

International Office

International Admissions Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles which govern the organisation and delivery of the admissions process for new international students and gives International Office's role as expert advisor in this area.

2. Scope

All admissions of new entrant international students.

Academic Registry is responsible for the admissions processes pertaining to continuing international students, part-time international students or those undertaking research based programmes. These processes concur with those of the International Office.

3. Policy

International student admissions are governed by the following principles:

- That international admissions for new entrants are the responsibility of the International Office and will be delivered working in close partnership with other key University departments including Academic Registry and with Faculties.
- That the international admissions policy will adhere to and incorporate the University's Admissions Policy within all of its processes and procedures.
- That new entrant international students be provided with clear information and guidance on admission related areas either, at the time of admission or as part of the recruitment process, including the following:
 - Admissions policies and processes, including any variation for international students and processes for entry part-way through an academic year
 - Application deadlines and processes for considering applications
 - Classifications of disability to be published and arrangements for students with disabilities to be made available
 - Student classification for tuition fee purposes, tuition fees and other compulsory charges
 - Application fees
 - Payment deadlines, methods and refund procedures
 - Bursaries and their allocation criteria
 - Living costs

- How students who need a visa should go about securing one, signposting relevant organisations and sources of further information, advice and guidance
- Contact point(s) for enquiries
- Entry requirements, including English language proficiency
- Details of where students may need to satisfy UKVI requirements (including English language competency), in addition to the entry requirements set by the institution
- Details of pre-sessional courses or academic study skills courses that may be available, including the assessment methods for such courses
- That this information and guidance is provided to students through various mediums including the Admissions Handbook, the International Guide, regularly updated website pages, promotional materials and email communications
- That all mediums are updated regularly to reflect any changes to admissions policies and procedures and any changes to courses and / or entry requirements and immigration rules
- That all new entrants will be treated in a fair and equal way and will all have access to detailed and up-to-date information
- That information provided to all new entrants will clearly differentiate between the admissions processes for international students and UK and EU students where differences exist such as the need to attend an interview
- That immigration rules and regulations will be considered and integrated into all aspects of the admissions policy and procedures, ensuring, for example, visa processing times are factored in
- That all new international students receive up-to-date immigration information, including information on the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) if necessary
- That all staff employed by the University and involved in the recruitment and admissions of international students receive training on a regular basis to ensure their expertise in this area. Training will comprise of internal sessions and external sessions delivered by organisations such as UKCISA and NARIC. The International Office will offer training and guidance to staff in other departments and Faculties as required
- That the International Office work closely with Academic Registry to ensure compliance with UKVI regulations

Key changes

There have been a number of key changes

- **Under 18's policy** – conduct risk assessment, parental consent, UK guardian. (in line with Government Policy and UKVI Policy)
- **5 year rule** - length of time already spent in the UK should be checked as they are limited to the amount of time they can spend in the UK on a student / Tier 4 visa.

Generally students can only study for a maximum of **5 years** at NQF/QCF Level 6 and above (Undergraduate and Postgraduate), except:

- for students joining a Masters course at an HEI after studying on an Undergraduate course that is 4 or 5 years long - in which case the limit is raised to **6 years** for studying both the Undergraduate and Postgraduate course
 - for students studying on a PhD at an HEI. If the time limit exceeds **8 years** after the PhD, no further leave will be granted
 - for students studying on Architecture, Law and Music
- **Academic Progression**
For students already studying in the UK on a Tier 4 visa, Universities must confirm they are making Academic progression when they apply to join a new course.

Academic progress is made when a student moves upward from one NQF Level to another, for example, from a Foundation course (NQF/QCF Level 3) to an Undergraduate course (NQF/QCF Level 6). It may be possible for a student to move sideways to study on a complementary course at the same level.

For those students who apply for a course at the same or lower level, the University needs to be satisfied that it can justify this progression.

For those students who have previously studied in the UK and failed their course and are applying for a course at the same level are interviewed with the Admissions Manager and the Course Tutor, to determine their eligibility for the course.

- **Fraudulent Qualifications Checks**

Any suspected fraudulent documents should be investigated by checking with the issuing body, NARIC, British Council and the issuing institution. If it is suspected that a student may have submitted fraudulent documents steps are taken to ensure confirmation is received to prove or disprove the suspicion,

If it is confirmed that the qualification is fraudulent, the student will be withdrawn and details maintained on the Suspected Fraud Register

- **Bank Statements**

Bank statements are requested as evidence of funds for students from South Asia, Africa and those in the UK, e.g. bank statement, bursary letter, bank loan letter. For funds held in a bank account the bank statement should be in the name of the student, parents or legal guardian and must show that the funds have been held for 28 consecutive days with the bank statement no later than 1 month before the time of application. Where the fund is in the name of a parent/legal guardian, the student must provide a copy of the birth certificate showing the name(s) of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) **or** certificate of adoption showing the names of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) **or** court document naming legal guardian. The document used must be the original legal document or a notorised copy. A letter of consent Bank loans and bursary letters should be in the name of the student. (**Annex 16** provides the letter that should be sent to students requesting this information.)

Students who are applying from **Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, India, Iran, Pakistan Philippines or Sri Lanka**, must use a financial institution that is accepted by the UKBA. Details on the institutions accepted can be found at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/policyandlaw/immigrationlaw/immigrationrules/appendixp/>

- **English Language mapping**

We seek to map in-country qualifications by assessing the syllabus and course information against IELTS. A Board Group discuss the mapping carried out and a decision made as to whether it can be added to the accepted list of qualifications. The University will seek to test a sample of students upon on arrival and again at the end of their first term to ensure the students have the correct standard of English language.

- **Issuing of double CAS**

Students who have been offered a Pre-Sessional English language course should be issued with a CAS only for the length of the Pre-Sessional English and if successful they can then be given a second CAS for the Academic course

- **Monitoring of no show data**

No show data analysed to identify areas of visa refusal and

- **English Language Tests**

We test students in high demand areas using our own BCU English language test, developed by the CfAS (similar to IELTS and fully trained staff deliver and assess the test, both overseas China, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Nigeria and in the UK.) Tests are typically administered at a partner university or at a venue that is vetted and deemed secure. Candidates must show a photo ID and confirmation email from the University with their student ID number on it before they are allowed to sit the test. A random sampling of the tests is carried out by a second marker and second marks independently assigned.

- **Pre Sessional English Language programmes**

To support students who narrowly miss their entry requirements, the course has been extended to 10 week and 6 week courses is held in the UK both in the summer and winter. All international students coming onto these programmes must hold a relevant SELT. The CfAS run these programmes and assess students at their end of programme exam. If students pass their programme they may proceed with their new visa application for their academic programme. If a student narrowly misses the relevant score in one band they are given an additional 2 week intensive programme and are tested again at the end. If a student fails more than one band, they are offered the one year Foundation Certificate in Education for Academic Purposes (FCEAP).

- **In- country Pre Sessional English Language programmes**

Offering a number of In-Country Pre-Sessional English language programmes to support students who wish to have direct entry into their academic programme or students who already have a SELT but want additional English language classes before joining a UK Pre-Sessional programme. These in-country programmes are run in China (in 3 separate locations), Taipei, Bangkok and Hanoi. CfAS run these programmes and send staff overseas to teach and then assess students at their end of programme exam.

- **CAS automation**

All CAS are produced directly through SITS in batches to account for greater accuracy

