



University  
Centre  
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

# HIGHER EDUCATION

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

From 2024 Entry until next revision

**Effective for HE students and potential students, staff, volunteers, governors and employers**

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Higher Education (HE) Admissions Policy is written by the Registrar (HE Admissions), in discussion with the Head of HE and overseen by the HE Senate and Senior Management Team. It is supported by a set of Standard Operating Procedures for staff. The Terms of Reference are broadly to:

- Promote fairness, consistency and transparency in recruitment and admissions practices
- Formulate the admissions policy and procedures for both Home and International Students to undergraduate awards to oversee the implementation and effectiveness of these and to monitor compliance with relevant Quality Assurance Statements and external legislation. (Refer to the International Admissions Policy in relation to international admissions).
- Monitor the quality of Home and International student admissions and recruitment, ensuring integrity and alignment of processes with the College's strategic aims
- Promote the dissemination of best practice in recruitment and admissions across the College, to identify development and training needs for admissions staff and to ensure that these needs are met
- Promote the Admissions processes in accordance with the HEI partners for franchised courses.

## **2 Policy Statement**

2.1 University Centre Somerset (UCS) at Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) is committed to providing a professional admission service and to provide clear, fair and consistently applied policies and procedures. UCS aims to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students who have the potential to benefit from and contribute to the academic life at UCS/BTC.

Policies and Academic Regulations can be found on the UCS website:

<https://www.somerset.ac.uk/>

Other documentation to be read in conjunction to this Policy:

- Academic Regulations of relevant Awarding Organisation
- UCS Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- UCS Student Protection Plan
- UCS Compensation and Refund Policy
- UCS HE RPL Policy
- Degree and Higher Apprenticeship Policy
- Student Transfer Arrangements
- International Admissions Policy

2.2 UCS recognises that, in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students, it may need to demonstrate a flexible approach and, where appropriate make adjustments for individual applicants, for example, disabled applicants or applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances.

2.3 Eligible students, whether full-time or part-time, will be able to apply for financial support from the government to help with tuition fees. Eligible UK, full-time students will also be able to apply for help with living costs. There are two types of help which you can apply for:

- Loans which you have to pay back
- Grants which you do not have to pay back

For further information on financial support please visit [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance).

### **3 Role and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Role of HE Admission Staff**

Admissions decisions at UCS are ultimately administered by the Registrar (HE Admissions), who co-ordinates the admissions process for students applying through UCAS and the HEI Partners and liaises with the relevant bodies. The Registrar (HE Admissions) has responsibility for:

- Managing the admissions procedure
- Monitoring applications and the decisions made by Course Leaders/Heads of Curriculum where necessary
- Advising applicants on UCAS procedures
- Advising staff on UCAS procedures
- Liaising with UCAS and Partner Universities
- Determining entry criteria and selection procedures with Course Leaders
- Providing accurate and relevant information for applicants and prospective applicants
- Communicating directly with applicants during the admissions process: for example, sending invitations for interviews; confirmation of outcome, including the Terms and Conditions for UCS/BTC or partner HEI if offer is given
- Supporting College wide open days
- Making reasonable local adjustments aimed at ensuring that individual disabled applicants have full access to the admissions process to and admissions-related events, including open days and interviews.

#### **3.2 Training for HE Admissions**

All members of staff with responsibility for the admissions process are given appropriate guidance in order to fulfil their roles competently and in line with this policy. Structured guidance is given to curriculum areas of any national or institutional changes to admissions policy or procedures.

##### **3.2.1 Transparency**

UCS in conjunction with the HEI Partners is committed to providing accurate and clear communication of information that will support students to make an informed decision about their course. The College requires the Registrar (HE Admissions); in conjunction with the Marketing Team to publish guideline entry requirements for all undergraduate programmes in all relevant communications, e.g. HE Prospectus, UCAS publications, College Website and HEI websites.

Information on the entry qualifications of applicants accepted in previous years and other statistical data may be found on the website [www.unistats.ac.uk](http://www.unistats.ac.uk).

### **3.2.2 Consistency**

In order to ensure constancy and fairness, the principles and procedures set out in this policy are followed for all programmes. The College acknowledges that admissions processes will vary to some extent across subject areas depending on the nature of the programme.

