



Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students

This guidance document is primarily intended for:

Admissions Office staff;
Admissions Tutors;
Exchange Co-ordinators;
Support staff involved in admissions and recruitment

*Initial contact for queries:
Faculty Assistant Registrar or equivalent.*

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1. Scope

- 1.1 This statement outlines the principles underlying the University's procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students.
- 1.2 This statement is supplemented, in relation to international students, by QA31 Recruitment and Support of International Students; in relation to exchange students, by QA37 Student Exchange Arrangements and, in relation to research students, by QA7 Research Degrees.
- 1.3 The principles outlined in this document apply to all programmes of study leading to an award from the University of Bath, including those offered to undergraduates, postgraduates, Foundation degree and Foundation year students, distance learners, part-time students and international students. These principles also apply to candidates joining the University as part of a formal visiting or exchange scheme. The statement does not apply to students on credit-bearing units which are not undertaken as part of a University award at the outset, although departments, Graduate Schools, the School of Management and the Division for Lifelong Learning are expected to be mindful of the general principles and good practice elements which may be applicable to these learners.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The University of Bath is committed to providing flexible, high quality and student-centred teaching and professional education, and to offering equality of opportunity to anyone with the ability to benefit.
- 2.2 The University seeks to promote its provision as widely as possible amongst suitably qualified candidates in the UK and internationally.
- 2.3 In order to admit a candidate, admissions staff must satisfy the University that they have evidence to show that the student has every reasonable prospect of succeeding on his or her chosen programme of study.
- 2.4 The University aims to ensure that its recruitment, selection and admissions processes are transparent and focused towards their intended audiences.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 All academic and support staff involved in recruitment, selection and admissions should be familiar with the underlying principles described in this document. This includes staff based in partner organisations and University Exchange Co-ordinators.

- 3.2 The Head of Recruitment and Admissions, in conjunction with Heads of Departments and Deans/Heads of Faculty, School or Director of the Division as appropriate, is responsible for the implementation of the University strategy for recruitment, selection and admissions and the operation of relevant policy and procedure.
- 3.3 The Executive Committee is responsible for admissions targets, which are decided as part of the Annual Planning Cycle. See:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/vc/coredocs.bho/anplancycle.htm>
- 3.4 The Recruitment and Admissions Office is responsible for ensuring the fairness and transparency of admissions policies and procedures across the University and for providing guidance on them. The Admissions team has a vital role to play in the decision-making process referring any general issues or specific cases to Graduate Schools, Department, or School Heads, Director of the Division, Deans, or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) as appropriate.
- 3.5 Heads of Department/School, or appropriate senior managers in partner organisations, are responsible for nominating staff to undertake recruitment and admissions functions. Admissions Tutors and those who support them should be appropriately skilled for the tasks allocated to them and in a position to make academic decisions against agreed criteria. Departments/Schools/partner organisations should keep these appointments under review to ensure that post-holders have and maintain adequate and appropriate knowledge and training.
- 3.6 Nominated admissions staff in the Recruitment and Admissions Office or Departments/Faculty/Schools/ or partner organisation are responsible for recommending offers subject to agreed criteria. Departments/Faculties/Schools and partner organisations must ensure that clear, transparent and up-to-date statements of their admissions requirements are available on their web pages. They must also be available for inclusion as appropriate in University publications or for dissemination at recruitment events. Department/Faculty/School staff are also responsible for admissions enquiries, marketing and recruitment activities. Oversight of activities at partner organisations is the responsibility of the Learning Partnerships Office of the Division for Lifelong Learning.
- 3.7 Departmental/Faculty/School Admissions Tutors should ensure that any other staff involved in recruitment, selection and admissions activities are aware of the University Admissions Policy and related policies (see Section 4) and that they are clear about their responsibilities under those policies. The Learning Partnerships Office of the Division for Lifelong Learning, with support from Recruitment and Admissions, will ensure that partner organisations are aware of relevant policies and procedures.

4. Admissions Policy and Related Policy Documents

- 4.1 All staff involved in recruitment, selection and admission activities must be aware of the following policies relating to recruitment, selection and admissions.
- 4.2 The University's policy on Recruitment, Selection and Student Admissions sets out the criteria for recruitment and admissions activities and is available from:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/study/ug/apply/info/policy/>
- 4.3 The University's policy on Widening Participation is available from:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/admissions/undergrad/widening-participation/>
- 4.4 The University's policy on Equal Opportunities for Students is available from:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/student-services/policy/equal-op/>
- 4.5 Guidance on the University's legal responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act is published by the Learning Support Service. See:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/learning-support/staff/admissions.html>
- 4.6 The University's policy on Race Equality is available from:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/universitysecretary/equalities/SES/SES-%20revised%20June%202011.pdf>
- 4.7 The University's policy on Applicants and Students with Criminal Convictions is available from:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/policies/criminal-convictions.htm>
- There is guidance on the procedures relating to disclosure of a criminal record at:
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/policies/disclosure-information.html>
- 4.8 Advice on the implementation of any aspect of the University's policies relating to recruitment, selection and admissions is available from the Recruitment and Admissions Office, Graduate Office, International Office or Learning Support Service, as appropriate.

