

UNIVERSITY CENTRE SOMERSET HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS POLICY

From 2025 entry until next revision

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

Relevant to students studying on a programme validated by University Centre Somerset, Pearson or an Open University

Students enrolled with any other partner university should refer to that university's policy.

Author: Dean of UCS & HE Registrar
Approved by: SMT
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1 Introduction

1.1 The University Centre Somerset (UCS) Higher Education (HE) Admissions Policy is written by the Dean of UCS and the HE Registrar and overseen by the HE Senate and Senior Management Team. It is supported by a set of Standard Operating Procedures for staff and broadly ensures UCS:

- Promotes fairness, consistency and transparency in recruitment and admissions practices.
- Formulates 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).
- Monitors the quality of Home and International student admissions and recruitment, ensuring integrity and alignment of processes with the UCS's strategic aims
- Promotes the dissemination of best practice in recruitment and admissions across UCS, to identify development and training needs for admissions staff and to ensure that these needs are met
- Promotes the Admissions processes in accordance with the HEI partners for franchised courses.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 UCS which is part of University Centre Somerset College Group (UCS College Group) 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.

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:

- UCS Academic Regulations
- Academic Regulations of relevant Awarding Organisation
- UCS Contextual Offer Statement
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

- UCS HE Student Protection Plan
- UCS HE Compensation and Refund Policy
- UCS HE RPL Policy
- Student Transfer Arrangements (Appendix 1)
- International Admissions Policy

2.2 UCS recognises that, 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 must pay back
- Grants which you do not have to pay back

For further information on financial support please visit 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 HE Registrar, who co-ordinates the admissions process for students applying through UCAS and the HEI Partners and liaises with the relevant bodies. The HE Registrar has responsibility for:

- Managing the admissions procedure
- Monitoring applications and the decisions made by Course Leaders/Deputy Heads of Department 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 or partner HEI if offer is given
- Supporting UCS 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 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. UCS requires the HE Registrar 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, UCS 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.

3.2.2 Consistency

To ensure constancy and fairness, the principles and procedures set out in this policy are followed for all programmes. UCS 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 Dean of UCS and/or HE Registrar.

4 Admissions Requirements

4.1 Selection Principles

UCS endeavours to ensure that the selection process provides equal consideration for applicants who apply by the relevant closing date. All selection decisions are made based on 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 HE Registrar based on 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 UCS'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 HE Registrar and Course Leaders should demonstrate flexibility where appropriate in response to individual applicants requesting adjustments to assessment methods.

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 to comply with UKVI regulations.

UCS as part of UCS College Group 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 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 UCS and UCAS websites and within our UCS Prospectus.

Applicants must satisfy the requirements of the course or Single Registerable Module (SRM) 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 SRM are advised to refer to the website www.somerset.ac.uk or to the HE Registrar to seek further guidance ucsadmissions@ucscollegegroup.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 several 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 HE Registrar 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 HE Registrar, 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 typically 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 recognises 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 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 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@ucscollegegroup.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 to assess and, as appropriate, recognise prior experiential learning, credits accrued via appropriate SRMs 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 HE 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 UCS Academic Regulation or Academic Regulations of the Awarding Organisation. Applicants are advised to check with the HE Registrar in the first instance.

4.4.6 **Contextual Offer Statement**

UCS is committed to providing equal opportunities for all applicants, as described in this UCS HE Admissions Policy and our Access and Participation Plan. As such we seek to recognise an individual's potential to succeed and flourish. To do this, we consider qualifications and experience in the context of each applicant's background. We make offers based on evidence that suggests a student's suitability to succeed on their chosen course of study. As such, where appropriate, we will consider making a contextual offer to study with us to recognise life experience and potential as well previous academic achievement.

There are several factors which we will consider as contextual data to fully understand an applicant's academic potential that academic qualifications alone may not be able to demonstrate. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- The applicant lives in a neighbourhood where the proportion of students going into higher education is low.
- The applicant completed their studies at schools/colleges where performance was below average and eligibility for Free School Meals was higher than average.
- The applicant is a care leaver
- The applicant is a young Carer
- The applicant is estranged from parents / carers
- The applicant is a mature student (over the age of 21) at application.
- Applicants seeking asylum, have limited leave to remain, are under 'humanitarian protection' or have been granted refugee status with indefinite leave to remain will be eligible to receive a contextual offer without having to meet other indicators. Please

note that this will require supporting evidence of current immigration status with documentation such as a Biometric Residence Permit, Home Office letters or a solicitor's letter

- Extenuating circumstances, for example if an applicant has been dealing with illness or bereavement that may have impacted their exam performance.

Please note this does not include Top-Up degrees (where the entry requirement is a level 5 qualification).

In some cases, an unconditional offer of study may be made where relevant experience and / or evidence can be produced to underpin an offer (in the case of mature students and extenuating circumstances).

For UWE validated qualifications the contextual offer policy for that organisation applies: <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/courses/applying/undergraduate-applications/contextual-offers>

Applicants should apply as normal through UCAS, ensuring that they complete the form accurately and in full. The application will be assessed against the standard entry requirements for the course by our admissions team with contextual offer considerations in mind.

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 UCS or partner HEI policies, please contact the HE Registrar to enquire about this.

4.4.8 Applicants wishing to reapply

Applicants who wish to reapply should contact the HE Registrar 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 considered 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

UCS 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 UCS 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. UCS may request further information about the nature or context of an applicant's criminal record and refer to the Suitability 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. UCS will send further instructions as part of the admissions process where this is the case.

