

# **Recruitment and admissions policy**

## **1. Aims of the policy**

**1.1** The University aims to provide education for all applicants who demonstrate the potential to benefit from its provision in line with its mission to widen access and participation and its commitment to equality of opportunity. The Recruitment and Admissions Policy is designed to ensure that it is able to admit a diverse student population who possess the abilities and aptitudes to complete their studies successfully.

**1.2** The University has adopted the UUK Fair Admissions Code of Practice and this policy has been developed to ensure that its recruitment and admissions practice protect applicants, support fairness and transparency, ensure the stability of the higher education sector and maintain high academic standards.

**1.3** The Recruitment and Admissions Policy and its associated procedures have also been developed in accordance with the Office for Students Regulatory Framework and the Core Practice of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (August 2018) that to ensure that 'The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system'. The University will aim to ensure that all aspects of its processes are inclusive and that decisions are made in a fair and reliable manner.

**1.4** The policy also takes account of the Office for Students requirement that 'students are recruited to courses for which they have the capability to achieve a successful outcome'.

**1.5** The policy and associated procedures are also in line with the Competition and Markets Authority Guidance for Higher Education.

## **2. Scope of the policy**

**2.1** These procedures cover the recruitment and admission of students to Further Education Courses, Undergraduate Courses, including courses with Foundation, Postgraduate Courses, Apprenticeships and Degree and Higher Apprenticeships. Separate arrangements apply for students applying for doctoral programmes.

**2.2** The Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Access and Participation Plan which sets out its aims and objectives for its widening access participation activities.

## **3. General principles**

**3.1** The University aims to provide education for all applicants who demonstrate the potential to benefit from its provision.

**3.2** The recruitment process is designed to attract a diverse student population who possess the abilities and aptitudes to complete their studies successfully.

**3.3** The University will admit candidates who have the potential to succeed on their chosen course regardless of background. Applicants to the University are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, age (subject to the University's policy on the admission of those under 18), disability, religion, sexual orientation or social class.

**3.4** The University will communicate clearly with potential applicants and applicants, and provide clear, accurate and up-front information concerning the courses, the fees, the terms and conditions and the procedures for admissions and enrolment.

**3.5** The University will provide comprehensive and consistent information on the course, the student experience and how it will meet students' aspirations beyond graduation.

**3.6** Recruitment activities will be aimed at providing information and guidance to applicants and keeping them informed of any updates to the course in order to ensure that they can make an informed decision.

**3.7** The University will ensure that selection methods are fair and consistently applied. Applicants will be selected on the basis of their application, including the evidence of their qualifications and experience and, where appropriate, through the use of interviewing, auditions or other such mechanisms.

**3.8** Consideration will be given to the nature and the purpose of an interview, or any other selection method, to ensure that it has appropriate selection criteria and is designed to appropriately assess the applicant's suitability for the course.

**3.9** All recruitment, admissions, enrolment and induction procedures will be regularly monitored for their effectiveness for all categories of applicants. Entry requirements will also be regularly reviewed prior to publication to ensure that they are appropriate.

**3.10** The University will aim to remove any barriers to application through support for students with disabilities and appropriate outreach to ensure applications from disadvantaged groups through its Access and Participation Plan.

**3.11** The University aims to provide a professional service that is efficient and managed by staff who understand their role in the overall student experience. It will take into account the latest research and good practice in its approach to recruitment and admissions.

**3.12** In line with the OfS transparency condition, information will be made available to applicants on applications, offers, acceptances and enrolments analysed by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. The University will also monitor the link between admissions and student outcomes.

## **Recruitment**

### **4. Information provision**

**4.1** In accordance with consumer protection law, the University will provide potential applicants with information that is accurate, complete, clear, unambiguous, up front, timely and accessible.

**4.2** Information provided will include modes of study, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, learning outcomes, and the extent of flexibility and choice. The University will also provide information on which courses are accredited or approved by professional and statutory bodies.

**4.3** Information will also be available on the range of learner support, academic or pastoral, available for students. This will include study skills support, information technology and learning resources/library services, personal tutorial support, student welfare, counselling, employment and careers services.

**4.4** Clear information will also be provided on tuition fees, and any other costs associated with the course and the availability of scholarships and bursaries.

**4.5** Where courses are still subject to approval, this will be clearly marked in the prospectus and on the website, as appropriate. Once they are approved, applicants and potential applicants will be informed if there are any changes to the information initially provided.

**4.6** Information on how to apply will be provided to applicants, including timescales and key communications, together with expectations of applicants, how to ask for feedback and, where necessary, make a complaint.

