

## **INTRODUCTION**

Keele University strives to be a place where learning, living and working is a positive experience for all. The University operates an admissions policy which ensures equality of opportunity to all applicants who have the potential and motivation to succeed regardless of background. The University considers not only an applicant's academic achievements but also looks for evidence of knowledge and understanding of the discipline applied for, interests, responsibilities, and ability to cope with the challenges of Higher Education.

The University is committed to providing a professional and transparent admissions process. This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in both the [Schwartz Report](#) and the guiding principles outlined by the UK Quality Code for HE Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access November 2018 and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students. The Code's expectation is that: "HE providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully... The application process should be inclusive and allow all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background".

The Policy ensures that the University works within the guidance for Higher Education providers published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) which enables prospective students to have access to accurate and reliable information and allows them to make informed decisions about higher education.

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

- i) enquirers, applicants, parents and advisors with clear information regarding the University's admissions processes;
- ii) a framework for all staff involved in recruitment, selection and the admissions process to ensure consistency and transparency within the admissions process ensuring the interests of applicants are protected.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's [Student Terms & Conditions](#).

This Policy is in compliance with the following legislation:

- Equality Acts
- All relevant Data Protection Laws
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- UK Immigration Rules including the UK Borders Act 2007 and The Border, Citizenship & Immigration Act 2009
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013
- The Consumer Protection (Amendment) Regulations 2014

### **1.2 Scope**

This policy applies to all Undergraduate, Apprenticeship, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Postgraduate Taught and Research applicants. The policy is for the use of applicants and staff and those who are considering making an application to the University and only applies up to the point that an applicant becomes a registered student and commences their programme of study.

## 2. POLICY

### 2.1 Application Process

#### Undergraduate

- i) Applications for full time undergraduate programmes at Keele should be made normally through UCAS (including direct entry to year 2 and final year entry). Specific guidance on applying to Keele is on the [University website](#).
- ii) All applications received by the UCAS standard application deadline<sup>1</sup> (excluding Medicine) will be guaranteed equal consideration in line with UCAS guidelines.
- iii) Applicants who apply after the UCAS standard application deadline (excluding Medicine) will be considered on an individual basis if there are still places available on the relevant programme of study.

#### Apprenticeships

- i) Applications for Apprenticeship programmes will be made either via a link provided by an employer or as detailed on the programme pages of Keele's website.
- ii) Modes of attendance and start dates will be clearly publicised on the University's website.
- iii) Applicants will be required to fulfil all the entry requirements including both the employer interview (where applicable) and any academic and non-academic requirements.

#### Postgraduate Taught and CPD

- i) Applicants for postgraduate taught programmes should normally be made direct to the University via the online application form.
- ii) Modes of attendance and start dates will be clearly publicised on the University's website.

#### Postgraduate Research

- i) Applicants for postgraduate research programmes should normally be made direct to the University via the online application form.
- ii) In most cases applicants will be expected to submit a research proposal unless applying for a specific research project. For further information see: [‘How to Apply – Postgraduate Research’](#).
- iii) Applications will only be considered where the University can offer supervision in the subject area of the applicant's intended research.
- iv) A research programme can be started any time of the year in discussion with the relevant Research area.

### 2.2 Consideration of applications

Admissions activities are carried out by the central Admissions Team, Academic Schools and Research Institutes. Admissions Tutors in the Academic Schools remain involved in the admissions process and are responsible for setting entry criteria and selection processes.

- i) Standard entry requirements will be published on the University webpages for all programmes. Possession of the appropriate qualifications for entry upon any programme of study shall not entitle any person to be admitted to the University and the University reserves the right to accept or reject any applicant for admission.
- ii) For all programmes, the selection process may take into account:

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<sup>1</sup> The initial UCAS deadline is 15 January

- The applicant's potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study
  - Actual or predicted academic or professional qualifications and grades
  - Applicants that have followed a non-standard educational route will be considered on an individual basis. The University recognises that standard selection measures may not enable an applicant to demonstrate their suitability and alternative evidence may be requested e.g. relevant work experience may be accepted in lieu of formal academic qualifications
  - Relevant experience (where applicable)
  - Applicant's personal statement
  - Academic Reference(s). Those applicants who have been out of education for over 3 years may be requested to provide a reference from an Employer
  - Performance at an interview (where applicable)
  - Responses to selection questionnaires
  - Qualifications in English language
- iii) Applications are considered individually and holistically, and meeting typical entry requirements does not therefore automatically guarantee an offer of admission especially in relation to programmes that are oversubscribed.
- iv) Where an applicant is unsuccessful with their application to their original choice of course, the University may consider the applicant for an alternative relevant programme.
- v) Admissions decisions<sup>2</sup> will normally be made within 15 working days where applications are complete<sup>3</sup>. However, where programmes are oversubscribed there may be a delay but applicants will be notified if this is applicable.