Good Practice Example

In one department, the Undergraduate Admissions Tutor has had experience of helping several students with non-visible disabilities (autism, Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia and dyspraxia) through the admissions process. The applicant is invited for a one-to-one optional visit to the department, together with his or her parents and (where appropriate) any professional carer. This visit is in addition to any interview and provides an opportunity for an informal meeting with both the tutor and the Learning Support Service. The Admissions Tutor may (with the applicant's permission) also contact his or her teachers at school or college. The applicant is invited to the Open Day, so that he or she has the same opportunity to meet other staff and potential students, and to experience the same programme of events as other applicants.

5. Admissions Regulations

- 5.1 To ensure that candidates for all programmes of study are appropriately qualified for their programme of study, and to ensure high standards of fairness and consistency, the University maintains a core set of entrance requirements. These are set out in the University Regulations, numbers 13 (for first degrees), 14 (for diploma and certificate courses) and 16 (for higher degrees). All admissions staff, whether central or based in Departments/Graduate Schools/the School of Management/the Division or partner organisations, are required to adhere to these Regulations. See: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/regulations/>
- 5.2 The Head of Recruitment and Admissions should be consulted on a case-by-case basis for guidance on procedures for seeking exemptions to the admissions regulations.

6. Admissions Information

- 6.1 It is the aim of the University to welcome a wide range of applicants. The University is committed to providing clear, consistent, easily understandable and accessible information about entry requirements, selection procedures, conditions of offer, expected timescales for responses, fees and finance, and welfare, guidance and support services.
- 6.2 The Recruitment and Admissions Office is responsible for co-ordinating admissions information in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Prospectus, and for the information provided in response to individual enquiries to one of its sections. Departments, Faculties, Schools, the Division and its partner organisations are responsible for the admissions information appearing in programme-specific publications and on websites. They are also responsible for the information transmitted by email, telephone or other means in response to enquiries they receive and for the information they provide during visits and Open Days.
- 6.3 Across the range of admissions information, University staff will:
- 6.3.1 Ensure that any potential student who has additional needs is aware of the advice, guidance and support which the University can offer and how to access it if they choose. There is further information online, including the offer of support for Open Day and interview visits, <http://www.bath.ac.uk/learning-support/index.html>
- 6.3.2 Ensure that any potential student or applicant who has disclosed information in relation to a criminal offence, caution or warning is aware of the advice, guidance and support which the University can offer and understands the part that any non-academic information will play in any admissions decision. There is further information online at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/policies/criminal-convictions.htm>
- 6.3.3 Ensure that applicants are aware of their responsibility to provide full and accurate information as part of the admissions process.
- 6.3.4 Ensure that information about placements is provided where relevant.
- 6.3.5 Ensure that information is provided about the Students' Union's activities. To support the work of Admissions Tutors, the Students' Union produces a range of information leaflets which can be included or referenced in mailings to prospective

students. Contact the Representation and Democratic Services Co-ordinator, Students' Union.

- 6.3.6 Ensure that, in the case of any changes to a programme of study which are made after an offer is made and before registration, students are informed of the change as soon as possible.
- 6.3.7 Ensure that procedures for applicants requesting deferral of entry to a later year are clearly and readily available. The University will not normally allow an undergraduate applicant to defer entry for more than one year; postgraduate applicants will normally be allowed a maximum of two requests for deferred entry (a maximum of two years' deferral).
- 6.4 Admissions staff must be prepared to provide feedback to applicants on admissions decisions and are required to maintain sufficient records to achieve this, within the limits of the resources available to support this, and bearing in mind any issues of confidentiality. It is acceptable for feedback to be standardised and the University notes that it will not always be possible or appropriate to provide candidates with highly specific or tailored feedback. Clear advance information about feedback procedures is important in this context (see 8.5).