## **5. Advice and guidance**

**5.1** The University will provide appropriate guidance to enable potential applicants to make informed decisions about their options. The information outlined above will be supplemented by advice and guidance as follows:

- Holding advertised open days/evenings, taster days.
- Visiting Schools and Colleges to provide information.
- Outreach work to encourage applications from students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Providing information and advice from a suitably qualified member of staff to applicants.
- Providing access to information in suitable alternative formats for those applicants with particular disabilities or with particular needs as appropriate.

**5.2** The University's activities will be undertaken with the aim of providing support and guidance to help the applicant make an informed decision.

## **Admissions**

### **6. Entry requirements**

**6.1** Applicants to undergraduate degree courses must normally have a minimum of two A Levels or equivalent qualifications in order to be considered.

**6.2** Taught masters courses typically require a minimum of a Lower Second Class Honours degree.

**6.3** The requirements for FE and Apprenticeship courses are set in accordance with the appropriate qualification and any funding body requirements. For some apprenticeship students there will be a requirement for maths and English on admission. Students admitted without a level 2 qualification in these subjects will be required to undertake this as part of their course.

**6.4** Each School or College will have responsibility for setting any specific admissions criteria (such as the requirement for particular subjects) at validation/revalidation or other reviews of the course.

**6.5** The University welcomes and accepts all qualifications that are part of the UCAS tariff as well as an extensive range of international qualifications.

**6.6** The University will consider mature applicants (aged 21 or over at point of entry) who have relevant work and/or life experience.

**6.7** The University welcomes applications from individuals who have followed non-standard educational routes, or those who meet entry criteria through experience rather than academic qualification.

## **7. English language requirement**

**7.1** As all teaching, learning and assessment at the University is through the medium of English unless approved otherwise, all applicants will be required to demonstrate that they meet the required level of English language competency for their desired course of study.

**7.2** Applicants whose first language is not English will be required to have a recognised English language qualification, such as IELTS (International English Testing System), or equivalent at the appropriate level for the course of study for which they wish to be considered. The equivalent qualifications are outlined on the University website. All qualifications must cover the key components of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

**7.3** The only exception to this where applicants are residents of or have undertaken qualifications in the countries approved by the UKVI which can be accessed through [the government website](#).

**7.4** Each course will state an overall IELTS score (or equivalent) together with any individual element requirements, as and where appropriate.

**7.5** Where an applicant's English language competency is below that necessary for their intended course of study, they will be required to successfully undertake a pre-sessional English language course prior to being enrolled on their course.

## **8. Visa requirements including UKVI Student Route**

**8.1** Applicants who are not UK or Irish citizens wishing to gain admission to the University must meet and possess the appropriate leave to remain in the UK and satisfy immigration requirements in force at the time of entry onto the course. The University will not normally accept students whose decision by the Home Office is pending.

**8.2** Students seeking University sponsorship for the UK Visas and Immigration student route will be required to meet the requirements as set out by the Home Office in addition to University requirements.

**8.3** For international applicants who require sponsorship for the student route, once the academic assessment has been made, the University will also make an assessment about the applicant's ability to gain a student visa. This may entail financial checks and also a credibility interview prior to a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) being issued. Where a student does not meet credibility requirements, their offer will be withdrawn.

**8.4** Students who are not UK or Irish nationals and who are not sponsored by the University for the student route will be required to demonstrate that they have appropriate leave to remain in the UK.

## **9. Sub-contracted provision**

**9.1** Academic partner institutions which offer University courses will follow the entry criteria as agreed through the validation/approval process and the contract.

**9.2** Admissions for University students at sub-contracted partners will be in accordance with the contract with the partner and information on the process will be provided to applicants through the partner.

## **10. Admissions processes – general principles**

**10.1** Admissions processes will be outlined to applicants on the University website and will explain how to apply and how the University will process applications.

**10.2** Opportunity will be given on application forms (including through UCAS), at any interviews or other selection activities, for applicants to draw attention to relevant qualifications, experience and other information that might support their application.

**10.3** The University will request information on applicants' personal characteristics and demographics in order to monitor the effectiveness of its admissions processes. However, information about applicants' ethnicity, gender, disability and age will not form part of the admissions decisions.

**10.4** The University will aim to process applications and to communicate decisions in line with published processing times and deadlines where appropriate. Where it is unable to do this, it will communicate the reasons for this to the applicant.

**10.5** Where interviews or additional assessments are used, these will be clearly outlined to candidates in the information provided.