### **3.2.3 Conflicts of Interest**

A conflict of interest occurs where the professional responsibilities and position of trust held by an individual or an organisation is compromised by the potential for personal gain or organisational benefit from a situation. In the admissions process this is most likely to occur when any member of staff reviewing an application / interviewing for a place on a course has a personal relationship with an applicant. In these instances, staff are required to disclose the conflict of interest to the Head of Higher Education.

## **4 Admissions Requirements**

### **4.1 Selection Principles**

UCS (in conjunction with its partner HEIs) endeavours to ensure that the selection process provides equal consideration for applicants who apply by the relevant closing date. All selection decisions are made on the basis of merit and the ability of each applicant to meet the academic and non-academic criteria for admission to the relevant programme of study.

The selection criteria must treat all students fairly and not discriminate unlawfully because of marital or civil partnership status, gender, gender re-assignment, race (including colour, nationality, national origin or ethnic origin) disability, pregnancy and or parental status, sex or sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, political or other opinion, social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

### **4.2 General Entry Requirements**

Applications are assessed by the Registrar (HE Admissions) on the basis of information provided on the application form. All applicants are assessed as individuals and are given equal opportunities to demonstrate relevant skills and provide supporting information where required. In some cases, the selection process may include other steps for example interviews in addition to the information provided on the application form. The criteria for assessment vary across different programmes. Academic and non-academic entrance requirements are reviewed annually in line with the College's aim to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students who have the potential to benefit from and contribute to a quality education on their chosen programme. The Registrar (HE Admissions) and Course Leaders should demonstrate flexibility where appropriate in response to individual applicants requesting adjustments to assessment methods.

In order to comply with the requirements of relevant professional bodies, applicants to certain vocational or professional courses may be required to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or Occupational Health checks. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply when they are made an offer of a place.

### 4.3 International Applicants

UCS Welcomes applications from international applicants. International applicants already resident in the United Kingdom will be required to provide identity and proof of residency status as part of their application process in order to comply with UKVI regulations.

UCS as part of Bridgwater and Taunton College holds a licence for UKVI Sponsorship and can issue a confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) in support of an international Applicant's student visa application. Details can be seen in the International Admissions Policy.

### 4.4 Qualifications

#### 4.4.1 Minimum Requirements

UCS, in association with its HEI partners considers applicants with a wide range of UK, European and International Qualifications for admissions to our undergraduate programmes.

For all courses of study applicants must have a minimum acceptable level of literacy (typically Grade C/4 or above in GCSE English or its equivalent) and for many courses of study numeracy (typically Grade C/4 or above in GCSE Maths, or its equivalent).

The typical minimum entry requirement for admissions to an undergraduate degree programme at UCS is published against each course on the College and UCAS websites and within our Higher Education Prospectus.

Applicants must satisfy the particular requirements of the course / Single Registerable Module to which they are applying, which may include specific grades in named subjects.

Applicants who are uncertain of the requirements for a particular degree programme, course of study or Single Registerable Module are advised to refer to the website [www.somerset.ac.uk](http://www.somerset.ac.uk) or to the Registrar (HE Admissions) to seek further guidance [ucsadmissions@btc.ac.uk](mailto:ucsadmissions@btc.ac.uk)

#### 4.4.2 Acceptable Qualifications

UCS welcomes the increased breadth offered in post-16 qualifications. Each application will be considered individually whilst seeking to admit students with the potential to succeed on their chosen course of study. This may be demonstrated in a number of ways through different qualifications and combinations; however, applicants are expected to have demonstrated the ability to study at a progressive and concentrated level.

Functional Skills programmes at Level 2 may be accepted in lieu of GCSE English or GCSE Maths Grade C/4 for some programmes.

UCS welcomes applicants with other relevant level 3 qualifications and the Registrar (HE Admissions) will formulate offers on these courses on an equivalent basis with other level 3 qualifications.

#### 4.4.3 English Language Requirements

Teaching, assessment and student support will normally take place in English, unless otherwise stated. The Registrar (HE Admissions), International Team and Course Leaders must be confident that the candidate has the proficiency in the English language necessary to succeed in the chosen course of study.

