



**This document is primarily intended for:**

Staff working in, or in conjunction with recruitment, outreach or admissions teams  
 Admissions Tutors  
 Exchange co-ordinators  
 Staff in marketing teams

**Queries:**

**First point of contact & Technical Specialists –**

Head of UG Admissions / Head of PGT Admissions / Head of Doctoral Recruitment & Comms

## Quality Assurance Code of Practice

### Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students

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#### 1 Purpose and Scope

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- 1.1 This statement outlines the principles and practices underlying the University's procedures for the recruitment, selection, and admission of students.
- 1.2 This statement applies to the formal application process for all courses leading to an award of the University of Bath. This includes:
- undergraduate degrees
  - postgraduate taught degrees
  - doctoral degrees (otherwise known as research programmes or doctoral programmes)
  - courses offered by partner organisations under a franchise agreement
  - courses offered in partnership with another university leading to a joint award by both parties
  - degree courses offered in partnership with other universities where the University of Bath is responsible for the admission of students, even in cases where another institution will make the final award.

While this statement does not directly apply to students who are undertaking credit-bearing study (such as certain forms of continuing professional development) or are visiting the University on a temporary basis, the departments responsible for those arrangements should consider the principles and practices outlined here.

The application process for apprenticeship courses is outlined in [QA22\(A\)](#).

- 1.3 **Recruitment** encompasses a broad range of activities and initiatives undertaken by the University, including outreach, events, and various marketing activities, with aim to ultimately encourage prospective students to apply to, or start a course at, the University. For the purposes of this statement, recruitment refers to the process by which the University shares information and advice with prospective students, to inform their decision-making. This includes activities targeted at widening access to the University, even where they are the responsibility of separate teams.
- 1.4 **Admissions** encompasses the principles and practices for processing and selecting applicants for the offer of a place at the University, including the processes for applying and confirming such a place. **Selection** encompasses the principles and practices used during admissions to assess the suitability of an applicant where places are limited, based on their academic suitability and any wider context.
- 1.5 In addition to this statement, [QA37 Student Exchange Arrangements](#) provides supplementary guidance in relation to exchange students, and [QA7 Research Degrees](#) provides additional guidance on the admission and candidature of doctoral students. [QA20 Collaborative Provision \(Taught and Doctoral\)](#) provides guidance on study delivered in partnership with other organisations.

## 2 Principles

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- 2.1 The University admits students to each course (or group of similar courses) as a cohort:
- **For taught courses**, each cohort will have a set number of places, divided into set places for UK and international students respectively.
  - **For doctoral courses**, the proportion of places for UK and international students will be dependent on the restrictions of any funding being provided. Cohorts may be set research projects or funded competitions with a fixed number of places or groups of applicants with individual proposals in a given research area.
- For each cohort, the University selects applicants for offer based on their potential to succeed and their academic merit, considering each applicant's fee status and context as appropriate.
- 2.2 The University must be satisfied that there is evidence demonstrating that each student admitted has the potential to succeed on their chosen course.
- 2.3 The University seeks to promote its provision as widely as possible amongst suitably qualified candidates in the UK and internationally. Whilst specific recruitment activities or initiatives may be targeted or narrow in scope, the University will make available to all prospective students information that helps them to make an informed decision.
- 2.4 The University aims to ensure that its selection and admissions processes are always consistent and transparent.
- 2.5 Each application is considered holistically based on academic merits and, where appropriate, an applicant's individual context and circumstances. Academic consideration does not include an applicant's additional needs, criminal convictions, or right to study and these are considered through separate processes.

- 2.6 The University will ensure its recruitment and admissions processes protect free speech and academic freedom. An applicant's opinions or ideas will not be considered in any recruitment, selection or admissions decision, and the University cannot revoke an offer of a place on the grounds of an applicant's lawful speech.
- 2.7 The University will ensure its recruitment and admissions processes and selection criteria comply with Equality Duty (including those laid out in Equality Act (2010)).
- 2.8 The University will ensure it meets all requirements under consumer protection law. This includes providing accurate and accessible information to prospective students.
- 2.9 The University will ensure recruitment, selection and admissions activities and processes are compliant with the principles of data protection, safeguarding and other relevant legislation.
- 2.10 All University of Bath staff involved in recruitment, selection or admissions should be familiar with the underlying principles described in this statement. This extends to staff in partner organisations responsible for selection decisions and to third party representatives undertaking recruitment activity on behalf of the University, such as agents based overseas.