**10.6** The University will carry out checks on documents supplied by applicants to establish authenticity in order to guard against fraudulent applications. Where an application is found to be fraudulent either prior to or after admission, the University may cancel the offer or enrolment.

**10.7** Where an application is processed through UCAS, if the UCAS Similarity Detection Service highlights a "non-original" personal statement, the applicant will be provided with an opportunity to explain the similarity and provide a 'new' personal statement. This will allow the University to continue to consider such applications where there may be a valid explanation.

## **11. Access and participation**

**11.1** The University is committed to removing the barriers to admission some groups face through its Access and Participation Plan. This plan identifies access gaps in protected characteristics and the activity required to improve these. This work includes outreach activities and also bursary provision for under-represented groups.

## **12. Applicants' obligations**

**12.1** Applicants must apply through the appropriate channel as outlined on the University's website.

**12.2** Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the University is in receipt of all relevant information in order for the University to make a decision on their application and that all information is accurate. Omission of relevant information, or the supply of inaccurate information, may invalidate the application or the offer of a place.

### **13. Consideration of applications**

**13.1** Applications will be assessed against the entry criteria. Those students who meet or who have the potential to meet the criteria will be given an offer subject to places being available.

**13.2** Where applicants do not have the formal entry criteria, their applications will be considered on their individual merits and an assessment made about whether they have the potential to succeed on the course.

**13.3** Where courses are full and/or waiting lists are held, or when courses have to be closed for any reason, applicants are informed as soon as practicable with the offer of alternative courses, wherever possible.

**13.4** Where applicants are considered unsuitable for a particular course, then, wherever possible, they will be referred to other appropriate courses.

### **14. Interviewing and assessment**

**14.1** Applicants will receive clear information on interviews, auditions or any form of assessment applied during the application process. Applicants with a disability or other learning needs should contact the University to discuss any reasonable adjustments to the interview and assessment process.

**14.2** Interviews, auditions and assessments will be conducted and evaluated in a standardised manner for the course and will be inclusive to reflect the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. There will be a clear structure for each interview, or other selection method, and selection will be conducted against predetermined criteria. Where courses require an interview or an audition, applicants will be notified of their appointment within a stipulated timeframe.

**14.3** Decisions, and the reasons for the decisions will be recorded in writing as fully as possible to facilitate feedback to unsuccessful applicants. These records will be retained by the University in line with its Records Retention policies and schedules.

**14.4** For certain courses, initial assessment for Basic Skills attainment (numeracy, literacy, ESOL) may be carried out as part of the admissions process. The offer of a place on the course may then be informed by the outcome of those assessments.

### **15. Additional health and DBS checks**

**15.1** For certain courses, particularly in health, social work and other courses leading to professional registration, applicants will be required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be clearly outlined in the information for the course.

**15.2** For courses in health-related subjects, applicants must also undergo a health check which will be undertaken by the University's occupational health partners. This will also form part of the information provided to applicants.

**15.3** Any offer of a place will be made subject to satisfactorily passing these checks.

### **16. The offer stage**

**16.1** Offers will be made as promptly as reasonably possible. Information will be provided to the successful applicant on:

- any conditions attached to the offer
- the tuition fees and terms and conditions of admission
- what the applicant has to do next and by when including visa requirements and the declaration of any relevant criminal convictions
- when further information e.g. regarding joining instructions including any arrangements for enrolment, registration, induction.
- any pre-enrolment support, orientation or induction for access and participation or international students before the start of the course as appropriate

**16.2** The University will normally make offers in relation to the UCAS tariff. These may be varied to take into account students' educational backgrounds or mitigating circumstance or in the light of other assessments of the candidate's ability. It may make unconditional offers only where the candidate has met the entry requirements, where their previous experience is taken into account as relevant to the course or where the admissions decision has been informed by an interview, audition or portfolio of work.

**16.3** Where a request for deferral of entry to a later year has been made, the University's 'Procedure for deferral of a place offered' will be implemented.

**16.4** The University will also provide the offer holder with any updates to the course and any changes made.

**16.5** For international students who require sponsorship, the University requires payment of a deposit prior to the issue of a CAS. The offer letter will additionally outline the deposit, how it should be paid and under what circumstances it will be refunded.

## **17. Changes to courses**

**17.1** The University will ensure that substantial alterations to courses from earlier published information are communicated to applicants holding an offer. This may include changes to the course following validation or professional accreditation, closure of a course, significant changes to cost, location, content or title.

**17.2** Where a course is withdrawn prior to admission, the University will inform applicants at the earliest opportunity in line with the University's published terms and conditions and the [Student Protection Plan](#).