All applicants will require an approved English Language qualification to gain entry to UCS if they have not already demonstrated that they can meet the normal required standard. Any offer made will incorporate this requirement as part of the conditions.

UCS and its partner HEIs recognise a wide range of English Language qualifications and will be made an offer which is conditional on successful completion of one of the approved tests. Minimum acceptable scores for the most commonly presented English Language Qualifications are given below. Please note that some programmes, such as nursing, may require higher scores:

- 5.5 overall on IELTS, with at least 5.0 in each component of listening speaking, reading and writing

#### 4.4.4 Applicants who have non-UK qualifications

UCS welcomes applications from students with international qualifications, the International Team have experience in considering a wide range of international qualifications against the College's/UCS's entry criteria. Prospective applicants who wish to discuss whether their qualifications will meet the requirements criteria should contact the International Team on [international@btc.ac.uk](mailto:international@btc.ac.uk)

#### 4.4.5 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) including Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (previously known as Accreditation of Prior Learning) is a process undertaken by UCS and its associated HEIs in order to assess and, as appropriate, recognise prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit value and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study. Reference should be made to the UCS Higher Education Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy.

Any decision on credit transfer or entry of students with advanced standing is an academic decision taken in accordance with the Academic Regulations of the Awarding Organisation. Applicants are advised to check with the Registrar (HE Admissions) in the first instance.

#### 4.4.6 Age and Vulnerable Adults

UCS and its associated HEIs recognise that in some cases careful consideration may need to be given to someone's age or position as a vulnerable adult when applying for certain programmes. Please refer to the UCS Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

#### **4.4.7 Applicants seeking deferred entry**

UCS welcomes applications from students who wish to spend time gaining experience of work, voluntary service or travel after leaving school or college. This intention should be stated on the UCAS Application Form unless the individual intends to apply for entry during the gap year. Applicants who take a gap year should be aware that they should abide by the UCAS rules and timeframes for that application cycle for which they are applying. It may not be possible to defer entry for all courses depending on partner HEI policy, for example deferred entry is not possible for nursing courses.

#### **4.4.8 Applicants wishing to reapply**

Applicants who wish to reapply should contact the Registrar (HE Admissions) prior to making an application. Any decision on the eligibility of applicants who have previously held an offer of a place but failed to achieve the academic conditions at first attempt is an academic judgement. Such candidates should be aware that no guarantee can be given that another offer will be made, and that the conditions of any further offer may differ to those of the original.

#### **4.4.9 Applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances**

If any applicant feels that their prior ill-health – or personal circumstance other than ill- health (for example, bereavement, or other difficult home or family circumstances) – may have affected their previous education, or grades received in past examinations, then they are welcome to contact UCS to discuss this further. All formal requests for extenuating or mitigating circumstances will be taken into account in the admissions process and should be supported by a full declaration about the nature of the circumstances. Where those circumstances are affecting or have affected current studies the correct course of action would be to notify the relevant exam board of those circumstances.

#### **4.4.10 Criminal Convictions**

University Centre Somerset is committed to inclusion and equality of opportunity. We recognise our duties under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and updated in 2014. However, as UCS operates on sites where there are FE, School and vulnerable adult students, safeguarding the whole student body represents our primary duty.

It should be noted that, in line with the UCAS Criminal Convictions Good Practice Guide 2018, and the ICO recommendations, all applicants who accept an offer to study at UCS will be asked to disclose if they have any unspent criminal convictions via an email communication. Failure to do so this will generally be considered a very serious matter and is likely to lead to their application being rejected, or if admitted, to their registration at the College being revoked. Having a prior criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from being offered a place; this may depend, for example, on the nature, timing and relevance of the criminal offence in question. The College may request further information about the nature or context of an applicant's criminal record and refer to the Fitness to Study section below.

Where indicated in the UCS prospectus or website, specific programmes of study may involve regular access to children and/or vulnerable adults and applicants may



be required to undertake a DBS check. The College will send further instructions as part of the admissions process where this is the case.