### 3 Roles and Responsibilities

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- 3.1 The University has two departments with responsibility for the recruitment and admission to degrees, each led by a director:
- **Student Recruitment and Admissions** is responsible for recruitment and admission of students to taught degrees and is led by the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions.
  - **The Doctoral College** is responsible for recruitment and admission of students to doctoral degrees and led by the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor Research (Doctoral) and the Academic Director (Doctoral).
- 3.2 Responsibility for admissions to certain courses is devolved:
- **The School of Management** are responsible for admissions to their postgraduate taught degrees.
  - **The Department of Life Sciences** are responsible for admissions to Pharmacy postgraduate CPD courses.
- 3.3 The **University Executive Board** is responsible for the setting of targets for entry, in accordance with the University's strategy approved by Council.
- 3.4 The relevant Directors, in conjunction with the Deans of Faculty/School and Heads of Department, are responsible for the implementation of the University strategies for recruitment, selection and admissions and the operation of relevant policy and procedure. They have responsibility for bringing together recruitment and admissions activities in their departments in a shared approach commonly understood by all staff.
- 3.5 **Recruitment teams** and all those tasked with providing information to prospective students are responsible for implementing agreed recruitment strategies. They are responsible for ensuring:

- information provided to prospective students for recruitment purposes is accurate by monitoring the provision of information across the University.
- staff undertaking recruitment activities are appropriately trained to disseminate advice and guidance to applicants and their advisors in a manner which encourages positive decision making.
- agents and other third-party staff are trained appropriately in their capacity representing the University and its interests and that agent arrangements are conducted in accordance with this statement (see para. 5.4).
- recruitment strategies are periodically reviewed and are fit to deliver against objectives.

3.6 The **Widening Access Team** has responsibility for delivering certain recruitment activities specifically designed to encourage students from under-represented groups to join the University. The Head of Widening Access and Participation is responsible for ensuring all such activities and information provided adhere to the principles and practices outlined in this statement.

3.7 **The Department of Marketing & Communications** and all those tasked with delivering marketing activities to prospective students have additional responsibilities for sharing information with prospective students, including:

- ensuring that marketing materials are compliant with current legislation and policies on information provision
- providing suitable platforms for publishing course and admissions information
- conducting surveys and evaluation activities to meet requirements laid out in the recruitment strategies, for the purpose of informing and improving the provision of information and recruitment and admissions practices.

3.8 **Admissions teams** (or those responsible for processing applications) are responsible for ensuring fairness and transparency of admissions policies and procedures for their students across the University. This includes:

- providing accurate and transparent entry requirements online and validating this information where it appears in recruitment, marketing, or outreach materials
- ensuring staff undertaking recruitment activities internationally are equipped with relevant guidance on international qualifications and entry requirements
- assessing applications to their respective area using the admissions and selection processes as outlined in Section 6, referring applications to nominated staff in academic departments as appropriate. Selection staff within an admissions team will usually have responsibility for a specific set of courses or group of students
- assessing the fee status of applicants (in accordance with UK fee legislation) and reviewing changes in fee status for students during their studies
- setting expectations and monitoring the speed of selection decisions (with reference to para. 7.2)
- managing the number of offers made and how selection decisions are timed and sequenced to ensure student intakes meet the University's agreed expectations

- ensuring all applicants are provided with all material information regarding their chosen course prior to offer and informing applicants of any relevant changes to this information prior to entry, taking guidance from colleagues in the Faculties/School and the Academic Registry as appropriate (as detailed in para. 5.5)
- annually reviewing selection processes and criteria for each degree with academic departments to ensure they are effective and fit for purpose
- providing reports on admissions outcomes to Senate and Council, and relevant annual data on applications and entrants to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as required.