## **18. Applicants with a disability or other learning needs**

**18.1** The University of West London encourages applicants with disability to disclose their disability and support requirements at the earliest opportunity, for example on the application form or at any interview. This helps UWL staff and partnership institutions to provide students with appropriate information and support.

**18.2** Early disclosure enables the University's Wellbeing team to contact the applicant to consider appropriate support requirements and to identify whether reasonable adjustments can be made prior to the start of term.

**18.3** In the unlikely event that the University is unable to make the adjustments needed to provide the required support, the University undertakes to offer the applicant support in submitting an alternative application where appropriate.

## **19. Applicants with criminal convictions**

**19.1** Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily be a bar to admission and the University abides by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1975.

**19.2** Applicants with a relevant unspent criminal conviction will be considered in line with the [Applicants and Students with Criminal Convictions Policy](#) Only those convictions which pose risks to the University community need to be declared.

**19.3** For courses requiring a DBS check, any convictions either declared by the candidate or disclosed as part of the DBS will be considered in accordance with the Regulations for the consideration of criminal convictions for students on courses leading to professional registration found on [our policy page](#).

## **20. References**

**20.1** For applicants to a course where a reference is required and there has been a significant break since schooling, a personal reference from a professional or employer (not friend or family) may be requested rather than a school reference.

**20.2** For FE courses primarily designed for 16–18-year-olds, references will be required for all applicants.

**20.3** Where a reference has been requested but an interview or other selection activity is conducted before the reference has been received, an offer may be made 'subject to reference'. This condition will be stated in the offer letter. The reference will then be followed up by the admissions team, and when received, a further letter is sent to the applicant either confirming or cancelling the offer.

## **21. Applicants under 18**

**21.1** Applicants under 18 years old are admitted only after consultation with parents or guardians and with school or local education authority representatives as appropriate. Students under the age of 18 must have a parent's or guardian's written permission. The request for permission will be made at the offer stage of the admissions process.

## **22. Recognition of prior (experiential) learning and advanced standing**

**22.1** Applicants with prior experience which is equivalent to parts of the course can use the process of the Recognition of Prior (Experiential) Learning to be considered for accessing Higher Education courses leading to the University's own awards and/or using the prior learning as part of these awards. The process is based on a portfolio of evidence to show the equivalence of the normal entrance requirement of a specific course.

**22.2** Applicants with a prior qualification or other certified learning may apply for advanced standing (e.g. admission to levels 5 and 6 for an undergraduate course). The prior learning will need to map against the learning outcomes, content, and level of award. Any prior learning must be considered current in line with the [University's Academic Regulations](#).

**22.3** The amount of RPEL or advanced standing that may be claimed is set out in the University's Academic Regulations which are published on [our policy and regulations page](#).

**22.4** Applicants wishing to claim advanced standing or exemption from particular modules should contact the Admissions Office prior to their admission to the course.

### **23. Feedback**

**23.1** Prompt and clear feedback will be provided to applicants who have not been offered a place where requested, and advice about alternatives and future options will be given, as appropriate.

### **24. Complaints regarding the admissions process**

**24.1** At the University of West London, we are committed to providing fair, transparent and consistent admissions procedures for all of our applicants. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when applicants are dissatisfied with the conduct of the admissions process. The University has therefore developed an Admissions Complaints Procedure set out in Appendix A.

### **25. Data protection**

**25.1** Information collected as part of the application process will be used only in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and the Privacy Notice for Applicants which are available [on our website](#).

### **26. Responsibility for recruitment and admissions**

**26.1** The responsibility for recruitment lies within the Recruitment section of the Marketing, Recruitment and Communications Department which is also responsible for all admissions under the Head of Admissions.

**26.2** Recruitment of international students is the responsibility of the International Recruitment Team under the Head of International Recruitment.

**26.3** Access and Participation is the responsibility of the Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience).

### **27. Staff training**

**27.1** All staff involved in recruitment and admissions process will receive training which will include relevant information on the CMA and Data Protection Requirements. Training requirements will be reviewed on a regular basis and training will be refreshed annually.

### **28. Monitoring**

**28.1** The Recruitment and Admissions Policy will be reviewed as required by the Academic Board to ensure that it is effective and is meeting the requirements of the Fair admissions code of practice

**28.2** The policy will be monitored by the Recruitment Monitoring Group in relation to process and the Access and Participation Group in relation to its effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the University's Access and Participation Plan.

**28.3** It will also be monitored in relation to the qualifications used on entry and the successful outcome of students.

**28.4** To ensure that the Recruitment and Admissions Policy is effective, the University may also undertake surveys of applicants who decline offers.

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