#### 4.5 **Fitness to study**

4.5.1 UCS is committed to supporting and promoting the welfare of its students and is committed to the provision of a safe environment conducive to work, study and the enjoyment of a positive experience for all members of its learning community. The College/UCS has a duty to ensure all students can consistently and effectively undertake their studies in a way which does not put themselves, or other students and staff at risk of harm.

4.5.2 Students should be able to take an active part in and meet the requirements of their course, to live and work with others, and to conduct themselves in ways that do not have an adverse impact on other members of the College/UCS and the local community.

4.5.3 UCS works in line with the Academic Regulations and policies of its awarding bodies and aims to ensure that students:

- Can benefit from being members of the UCS community and can participate in all aspects of their programme of study for the required period, with a reasonable chance of successfully obtaining the award for which they are registered.
- Do not in any way prevent, hinder or disrupt the study or assessment activities of other students; staff in the discharge of their duties or academic pursuits; or visitors to the College/UCS from carrying out their lawful business.
- Do not place unreasonable demands on staff or other students
- Do not, as a consequence of their presence on campus, present an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Are in a position to behave professionally and engage satisfactorily in any elements of study or assessment which take the form of placements, particularly those taking place in a professional and/or work-based setting.

4.5.4 Concerns about a student or potential student's fitness to study may be related to, but not limited to:

- Non-engagement with current or prior learning
- Mental or physical health issues
- Health concerns without apparent insight into, or management of, these concerns
- Substance misuse
- Inappropriate behaviour towards others
- Aggressive, violent or threatening or sexually harassing behaviour
- An attitude towards the College/UCS that may put its name into disrepute, or current or previous defamatory action towards the College/UCS
- Failure to meet previous conditions placed on study with the College/UCS

4.5.5 Where concerns of the nature of those above become apparent, a panel consisting of the Director of Student Services (or if not available, another Senior Postholder)

and relevant Head of Department or Manager will meet to decide whether an applicant may be admitted to the College/UCS, or an existing student may continue.

- 4.5.6 UCS reserves the right to refuse admission, or to exclude an existing student, if the panel confirms the concerns or identifies significant risks. Any such action would be carried out in line with the Academic Regulations of the relevant Awarding Organisation where they apply to admissions decisions of UCS. The relevant Academic Regulations and policies would be followed in the case of a decision to exclude a student. The College/UCS reserves the right to share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies in order to ensure the safety of its students and staff and that of other organisations.
- 4.5.7 There may be occasions, particularly in the case of a long term mental health condition, in which adjustments are made to enable a learner to complete their UCS programme of study, for example on a reduced timetable or working from home.
- 4.5.8 Students and apprentices have the right to appeal against a decision not to be admitted to the College/UCS or allowed to continue at the College/UCS – see section 4.9.8 Academic Appeals, below.
- 4.5.9 Students with a Long-Term Health Condition should discuss this with their tutor and complete a Long-Term Health Condition notification form. This should be returned to the HE Team ([he@btc.ac.uk](mailto:he@btc.ac.uk)) following the instructions in the Extenuating Circumstances policy. Provision of evidence of this condition and its effect in the case of a flare-up means that no evidence is needed if a future claim for Extenuating Circumstances is submitted.

#### 4.6 Admissions Processes for Full-Time Students

##### 4.6.1 UCAS Process

UCS observes the procedure and deadlines for the handling of applications as set out by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and those of their associated partner HEIs.

Applications for admission to full-time HND and Degree courses are made through UCAS online at [www.ucas.com/students/apply](http://www.ucas.com/students/apply). Overseas and European students should also apply through UCAS in the same way as students residing within the United Kingdom.

##### 4.6.2 Deadlines

All applications for courses starting in September should be received by UCAS by the deadlines of

- 15 October of the previous year for Medicine and Dentistry
- 25 January of the same year for all other programmes

Applications made before the closing date are considered equally against the stated selection criteria and in the context of the number of available places. UCS may consider late applications where places are available. UCS works closely with associate partner HEIs regarding target numbers and reviews these numbers on a regular basis.

#### 4.6.3 **Communication with applicants**

Formal responsibility for acknowledgement of applications and communications of the outcome rests with UCAS. UCS and its associated partner HEIs also acknowledge receipt of individual applications and communicate directly with the applicant during the application process.