Good Practice Example

A departmental or school website should include clearly presented information about admissions, prepared in line with accessibility guidelines. Departments and schools may like to consider including on their admissions pages links to the following materials:

- Admissions requirements;
- Description of the admissions process as it typically occurs in that School/Department, including typical offers, indicative timelines for responses, etc;
- Programme specifications;
- Course description and information about assessment and feedback (brief indicator of how this is done in that subject, ie essay-based, or multiple choice tests, or assessed coursework etc); also what degree of flexibility is possible in provision;
- Information about placements; which should include limitations eg non-home/EU students wishing to undertake placements or study abroad in the EU under the University's Erasmus Charter.
- Recruitment and Admissions Office, Graduate Office, International Office, Learning Support Service web pages;
- Financial information, including up-to-date information on fees, accommodation expenses, etc;
- Student Money Service
(<http://www.bath.ac.uk/studentservices/money-service/>);
- Open Day and visitor's information;
- The University's virtual tour of the Claverton campus;
- A virtual or photographic tour of any notable facilities, such as laboratories or workshops;
- Information about the city of Bath (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/bath/>) or other delivery locations, as appropriate.

7. Recruitment Information

- 7.1 In promoting the University's provision as widely as possible, staff should aim to provide advice and guidance which is targeted to the particular needs and aspirations of a specific enquirer or defined audience.
- 7.1.1 The Head of Recruitment and Admissions will co-ordinate advertising campaigns targeting both undergraduates and postgraduates; and will negotiate with Faculties, Schools or Departments concerning any shared resources for particular initiatives.
- 7.1.2 Information should be accurate, relevant, current and accessible and consistent with information published on websites or in print.
- 7.1.3 Information should enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options and if any enquiry goes beyond the limits of an individual member of staff's knowledge and expertise s/he should know who to refer the enquirer to.
- 7.1.4 The detail provided should include information about the main learning and teaching methods, assessment procedures, content, structure and organisation of courses. It should also indicate the extent of flexibility and choice within the curriculum design.
- 7.1.5 Visits to the University by schools, colleges or careers counsellors will be welcomed and encouraged, subject to available resources, and in line with the University's Widening Participation agenda (see 4.3).
- 7.1.6 An annual programme of targeted liaison visits to schools, colleges and education providers in the UK will be co-ordinated by the Deputy Head of Recruitment and other Admissions in line with the University's Widening Participation agenda (see 4.3).
- 7.2 Recruitment and admissions staff should respond swiftly to requests for further information about study opportunities and student life at Bath. All staff who provide a first point of contact with potential applicants should be fully trained in order to ensure that enquiries are treated with courtesy and fairness and answered clearly (see Section 9).
- 7.3 A range of opportunities should be provided for prospective students and applicants to visit the University at appropriate points during the recruitment cycle, at departmental/School and University Open Days. Such opportunities will also include virtual tours of the campus or Department/School.

Good Practice Example

The University of Bath's external home page includes a virtual tour of the Claverton campus. See:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/study/ug/opendays/selfguidedtour/>

It is good practice for departments and schools on the Claverton campus to link to the tour from their own admissions information pages.

Good Practice Example

One department runs a Postgraduate Online Open Week offering a range of recruitment activities over the internet. These include video clips featuring question and answer sessions with Directors of Studies, the Head of Department and students and researchers; information about programmes and courses; and a timetable for online question and answer sessions when Directors of Studies are available to answer enquiries.

8. Selection

- 8.1 The University's aim is to select those students most likely to benefit from its provision. The entry criteria and selection methods chosen for each programme are designed to ensure that students are likely to succeed academically and to gain intellectually from the provision available. Aptitude for a particular programme is therefore the primary criterion for selection and an academic decision will always be reached on an application before other factors such as additional needs or criminal convictions are taken into account. Further advice on the admission of candidates with additional needs is available from the Head of Recruitment and Admissions.
- 8.2 The University has a limited number of places available and it is not always possible to make offers to all the good candidates who apply.
- 8.3 The position of the Department/School/Partner organisation on interviews for undergraduate or postgraduate admissions should be made clear on departmental/school or partner organisations' websites. Arrangements for interviews, where appropriate, will be made within Departments/Schools by Admissions Tutors in conjunction with the Assistant Registrars (Undergraduate Admissions and Student Records and Examinations Office (for Graduate admissions)).
- 8.4 In selecting students, admissions staff will aim to:
- 8.4.1 Reach decisions which are fair and consistent in relation to the published entry criteria and the evidence the applicant presents of their academic and/or professional qualifications. Decisions will take into account any specific skills or experiences which are essential or desirable for the programme in question.
- 8.4.2 Take into account evidence of a candidate's *potential* to succeed on the programme. Where appropriate and relevant, admissions staff may consider contextual factors in relation to an application. These factors may include illness, family circumstances, personal responsibilities, or instability affecting the school or college. Where such factors are to be considered, either before making or when confirming an offer of a place, evidence of the effects of disadvantage should be sought. Generally, it is expected that applicants will have taken appropriate action to ensure that examining bodies have allowed for mitigating circumstances prior to the announcement of any results since the University will not generally be best placed to do this fairly and consistently.
- 8.4.3 Apply selection processes which are appropriate to the programme in question. Selection may be on the basis of an application form (with any written work or portfolios required) or on the basis of an application form plus interview.

