Asylum seeker:** someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed (UNHCR).
- 4.2. **Care-experienced:** Anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage of their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked after. Care may have been provided in one of many different settings, such as residential care, foster care, kinship care, or looked after at home with a supervision requirement (Universities Scotland).
- 4.3. **Widening participation:** The process of creating opportunities for individuals who have been traditionally under-represented in higher education, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds or other life disadvantage, such care experience (COWA).
- 4.4. **Diversity:** The recognition and valuing of difference within society, in terms of factors such as age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. It encompasses the acceptance of these differences and the understanding that they contribute to the richness

of society, and the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to reach their full potential, free from discrimination or prejudice (Scottish Government).

5. Background

- 5.1. The University is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices. This policy is underpinned by the University of Edinburgh's strategies, codes of practice and policies on [Data Protection](#), [Disability](#), [Equality & Diversity](#) and [Widening Participation](#).
- 5.2. The University is committed to equality in education. Students are selected based on their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes.
- 5.3. The University aims to increase the diversity of its student population: we believe that diversity is educationally as well as socially desirable in a civilised society, enriching the educational experience for all. We, therefore, seek to attract a wide range of applicants from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds who can demonstrate the academic ability and the skills required to succeed in their chosen studies. We actively encourage applications from students from all groups who are currently under-represented in higher education.
- 5.4. The University aims to offer clear advice and guidance to prospective applicants to enable them to make informed choices and to apply to programmes appropriate to their interests, academic qualifications and potential.
- 5.5. Admission is subject to the availability of places. Where there are restrictions on the number of places the University can make available, competition for places is often extremely high.
- 5.6. This policy and associated procedures comply with relevant legislation and meet the expectations and practices of both the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and the [UUK Fair Admissions Code of Practice](#).
- 5.7. The University will provide constructive feedback upon request to unsuccessful applicants as part of its commitment to transparency and fairness. The University also operates a robust complaint handling and review procedure should any applicant wish to make a complaint about the application process.

6. Terms and conditions

- 6.1 The University's published [terms and conditions](#) apply to all applications for undergraduate and postgraduate study. The University will draw these to the attention of anyone who receives an offer of a place to study at the University. The terms and conditions are fair and transparent, and form a contract between the University and each student when an offer is accepted. Terms and conditions are reconfirmed at registration each year.

7. Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1.** The SRFSG is responsible, on behalf of the University, for approving admissions practices and policies.
- 7.2.** The University's SRA department is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures regarding student recruitment and admissions are operated fairly and consistently and in line with the University's [strategic aims and objectives](#) and relevant legislation.
- 7.3.** The University's Schools and Colleges are responsible for setting entry requirements for their programmes. Admissions decisions are made by admissions staff within Schools and Colleges. Heads of School and College are responsible for ensuring that these staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and that the College or School maintains clear and transparent admissions criteria and procedures.
- 7.4.** Admissions staff are provided with regular training on admissions issues and are expected to follow University admissions policies, procedures and guidance.

8. Selection

- 8.1** For all programmes, the selection process will take into account:
 - Achieved and pending academic qualifications
 - The academic context in which qualifications have been achieved
 - Whether an applicant has experienced disadvantage such as refugee or asylum seeker status, care-experience, or social deprivation, as well as any other specific challenging circumstances that may have affected pre-application education
 - An applicant's stated interest, commitment and motivation for study
 - Where relevant, work or other non-academic experience
 - Academic and/or professional references
 - Where required, an applicant's performance at interview
 - Where required, an applicant's portfolio or sample of written work
 - Where required, an applicant's research proposal
 - An applicant's English language proficiency.
- 8.2.** Each application will be considered on an individual basis by appropriately trained and qualified staff working to agreed selection criteria.
- 8.3.** Admissions decisions will be made as quickly as possible. However, due to the large volume of applications, and in order to operate a fair admissions process, in some cases, it may take longer for decisions to be reached.
- 8.4.** For admission to some postgraduate programmes, a full or partial 'gathered field' will operate, whereby some or all applications from suitably qualified candidates will be held

until the application deadline before decisions are made. Gathered field deadlines are published in the online [Degree Finder](#) where relevant. The University aims to keep such delays to a minimum.

- 8.5.** Undergraduate applications are assessed in line with the UCAS equal consideration deadlines and all applications received prior to the relevant UCAS deadline will be given full and equal consideration.
- 8.6.** Admissions decisions will be communicated to applicants in an appropriate and timely manner. Any conditions attached to an offer of a place will be clear and specific.
- 8.7.** In some cases where the University is unable to make an offer for an applicant's programme choice, an offer for an alternative programme may be made.