#### 4.6.4 **Disabled applicants**

UCS welcomes applications from students with physical or learning disabilities or difficulties. The College will make reasonable adjustments to help ensure that disabled applicants have full and equal access to our admissions procedures and courses. The judgement about an individual applicant's academic suitability will be kept separate from any consideration of the applicant's disability-related support requirements.

Applicants are invited to indicate their disability status on their application form and we strongly encourage applicants to disclose any disability. Where candidates choose not to disclose their disability this may make it more difficult, or in some cases impossible, for the College to make adjustments. Disabled applicants are also advised to contact the College's Additional Learning Support Team once an application has been submitted through UCAS to discuss any support requirements they may have in relation to the programme for which they have applied.

If any applicant feels that their disability has meant that they faced exceptional circumstances which should be taken into account by the College when considering their application, they should refer to the section 'Applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances' above.

#### 4.6.5 **International Applicants**

UCS welcomes applications from International students. Such applications will be processed in accordance with the guidance and requirements of UKVI to ensure students eligibility to study in the UK. This will include relevant document and identity checks. The Registrar (HE Admissions) will work with Bridgwater and Taunton College's International Team to carry out these eligibility checks.

#### 4.6.6 **Fraudulent Statement, Plagiarism and Omissions**

UCS and associate partner HEIs follow the UCAS procedures on fraudulent statements and omissions. Applicants should not omit any requested or relevant information, making any misrepresentation (for example, through plagiarism) or give false or misleading information at any point of the application process including after an offer is made. Should this occur UCS reserves the right to dismiss an application, withdraw an offer of a place and/or revoke registration.

The UCAS Similarity Detection Service processes all personal statements received in support of an application in order to identify statements that show similarity. Both the applicant and the College will receive notification from UCAS of any cases where a significant amount of potentially plagiarised material is identified. At the discretion of UCS, applicants who are identified by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service may be

given the opportunity to submit a new personal statement in support to their application.

## **4.7 Offers**

### **4.7.1 Conditional Offer**

A Conditional Offer means that UCS and its associated partner HEIs will offer an applicant a place providing certain conditions are met. Usually, conditions are based on the completion of outstanding qualifications. Other conditions may include criminal record checks, occupational health checks or work experience in a related field.

Each offer is specific to an applicant's individual qualifications and circumstances. Applicants must typically meet the conditions set by the College by 31 August of the application year, unless otherwise stated in the prescribed course or professional body requirements, even if the offer is deferred for entry to the following application year.

### **4.7.2 Unconditional Offer**

An Unconditional Offer means that the applicant has met the academic entry requirements and has been accepted onto their chosen programme of study subject to any criminal record or occupational health checks as required by specific courses (e.g. Nursing).

### **4.7.3 Unsuccessful Application**

Applicants will receive an unsuccessful response if UCS and its associated HEIs have decided not to offer them a place on the programme of study. Applicants can be unsuccessful for many reasons and should be aware that some programmes of study at the College receive more applications than the number of places available. Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining a place on their chosen programme of study will be notified of the reason for this decision.

### **4.7.4 Withdrawn Application**

An application may be withdrawn either by the applicant or by the College. In most cases if the College withdraws an application the reason will be displayed on UCAS Hub. The College reserves the right to withdraw an offer up to the point at which it has been accepted by an applicant. In cases where applicants are required to attend an interview as part of the application process applications may be withdrawn if a candidate fails to attend without making contact with the College, or if an applicant is unable to attend and an alternative date cannot reasonably be found.

### **4.7.5 Interviews**

Applicants may be invited for interview for a number of reasons. For some programmes an interview forms part of the selection process to provide each candidate with the same opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and aptitude for the programme of study.

Applicants with a non-traditional academic background including those applicants transferring from another university or college may be invited for interview, in such cases interviews are used as an opportunity to find out more about the applicant's qualifications, motivation and preparations for undertaking the programme of study refer to Student Transfer Arrangements for those students wishing to undertake an institutional transfer.

Interviews are also designed to ensure that an applicant understands the nature and demands of their chosen degree programme and provide an opportunity to visit the College, view facilities and meet members of the academic and support staff.