4.5 Suitability 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. 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 UCS and the local community.

4.5.3 UCS works in line with its own Academic Regulations and policies and/or with the Academic Regulations and policies of its awarding bodies where appropriate 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 UCS from carrying out their lawful business.
- Do not place unreasonable demands on staff or other students
- Do not, because of their presence on campus, present an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Can 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 suitability 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 UCS that may put its name into disrepute, or current or previous defamatory action towards UCS
 - Failure to meet previous conditions placed on study with UCS
- 4.5.5 Where concerns of the nature of those above become apparent, a panel consisting of the Assistant Principal Student Experience (or if not available, another Senior Postholder) and relevant Curriculum Assistant Principal will meet to decide whether an applicant may be admitted to the 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 UCS reserves the right to share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies such as the BACP in order to ensure the safety of its students and staff and that of other organisations. There may be course specific considerations taken into account as part of the suitability to study process that may vary between courses.
- 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. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and will need to consider the course specification and curriculum.
- 4.5.8 Students and apprentices have the right to appeal against a decision not to be admitted to the UCS or allowed to continue at the 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@UCSCollegeGroup.ac.uk) following the instructions in the UCS HE 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.
- 4.5.10 Where an EHCP is present, an Early Annual Review meeting will be held in place of a Suitability to Study panel meeting.

4.5.11 Where a student or apprentice has also made an application to reside in the UCS's Student Accommodation, the Residential Manager will also attend the panel meeting and a suitability to reside consideration will be made as part of the process.

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 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. Overseas and European students should also apply through UCAS in the same way as students residing within the United Kingdom.

Students wishing to apply to study at UCS and are not intending to apply to other Universities/Colleges have the option to apply directly to UCS using the direct application link displayed on the course website pages or found [here](#).

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/or 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. UCS 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 UCS to adjust. Disabled applicants are also advised to contact the UCS 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 considered by UCS when considering their application, they should refer to the section 'Applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances' above.

4.6.5 International Applicants

UCS may consider 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 HE Registrar will work with UCS College Group'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 to identify statements that show similarity. Both the applicant and UCS 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/or 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 UCS 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.

4.7.3 Unsuccessful Application

Applicants will receive an unsuccessful response if UCS 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 UCS 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 UCS. In most cases if UCS withdraws an application the reason will be displayed on UCAS Hub. UCS 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 contacting UCS, 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 several 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 (Appendix 1) 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 UCS, 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. UCS is responsible for making reasonable adjustments where possible and will consult the Additional Learning Support 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. UCS 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.

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.

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

4.7.8 Confirmation

Confirmation is the name given to the period in August each year when UCS 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). Based on 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 HE Registrar 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

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, Mature and SRM Entry

UCS welcomes applications from a diverse range of students. The same principles and values that inform other UCS admissions also inform mature admissions. However, this policy recognises that there are specific and necessary differences in applying to UCS as a mature student. This section of the UCS HE 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 based on their UCAS form. An interview may also be offered as part of the entry process, and this would be arranged through the HE Registrar.

4.8.2 Part-time Study – Direct Applicants

Applicants for part-time programmes of study (if available) 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. 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 SRM Study – Direct Applicants

Applicants for an SRM mode 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/module links. Applicants are asked to provide proof of the qualifications required for the module(s) 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 module(s) of study.

4.8.4 Role of Admissions Staff for Part-Time Entry

Management of the admissions process for part-time students and SRMs rests with the HE Registrar. All academic decisions are made by the HE Registrar, Assistant Principal, Deputy Head of the relevant curriculum area or Course Leader.

4.8.5 Entrance Requirements for Part-Time Entry

Applicants who are uncertain about the qualifications accepted for part-time programmes or SRMs should contact the HE Registrar 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.

4.8.6 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.ucscollegegroup.ac.uk/ , email info@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk or telephone 01278 441234.

4.8.7 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.

Applications to study through an SRM mode of study do not follow the same UCAS deadlines and can be accepted through the academic year prior to module start. For further information on module start dates please contact HE Registrar in the first instance. For SRMs we recommend that we receive applications no later than 3 weeks prior to the start of the module to facilitate the necessary pre-admission checks. However, consideration should be given to the intended method of fee payment as if intending to apply for student finance, this may take long than 3 weeks.

4.8.8 Communication with Applicants

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

4.8.9 Disabled applicants

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

Applicants to part-time programmes or SRMs received by UCS 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.

4.8.10 Financial Support

UCS 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 UCS website.

A range of specialist services is provided by UCS 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 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 UCS 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 UCS 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 UCS 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 UCS. UCS 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 contacting UCS, 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 several 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 UCS, 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. UCS 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 UCS 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). Based on 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 HE Registrar 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 UCS 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 consider all qualifications held by the applicant, for which certificated evidence was supplied or has subsequently been provided
- If applicable, the UCS HE 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.

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's Policy Review Group. This is a sub-committee of the Senate, the senior academic authority for HE at UCS.

Appendix 1 Student Transfer Arrangements

As required by the Office for Students (OFS), UCS publishes Student Transfer Arrangements on its website. The arrangements published are as follows and will be reviewed at the same time as the UCS 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 (HE) 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 HE 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 UCS Academic Regulations or the Academic Regulations of the awarding organisation
- There is space on the course

Please contact our HE Registrar via HE@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk to discuss your options and support your application.

Transferring out of UCS

If you are considering leaving UCS to another HE 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@ucscollegegroup.ac.uk

Transferring within 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 several 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 HE Registrar via HE@ucscollegegroup.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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)