3.9 **Heads of Department/School** (or appropriate senior managers in partner organisations) are responsible for nominating staff to undertake recruitment and admissions functions within their department:

- Admissions Tutor(s) (or nominated Director(s) of Studies) have specific responsibilities for considering referred admissions cases and questions of selection practice for their respective degrees. Admissions Tutors may also have responsibilities for leading or delivering specific department-focused recruitment activities.
- Admissions Tutors (or nominated Director(s) of Studies) and those who support them should have the appropriate skills and knowledge to make academic decisions against agreed criteria and deliver their recruitment activities effectively. They will be expected to engage with training provided by admissions and recruitment teams where appropriate.
- Departments, research centres or partnerships teams are responsible for conducting interviews where they are used in selection, supported by admissions teams where appropriate.

3.10 The respective recruitment and admissions department is responsible for overseeing prospective student and applicant enquiries for their students and relatives, agents and advisors. This includes:

- providing and managing channels for students (and their relatives, agents and advisors) to make enquiries which enable them to make informed decisions and access application processes effectively
- setting and monitoring response times for enquiries they receive and enquiries relating to their respective students received elsewhere in the University

3.11 **The Student Immigration Service** works with recruitment and admissions teams to ensure processes and practices that relate to the University's immigration sponsorship duties are compliant. The Student Immigration Service, working with recruitment and admissions teams as appropriate, is also responsible for the provision of information, guidance and support for processes for students applying for student visas. The Service has sole responsibility for the provision of immigration advice.

3.12 **Student Support and Safeguarding** work with recruitment and admissions teams to ensure applicants receive appropriate advice and guidance relating to any disability or long-term health condition and any support available to them when joining the University.

- 3.13 Managers whose staff have responsibility for recruitment or admissions activities should ensure that those staff are aware of the [University Admissions Policy](#) and related policies (see Section 4) and that they are clear about their responsibilities under those policies.
- 3.14 The **Heads of admissions teams and recruitment teams** are responsible for ensuring its staff at all levels have been provided with suitable training in recruitment and admissions. In addition to thorough training for its own staff, these teams will provide training opportunities for all staff engaged in their areas.
- 3.15 Where courses are delivered in collaborative partnership with partner organisations, the **Learning Partnerships Office** are responsible for ensuring all activities undertaken for the recruitment and admission of students by partners are delivered in accordance with this statement.

## 4 Regulations, Policies, Appeals and Complaints

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- 4.1 The University maintains a core set of entry requirements set out in the [University's Regulations for Students](#)<sup>1</sup>. These requirements ensure students joining all courses are appropriately qualified. All selection decisions must be consistent with these regulations, and the relevant Head of Admissions must be consulted on a case-by-case basis for guidance on the procedures for any exemption.
- 4.2 The University publishes an [Admissions Policy](#). The policy must incorporate the principles, and practices outlined in this statement and provide information on the application and selection process for prospective applicants.
- 4.3 The University has separate policies governing specific aspects of admissions and recruitment practices and policies of particular concern to these practices, including:
- [Guidance on Admissions and Support for Students entering the University Under the Age of 18](#) (in accordance with the [University of Bath Safeguarding Policy](#))
  - [Admissions Statement on Applicants with Criminal Convictions](#)
  - [Statement of Equality Objectives](#)
  - [Undergraduate](#) and [Postgraduate](#) Taught Applicant Privacy Notices
- 4.4 The University also has an [Access and Participation Plan](#), which may include specific activities and commitments in relation to admissions and recruitment activities.
- 4.5 The University has a detailed [appeals and complaints process](#) for prospective students should they feel any aspect of recruitment, selection or admissions has not been conducted in accordance with University policies and standards. Anyone seeking advice on how to lodge an appeal or complaint can obtain it from the relevant Head of Admissions on request.