9. Fraud and plagiarism

- 9.1.** The University of Edinburgh will not admit applicants on the strength of information considered to be either fraudulent or plagiarised. Where an applicant is suspected of having provided a fraudulent or plagiarised application the application will be assessed in the first instance based on standard academic and non-academic selection criteria. If it is recommended that an offer be made, an investigation of the fraud or plagiarism will be carried out before the final decision is made.
- 9.2.** The University reserves the right to reject or cancel an application under these circumstances. The University may terminate a student's registration if they are found at a later stage to have submitted a fraudulent or plagiarised application to the University.
- 9.3.** The [Policy and Procedure Regarding Admissions Fraud](#) establishes the process by which applications suspected to contain fraudulent or plagiarised material are handled by the University.

10. Disclosure of criminal convictions

- 10.1.** The University has a duty to ensure the safety of its student and staff community. For certain programmes involving interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults, applicants must disclose all convictions, including cautions, reprimands, final warnings, bind-over orders and spent convictions. All other applicants are encouraged to discuss any pending charges or restrictions relating to a conviction which may impact their ability to study with the Head of Admissions in Student Recruitment & Admissions.
- 10.2.** [The Policy for Applicants with Disclosed Criminal Convictions](#) deals with applications from prospective students who have declared a criminal conviction. Applicants will be assessed in the first instance based on standard academic and non-academic selection criteria. If it is recommended that an offer be made, further investigation of the relevance of the criminal conviction(s) will be carried out before the final decision is made.

11. Disabled applicants

- 11.1.** The University is committed to inclusive education and welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities, health conditions and specific learning differences.
- 11.2.** All applicants are encouraged to disclose any disability, health or learning difference during their application. This information is not considered in academic decisions; rather, it is used to ensure programme accessibility for the relevant applicant and used solely to determine if any adjustments are required to facilitate their study at the University. This consideration occurs separately from, and only after the academic selection decision is complete, and all offers are made based on aptitude, skills, and programme-related abilities alone. The [Disability and Learning Support Service](#) can be contacted at any point during your application to discuss any adjustments that might be needed.
- 11.3.** For programmes involving an interview, audition or portfolio inspection, admissions teams may use disclosed information to identify applicants needing specific adjustments to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the selection process, such as extra time in interviews.
- 11.4.** Some programmes leading to professions that entail responsibility for the health and safety of others require students to meet certain core competencies or fitness-to-practice conditions. Competencies are set by the governance bodies of those professions rather than the University and include medicine, oral health sciences, MSc anaesthesia practice, veterinary medicine, teacher education, law (Diploma in Professional Legal Practise), clinical psychology, counselling, psychotherapy and applied social sciences, social work and nursing degrees. For these programmes, all students, including those with disabilities, must meet the fitness-to-practice conditions set by the relevant professional registering body for that profession. Fitness to practice conditions can be found on the [Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#) website for veterinary medicine, the [Scottish Social Services Council](#) (SSSC) website for social work, the [Law Society of Scotland](#) for the diploma in legal practice and the [Higher Education Occupational Practitioners](#) (HEOPS) website for all other professions.
- 11.5.** All applicants are advised to review these conditions before making a formal application, and any prospective students who have concerns that a medical condition may have implications for future fitness to practice should contact the relevant College admissions team to discuss further.
- 11.6.** If an applicant believes that their disability, health or learning difference has affected their pre-application educational experience, the University may consider this within the selection process in accordance with the [Challenging Circumstances Policy](#). Applicants are encouraged to include this information in their personal statement, request their referee to incorporate it into their reference or communicate it directly via email with the pertinent admissions office by the relevant application deadline. The inclusion of such information does not guarantee an offer of admission but serves to provide context for the admissions decision.

12. Challenging circumstances

- 12.1.** Applicants who have faced challenging circumstances which have had a long-term impact on their education are encouraged to provide relevant information in their application. This will allow admissions staff to consider the context of the applicant's achievement in the selection process.
- 12.2.** The [Policy for consideration of challenging circumstances affecting undergraduate and postgraduate applicants](#) establishes the definition of challenging circumstances, and how these will be taken into account in admissions.
- 12.3.** The University is not best placed to fairly and consistently take account of any adverse circumstance which may have affected an applicant's performance in pre-entry qualifications. Examples of special circumstances include personal or family illness at the time of exams, the impact of changes to qualifications, curriculum or the examination system studied, or how grades are awarded. The University expects applicants to have taken appropriate action to ensure that the relevant examination bodies have allowed for such circumstances before the announcement of results or following an appeal.