Some applicants (for example disabled applicants) may require adjustments at interviews to provide them with full and equal access to the process. The College is responsible for making reasonable adjustments where possible and will consult the Additional Learning Support Needs Team for further advice or information.

#### **4.7.6 UCAS Extra**

UCAS Extra runs from February until early July and gives applicants who are holding no offers a further opportunity to make an additional application or application. The College will declare to UCAS the programmes for which they will accept extra applications and these will be posted on the UCAS website at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

#### **4.7.7 Clearing and Adjustment**

The UCAS Clearing Scheme offers a final opportunity to applicants who have not secured a place by early August. The UCAS website contains further information on eligibility to enter the Clearing process. UCS reserves the right to review the UCAS tariff at clearing in line with any approved Awarding Organisation changes to linked courses at the relevant university.

The College will publish any vacant places on the UCAS website and the College website and may offer them to suitable candidates. Applicants are advised to contact the Registrar (HE Admissions) directly to enquire about possible vacancies.

#### **4.7.8 Confirmation**

Confirmation is the name given to the period in August each year when the College receives A Level and other UK and International qualifications for applicants who have accepted Conditional offers (some awarding organisations e.g. BTEC/ Pearson do release their results earlier in the summer). On the basis of these results, applicants who achieve the grades required by their Conditional offer have their place confirmed. Applications from those students who have not quite met the required grades may be reviewed and their places may be confirmed if there are places still available on their chosen programme of study.

#### **4.7.9 Feedback**

Unsuccessful applicants may wish to request feedback on the reason for the outcome of their application. All requests for feedback must be made in writing to the Registrar (HE Admissions) and signed by the applicant. Generally, where applicants

request feedback on why they have not been admitted, feedback will be given, via UCAS.

#### **4.7.10 Academic Appeal**

The College/UCS will consider all applicants fairly and effectively in line with the procedure outlined in this document.

Applicants who wish to challenge a decision to reject their application should refer to section 4.9.8 below and the UCS HE Academic Appeals Policy.

### **4.8 Part-time and Mature Entry**

UCS welcomes applications from a diverse range of students. The same principles and values that inform other UCS admissions also inform part-time and mature admissions. However, this policy recognises that there are specific and necessary differences in applying to UCS as a mature or part-time student. One key difference is that application to UCS as a part-time student is not through UCAS. Consequently, this section of the UCS Higher Education Admissions Policy identifies key areas of non-standard entry where alternative processes and procedures are required. Otherwise the standard policy applies.

#### **4.8.1 Mature Applicants (full-time study)**

Mature students who wish to study on a full-time basis should normally apply using standard UCAS procedures.

Mature students applying for full-time programmes are assessed on the basis of their UCAS form. An interview may also be offered as part of the entry process and this would be arranged through the Registrar (HE Admissions).

#### **4.8.2 Part-time Study – Direct Applicants**

Applicants for part-time programmes of study should apply directly to UCS rather than through UCAS by using the Application Form which can be found on the UCS website via the course link. This includes applications for Single Registerable Modules. Applicants are asked to provide proof of the qualifications required for the programme of study. Applicants will typically be invited for a short interview; they will be informed of the outcome of this and of any further conditions for entry requirements or employment relevant to the programme of study.

#### **4.8.3 Role of Admissions Staff for Part-Time Entry**

Management of the admissions process for part-time students rests with the Registrar (HE Admissions). All academic decisions are made by the Registrar (HE Admissions) and Head of the relevant curriculum area, Curriculum Manager or Course Leader.

#### **4.8.4 Entrance Requirements for Part-Time Entry**

Applicants who are uncertain about the qualifications accepted for part-time programmes should contact the Registrar (HE Admissions) in the first instance. They can offer an alternative programme for those applicants who do not have relevant formal qualifications but who can draw on equivalent work and life experience.

#### **4.8.5 Pre-Entry Guidance for Part-Time and Mature Students**

Impartial and confidential advice and guidance for candidates who are considering returning to education are available from the Information and Guidance Team. The service is available for those looking to study full-time or part-time. For more information applicants should visit the website at [www.btc.ac.uk](http://www.btc.ac.uk), email [info@btc.ac.uk](mailto:info@btc.ac.uk) or telephone 01278 441234.