## 5 Recruitment and Provision of Information to Prospective Students

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<sup>1</sup> Section 13 (first degrees), 14 (diplomas and certificate courses) and 16 (higher degrees)

- 5.1 Staff involved in recruitment, selection and admissions will ensure information is available through recognised channels to inform potential students of the relevant information regarding the University's offering and enable them to make informed decisions, including:
- details of the application process for an applicant's chosen course, including how the applicant's context will be considered
  - advice, guidance, support and specific services available to students with disabilities, long-term health conditions or additional needs and how to access them both during the application process and as a student of the University
  - advice, guidance and support available to applicants regarding any criminal conviction, caution or warning or pending investigation, they may have
  - information on the full cost of study and any funding or financial support available to students, including access to the Student Hardship Fund
  - details of University accommodation, including the process for applying
  - highlighting any unusual or unexpected terms and conditions or aspects of the University's provision for students which significantly deviates from normal expectations
  - ensuring applicants are aware of their responsibility to provide full, accurate and truthful information as part of the admissions process
  - information on other key aspects of the University's provision for students, such as placements and the activities and services of The Students' Union
  - where relevant, information on the processes for applying for a Student visa
  - advice and guidance on the procedure for requesting a deferral of entry to a later year
  - the University's [Student Protection Plan](#) which outlines the arrangements for ensuring the quality and continuation of education for all undergraduate, taught postgraduates and doctoral students throughout their studies

Staff must ensure that in all these areas the information provided is applicable to a wide range of audiences, and in particular to students looking to join the University from outside the UK.

- 5.2 All staff undertaking recruitment activities should be trained to provide information and advice on the topics outlined in (5.1). Training should ensure staff can provide advice within the context of the wider sector, such that students can make an informed view of how the provision at Bath relates to other options.
- 5.3 Admissions teams will provide material information on its courses in a durable format to applicants during the application process, which will be accurate at that time. Where aspects of a course change between application and entry, the admissions team will ensure all affected applicants are appropriately informed in a timely manner, including guidance on alternatives a student may wish to consider if appropriate. In the unlikely event a course is discontinued prior to entry, the admissions team will contact all affected applicants and support them in finding suitable alternative courses where possible.
- 5.4 Student Recruitment and Admissions is responsible for ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place for the recruitment and training of agents or other representatives acting to recruit students to the University on its behalf, and to ensure that any guidance or materials used

are accurate and represent the University effectively. The team will ensure appropriate review processes are in place for agent relationships, and that other teams responsible for student recruitment or marketing are appropriately consulted as part of the review.

- 5.5 Student Recruitment and Admissions will negotiate any commission payments and manage such relationships through formal contracts approved by the Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions and the University's Legal Adviser.

## 6 Selection and Admission

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- 6.1 Applications for undergraduate first degrees are made through the UCAS admissions service. For all other courses, the University will provide an online application process through its website or suitable alternative, such as the website of a recognised partner organisation or appropriate national system. In all cases, the admissions team (or those tasked with processing applications) will ensure the method of application is clearly communicated on the University's website. Prospective applicants with additional needs when accessing the application process should contact the relevant Head of Admissions for further guidance, if required.
- 6.2 The University may charge an application fee and/or deposit. These will be determined by the relevant admissions team on a course-by-course basis. Where an application fee or deposit is required, the relevant admissions team will publish information detailing when a fee or deposit will apply and the circumstances and process for requesting waivers or refunds.
- 6.3 Each course has specific **entry requirements** and **selection practices** tailored to its needs. These criteria will be designed in keeping with the University's principles on admission and selection outlined in Section 2. Selection practices include methods for prioritising between applicants who meet standard entry requirements where places are limited.
- 6.4 The entry requirements for courses will be set and published for those qualifications commonly studied by applicants.
- 6.5 Admissions teams are responsible for setting equivalent levels for suitable qualifications not covered by set criteria. Where requirements are not routinely published, prospective applicants can contact the relevant admissions team for further guidance on their specific requirements and suitability.
- 6.6 Entry requirements on the University's website constitute the institutional record of these requirements. Where information is not published, the relevant admissions team will be responsible for nominating an alternative source. Admissions teams must inform all relevant stakeholders of any changes to entry requirements or qualification equivalences.
- 6.7 The [University's Regulations for Students](#) stipulate the minimum English language standards all students are expected to meet prior to entry. The University is also required to ensure it is satisfied that all students it sponsors for a Student visa meet minimum thresholds outlined by the UK Government. Admissions teams are responsible for setting and publishing clear and transparent criteria for how applicants must demonstrate they have a suitable standard of English.