13. Interaction between the University and the applicant

- 13.1.** The University is committed to ensuring that any interaction with an applicant is conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner and it expects that any communication from an applicant is conducted in the same way.
- 13.2.** Applicants should note that the University will not tolerate inappropriate behaviour or language towards its employees or members of the wider University community during the admissions process. Hostile, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour or language, whether expressed verbally or in writing and excessive levels of contact, will be viewed seriously and may adversely affect the consideration of an application, appeal or complaint.
- 13.3.** The University will normally warn an applicant that their behaviour or language is inappropriate and that action is being considered, but where the behaviour or language is particularly inappropriate no warning need be given before action is taken. Such action may include the withdrawal of an offer or the rejection of an application. Conduct which constitutes a criminal offence will be referred to the relevant authorities.

14. Undergraduate admissions, including admission to the PGDE

- 14.1.** Applications to all full-time undergraduate degrees should be made via UCAS, except those from North American applicants to the 4-year Graduate Entry or 5-year BVM&S, which should be submitted via the [VMCAS](#) website, or applicants to the [HCP-Med](#) and [Childhood Practice BA](#) programmes, which are made directly to the University.
- 14.2.** Applications for part-time undergraduate study are made directly to the University.
- 14.3.** Applications to the Professional Diploma in Education (PGDE) should be submitted via UCAS.

- 14.4.** Applications to visiting and exchange programmes should be made directly via EUCLID, the University's [online application service](#).
- 14.5.** Academic and non-academic entry criteria for undergraduate degrees will be described in the online [Degree Finder](#), and on [UCAS Search](#).
- 14.6.** All applications received prior to the relevant UCAS deadline will be given full and equal consideration. No preference will be given to applications submitted early. Late applications will be considered at the discretion of the admitting College.
- 14.7.** Applications for deferred entry will be considered on a case-by-case basis for most programmes. Where deferred entry is not accepted; this will be clearly stated within the degree finder.

15. Postgraduate admissions

- 15.1.** Applications for postgraduate programmes should be submitted directly to the University via EUCLID, the University's online application service.
- 15.2.** Academic and non-academic entry criteria for postgraduate programmes will be described in the University's online Degree Finder and some print brochures and guides.
- 15.3.** Applicants to postgraduate degree programmes are normally expected to hold an undergraduate degree in a discipline relevant to the subject or nature of the programme to which they are applying or to be in the final year of such an undergraduate degree programme. Additionally, applicants to some postgraduate research programmes will be expected to hold a Master's degree in a discipline relevant to their proposed studies and to submit a satisfactory research proposal.
- 15.4.** In some cases, relevant work experience may be accepted in lieu of formal academic qualifications, in line with the University's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).
- 15.5.** Offers to postgraduate research programmes will only be made when the University can offer satisfactory research supervision in the area of the applicant's intended research.
- 15.6.** The University's detailed arrangements for the admission of postgraduate students are covered by the [Policy and Procedure for Postgraduate Admissions to the University of Edinburgh](#).

16. Feedback

- 16.1.** Unsuccessful applicants can reasonably expect to receive feedback on their application on request. The School or College responsible for the admissions decision will provide this feedback in line with our [Policy for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints](#).
- 16.2.** While the University aims to provide informative feedback that is helpful to applicants, it may not always be possible to provide highly specific or tailored advice.

- 16.3.** The University is only able to give feedback to a third party (e.g. a parent, guardian, advisor or agent) with the written consent of the applicant, or as nominated by the applicant through UCAS.

17. Complaints and appeals

- 17.1.** Should an applicant wish to raise a concern about or question the University's decision or how an application has been handled, the University's [Policy and Procedure for Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints](#) should be followed.

18. Related policies

- 18.1.** The University Admissions Policy is underpinned by several other policies and procedures offering specific guidance on aspects of the process or for specific kinds of applicants:

- [Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Adult Returners to Higher Education](#)
- [Policy and Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning for Admissions to the University of Edinburgh](#)
- [Policy and Procedure Regarding Confirmation of Examination Results for Undergraduate Entry](#)
- [Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Elite Athletes](#)
- [Policy Regarding English Language Entry Requirements](#)

19. Associated documents

- [University of Edinburgh Strategic Aims and Objectives](#)
- [Widening Participation at the University of Edinburgh](#)
- [Widening Access Offers at the University of Edinburgh](#)

20. Policy version history

- Approved 2010
- Reviewed 2011 [minor changes]
- Reviewed 2012 [extensive rewrite]
- Reviewed 2013 [minor changes]
- Reviewed 2014 [clarification of disabled applicant policy; more definitive clarification on entry requirements for contextual applicants]
- Reviewed 2015 [terms and conditions section added; criminal conditions section added; clarification to special circumstances policy]

- Reviewed 2021 [minor changes]
- Reviewed 2023[minor changes]
- Amended Nov 2023 [separate disability policy absorbed into main admissions policy]