#### **4.8.6 Deadlines for Entry**

Applications for part-time programmes do not follow the same UCAS deadlines and can be accepted later in the year with a recommendation for applications to be received by the end of August.

#### **4.8.7 Communication with Applicants**

Formal responsibility for acknowledgement of applications and communications of the outcome rests with UCS/ BTC who will acknowledge receipt of individual applications and communicate directly with the applicant during the application process.

#### **4.8.8 Disabled applicants**

Prior to application, candidates wishing to study part-time and who have individual needs are encouraged to discuss this with the Additional Learning Support Team at the College. This will not prejudice their application. Applicants with a disability or health related issue are strongly encouraged to notify the college as soon as possible through the direct entry application form.

Applicants to part-time programmes received by the College who indicate a disability or health related issues will be sent additional information about the support available to them and will be referred to the Additional Learning Support Team who will remain in contact with them if they are made an Unconditional or Conditional offer.

#### **4.8.9 Financial Support**

The College offers equivalent financial support to part-time students as for full-time students on a pro-rata basis. Information about the levels and kinds of support available and assessing eligibility for financial support can be found on the College website.

A range of specialist services is provided by the College through its Information and Advice Team, Additional Learning Support Team and Student Support Team who can support and assist those who wish to study on a part-time basis. These include arrangements to support those without formal qualifications or who have been out of

formal education for some time. To help widen access for such applicants the following support is available:

- Pre-entry information, guidance and support services relevant to applicants who identify as a mature student or who wish to study part-time
- Information and advice on pre-entry programmes to assist those without the necessary formal qualifications to progress onto a part-time or full-time programme
- Support with application, admissions and registration processes.

## **4.9 Offers**

### **4.9.1 Conditional Offer**

A Conditional Offer means that UCS/BTC and its associated partner HEIs will offer an applicant a place providing certain conditions are met. Usually, conditions are based on the completion of outstanding qualifications. Other conditions may include criminal record checks; occupational health checks or work experience in a related field.

Each offer is specific to an applicant's individual qualifications and circumstances. Applicants must typically meet the conditions set by the College by 31 August of the application year, unless otherwise stated in the prescribed course or professional body requirements, even if the offer is deferred for entry to the following application year.

### **4.9.2 Unconditional Offer**

An Unconditional Offer means that the applicant has met the academic and non-academic entry requirements and has been accepted onto their chosen programme of study.

### **4.9.3 Unsuccessful Application**

Applicants will receive an unsuccessful response if the College and its associated HEIs have decided not to offer them a place on the programme. Applicants can be unsuccessful for many reasons and should be aware that some programmes at the College receive more applications than the number of places available. Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining a place on their chosen programme of study will be notified of the reason for this decision.

### **4.9.4 Withdrawn Application**

An application may be withdrawn either by the applicant or by the College. The College reserves the right to withdraw an offer up to the point at which it has been accepted by an applicant. In cases where candidates are required to attend an interview as part of the application process applications may be withdrawn if a candidate fails to attend without making contact with the College, or if an applicant is unable to attend and an alternative date cannot reasonably be found.



#### 4.9.5 Interviews

Applicants may be invited for interview for a number of reasons. For some programmes of study an interview forms part of the selection process to provide each candidate with the same opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and aptitude for the programme of study.

Applicants with a non-traditional academic background including those applicants transferring from another university or college may be invited for interview, in such cases interviews are used as an opportunity to find out more about the applicant's qualifications, motivation and preparations for undertaking the programme of study.

Interviews are also designed to ensure that an applicant understands the nature and demands of their chosen degree programme or course of study and provide an opportunity to visit the College, view facilities and meet members of the academic and support staff.

Some applicants (for example disabled applicants) may require adjustments at interviews to provide them with full and equal access to the process. The College is responsible for making reasonable adjustments where possible and will consult the Additional Learning Support Needs Team for further advice or information.