Candidates are entitled to know, in advance, the likely format of any interview offered.

- 8.4.4 Make offers on a basis which is consistent with the competition and the number of places available in any given year.
- 8.4.5 Ensure that each application is considered by at least two members of admissions staff who have received instruction, advice and guidance in respect of selection and admissions procedures.. Where both members of staff are based within a department, school or partner organisation, it is acceptable for a decision to be reached by one member of staff and checked for fairness and consistency against agreed admissions criteria by a second.
- 8.4.6 Communicate clearly and in a timely way with candidates concerning the outcome of their application. The University will normally write to those receiving an offer stating any specific conditions which apply and including details of standard institutional terms and conditions. Offers to postgraduate research applicants will indicate the intended topic of research and supervisory arrangements, but both are subject to confirmation when the candidature is approved, as described in QA7 Research Degrees. Where applications are unsuccessful, the University will communicate this via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) for PGCE courses or any other intermediary body. Where no such system exists, the Department, School or Partner organisation to which the candidate has applied is responsible for communicating to the applicant that the application has been unsuccessful. Departments or Schools or Partner organisations may choose how to do this. A standard email or letter is sufficient.
- 8.5 How feedback is provided to unsuccessful candidates, and whether this is done routinely or on request only, should be made clear to applicants as early as possible in the admissions process.

9. Staff Development and Training

- 9.1 The University is committed to providing a fair and accessible admissions system. To achieve this, staff involved in recruitment and selection at all levels must be appropriately trained for their roles and have a good general awareness of how the University works and what it has to offer. Members of staff who are new to the role will therefore need additional support when engaging in recruitment, selection or admissions procedures.
- 9.2 The University requires all new admissions staff to attend an individual briefing with the relevant undergraduate or postgraduate section of the Recruitment and Admissions Office. Briefings should normally have taken place no later than 1st December in the first academic year of the post-holder's admissions-related work.
- 9.3 The Recruitment and Admissions Office, working with the Staff Development Unit, will provide opportunities for appropriate training for all those involved in recruitment, selection and admissions. Departments are responsible for ensuring that their admissions staff are adequately prepared and trained for their roles.
- 9.4 As a minimum, the University requires all Claverton-based Departments/Schools to send at least one representative (whether academic or support) to at least one undergraduate and one postgraduate meeting of the Admissions Tutor and Support Staff Groups co-ordinated by the Recruitment and Admissions Office.

- 9.5 The Recruitment and Admissions Office will maintain up-to-date lists of undergraduate and postgraduate Admissions Tutors and support staff and Departments/Schools should ensure that any changes of personnel are notified promptly.

10. Complaints and Review Requests

- 10.1 The University will make available to enquirers and applicants a complaints and review request procedure should they feel that any aspect of the recruitment, selection or admissions process has not been conducted in accordance with the University Admissions Policy. The Head of Recruitment and Admissions will provide advice on how to do this, on request.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 The University will monitor its recruitment, selection and admissions processes to ensure that they work effectively and that they are informed by feedback from users and are subject to continuous enhancement.
- 11.2 The University will provide sample groups of enquirers and applicants with opportunities to comment on particular publications, services or admissions issues with a view to informing future service development.
- 11.3 The Recruitment and Admissions Office will monitor response times in relation to enquiries and admissions decisions.
- 11.4 The Recruitment and Admissions Office will undertake surveys on a range of recruitment, selection and admissions themes including evaluations of key publications, the reasons for candidate declines and the quality of response to enquiries.
- 11.5 The Recruitment and Admissions Office will regularly review and monitor the profile of applicants and entrants with regard to equal opportunities indicators and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to address any issues which arise. Departments/Schools/Partner organisations are also responsible for monitoring their own admissions data in relation to equal opportunities. Applicant and entrant information will also be presented to the Equalities and Diversity Committee which will make recommendations as appropriate in relation to any issues which arise either in any one year or as a result of an observed trend.
- 11.6 The Recruitment and Admissions Office monitors both the processes and outcomes of the University's recruitment and admissions procedures and will make recommendations to appropriate committees or working groups to address any issues.

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	QA31 Recruitment and Support of International Students Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice (Final Report) (The Schwartz Review, September 2004): http://www.admissions-review.org.uk/	
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