- 6.8 Staff within admissions teams and Admissions Tutors (or nominated Directors of Studies) consider applications for each course using agreed criteria and practices. In doing so, they aim to:
- reach decisions which are fair and consistent with published criteria, the evidence provided in a student's application and the University's principles on selection and admission outlined in Section 2
  - apply appropriate judgement and discretion when considering an applicant's individual merits to reach a fair decision, and with particular reference to a student's context and circumstances as outlined in para. 6.14, where appropriate
  - make offers on a basis which is consistent with the competition for places for a given entry. Where equal consideration deadlines apply (such as for UCAS applicants), this may involve delaying decisions on certain applications until staff can be confident offering a place will not prevent more suitable applicants who apply later from also having that opportunity
  - ensure all additional evidence required to offer or confirm a place (such as qualification certificates or past immigration documents) is collected and appropriately documented.
- 6.9 Every selection decision must be reviewed and verified by a second member of the admissions team staff before it is released to ensure selection criteria are applied consistently, and to prevent errors.
- 6.10 Prospective supervisors will play a key role in the consideration of doctoral applications. Where applicants are being considered for funding, their application may also be reviewed by a selection panel, which will make decisions using criteria specific to that funding competition.
- 6.11 The University may use academic interviews as part of the selection process, either for specific courses or for groups of applicants where other methods of selection are inappropriate or insufficient. The University will only require or employ interviews where they form a substantive part of the selection process for a given applicant.
- 6.12 Where interviews are used, the University will publish course-specific details on who will be interviewed and how interviews will be conducted.
- 6.11 The University reserves the right to interview any applicant where it is warranted by individual circumstances (at the discretion of the relevant Head of Admissions team).
- 6.12 Admissions teams will electronically notify all applicants of the decision on their application in a clear and timely way. For successful applicants, this will include:
- any specific academic conditions they will need to meet to secure their place
  - any other conditions that may apply, such as criminal conviction checks or visa processes
  - the process for accepting an offer
  - other institutional terms and conditions
  - for doctoral degrees, the intended topic of research and supervisory arrangements, both are subject to confirmation when candidature is approved. The process for approving candidature is outlined in [QA7 Research Degrees](#).

- 6.13 Where an application is unsuccessful, the admissions team will communicate this to the applicant. This communication may include limited feedback or advice on alternative courses available if appropriate. Unsuccessful applicants may contact the relevant admissions team for further feedback.
- 6.14 In line with the principles detailed in Section 2, when making selection decisions staff should consider additional context of applicants where appropriate and relevant. This may be achieved through the individual consideration of an application or through systemic processes that use contextual data applied across all applicants. Factors may include:
- an applicant's health and the impact of specific periods of illness on their prior education
  - family and other personal circumstances
  - disruption affecting education providers they previously attended and general performance of students at those providers
  - contextual data indicating an applicant's background, such as their socio-economic background or the rates of participation in higher education in their area.
- 6.15 Where specific processes are in place to consider these factors (such as contextual admissions schemes or processes for requesting consideration of mitigating circumstances) the relevant admissions team will publish guidance online and in any print prospectus on how they are applied so these processes are as transparent as possible.

## 7 Review and Monitoring

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- 7.1 The University will monitor its recruitment, selection and admissions processes and policies to ensure that they work effectively, are informed by user feedback and are subject to continuous enhancement.
- 7.2 When considering the effectiveness of admissions and enquiry operations, the University balances speed of response against quality admissions practices, quality of service and effective communication, with no one factor being more important.

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