#### 4.9.6 Confirmation

Confirmation is the name given to the period in August each year when the College receives A Level and other UK and International qualifications for applicants who have accepted Conditional offers (some awarding bodies e.g. BTEC / Pearson do release their results earlier in the summer). On the basis of these results, applicants who achieve the grades required by their Conditional offer have their place confirmed. Applications from those students who have not quite met the required grades may be reviewed and their places may be confirmed if there are places still available on their chosen programme of study.

#### 4.9.7 Feedback

Unsuccessful applicants may wish to request feedback on the reason for the outcome of their application. All requests for feedback must be made in writing to the Registrar (HE Admissions) and signed by the applicant.

#### 4.9.8 Academic Appeal

UCS will consider all applicants fairly and effectively in line with the procedure outlined in this document.

Applicants who wish to challenge a decision to reject their application should refer to the UCS HE Academic Appeals Policy.

Academic appeals which question academic judgement, without sufficient grounds or valid supporting evidence, shall not be considered.

UCS shall only consider academic appeals to an HE Admissions decision, which are based on one or more of the following grounds and on no other basis, providing there is evidence that is deemed sufficient and valid to support the claim:

- There is evidence of a material or administrative error in arriving at the decision
- The HE Admissions Policy was not followed, in a manner that could have resulted in a different decision if it had been properly followed
- The HE Admissions decision failed to take into account all qualifications held by the applicant, for which certificated evidence was supplied or has subsequently been provided
- If applicable, the RPL Policy was not followed, in a manner that could have resulted in a different decision if it had been properly followed.

If you are still unhappy with the outcome you may be able to refer your complaint to the relevant Awarding Organisation. If you are still dissatisfied, you may be able to raise the matter with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Full details of how the OIA works can be found on [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk).

## **5 Review of Policy**

- 5.1 This policy will normally be reviewed every two years and certainly within three years. Where appropriate, policies and procedures for the admission of students to undergraduate programmes of study may be revised in line with changes to the internal and external admissions environment. Any changes will be put forward for approval by the Senior Management Team Policy Review Group. This is a sub-committee of the Senate, the senior academic authority for HE at UCS.



University  
Centre  
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

## 6 Appendix – Student Transfer Arrangements

As required by the Office for Students, UCS publishes Student Transfer Arrangements on its website. The arrangements published are as follows and will be reviewed at the same time as the HE Admissions Policy is reviewed. The published statement is below.

### STUDENT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

We understand that sometimes a student changes their mind, or their circumstances change which means they wish to change their choice of degree or Higher Education provider. If this applies to you, we are fully committed to supporting you through this process.

#### Transferring into University Centre Somerset (UCS)

If you are a student wishing to transfer into UCS from another Higher Education provider, we would be happy to consider your transfer providing you meet the criteria below

- You meet our academic requirements for the course
- If appropriate, we will review any prior study or experience. You may need to provide
- a transcript of your progress from your current Higher Education Provider
- The Record of Prior Acceptance meets with the regulations of the awarding
- organisation
- There is space on the course

Please contact our Registrar (HE Admissions) via [he@btc.ac.uk](mailto:he@btc.ac.uk) to discuss your options and support your application.

#### Transferring out of University Centre Somerset (UCS)

If you are considering leaving UCS to another Higher Education provider, you should discuss this with your tutor in the first instance. You may be required to provide a transcript of your progress, the HE Team will be able to advise you on this, please contact them on [he@btc.ac.uk](mailto:he@btc.ac.uk)

#### Transferring within University Centre Somerset (UCS)

You may wish to transfer to another course within UCS if you consider your original subject is unsuitable. If you were considering changing, we would advise you to speak to the Course Leader of the course you are interested in – the criteria for Transferring into UCS above would apply.

#### Other things to consider

If you are thinking of changing course or institution there will be a number of things you will need to consider, especially if you are funded by the Student Loan Company (SLC) or currently live in university/college accommodation – for further advice contact the Registrar (HE Admissions) via [he@btc.ac.uk](mailto:he@btc.ac.uk)

#### Further Sources of Information and Advice:

The UCS HE Admissions Policy; The UCS HE Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy which can both be found via: <https://www.somerset.ac.uk/about-us/wider-information-set/>

[Changing or leaving your course | Undergraduate | UCAS](#)

[Student finance for undergraduates: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)