### **2.3 Deferred Entry**

The University generally<sup>4</sup> welcomes applications from applicants who intend to defer their entry for a year. Applicants should check with the Admissions Office, particularly if they wish to defer for more than one year.

### **2.4 Admission of Under 18s**

The University does not normally consider applications from any applicant under the age of 17. All successful applicants are expected to evidence academic maturity in their application.

Applicants who are under 18 should be aware that they are applying to study in an adult environment and there may be a small number of limitations for them at the University while they are under 18.

The University requires parental/carer consent for any student who will be under 18 at the time of enrolment. However, if a prospective student is living independently and can evidence their independent living status the University will normally not require parental consent. Students under the age of eighteen whose parent/carer does not reside in the UK are required

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<sup>2</sup> A decision may include an invite to interview

<sup>3</sup> Where applicants have included all required information on their application, e.g. completed and pending qualifications, personal statement, references and relevant supporting documentation.

<sup>4</sup> There a small number of courses that do not accept deferrals, this information will be published on the relevant course pages on the website.

to provide details of a UK based guardian who can act as a contact in case of emergency. For more information please see our [Under 18 Policy](#) and our [Safeguarding Policy](#).

## 2.4 Advanced Standing and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

### **Advanced Standing (Direct Entry)**

For the majority of programmes, the University will normally consider an application for direct entry onto year 2. Admissions will need to be satisfied that the applicant has covered similar content at level 4 to the first year of Keele's programme. In order to make this assessment the University will need to see a transcript of the applicant's studies and also details of the programme and module content. An academic reference from the applicant's previous Institution will be required and the personal statement should reflect reasons for the transfer.

Direct entry on to the final year is considered on a case by case basis and applicants are encouraged to contact the Admissions Office. For more information see our [Transfer guidance](#).

### **Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL)**

The University has a [policy](#) on recognising prior learning that allows applicants to apply for exemption from taking certain modules on a programme of study if an applicant has previous relevant qualifications or experience. This could include learning gained through previous study or through work experience. It is subject to the criteria set out in the policy and any restrictions on the use of prior learning on your programme.

## 2.6 Readmission to Study

Former students who wish to be readmitted to study at the University following a formal withdrawal from their study at Keele will need to reapply. It should be noted that readmission is not automatic and will depend on the circumstances of the individual. There are a number of reasons why a student may have needed to withdraw from their studies at Keele, these include:

### **Withdrawal due to an Examination Board Decision or other University policy**

Those students applying for readmission after being withdrawn by the University, either following the decision of an Examination Board or under another University policy, will not be readmitted to the same programme, nor normally be readmitted to a programme in the same School and in some cases will not be readmitted to the University.

### **Withdrawal due to ill health**

Those students that have been withdrawn or withdrew from Keele due to ill health may be invited to a panel meeting and/or required to obtain a certificate from the Keele Health Centre to confirm that they are well enough to resume their studies. Further advice regarding this can be obtained from Student Services.

### **Withdrawal due to Academic Misconduct or Disciplinary Case**

Those students that have been withdrawn following an Academic Misconduct or Disciplinary case will need to provide evidence that their outcome letter did not permanently exclude them from the University.

### **Withdrawal due to non-payment of fees**

Those students that have been withdrawn due to non-payment of fees, may be entitled to resume their studies once any outstanding fees are paid in full (students should also comply

with the requirements of the [Charging and Payment of Student Fees Policy](#)). In some cases a student may be required to provide evidence of their ability to pay any future fees.

### **2.7 Re-applications**

The University will consider re-applications on an individual basis and reserves the right to use information from a previous application in assessing a re-application.

### **2.8 Applicants with Disabilities**

The University welcomes applications from applicants with disabilities or additional support needs. Keele is committed to giving academic opportunities to all appropriately qualified applicants, irrespective of disability, wherever practical. The academic selection process is the same for all applicants.

Those applicants with a disability or a long term health condition (including physical or mental health conditions), are encouraged to notify the University as soon as possible, by contacting support.dds@keele.ac.uk to enable the University to discuss support arrangements.

Where applicants have declared a disability on their application form, this information will be passed to our Disability Support & Inclusion Team in order for them to discuss support requirements where appropriate with the applicant. This process is separate from the selection process.

### **2.9 Applicants who have submitted extenuating circumstances**

Special consideration will be given to those applicants whose education has been significantly disrupted or disadvantaged through health or personal problems, disability or other circumstances. Applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence to the Admissions Manager or Head of Admissions.

### **2.10 Re-marks**

Applicants who have applied for a re-mark or appeal with an awarding body should notify the University immediately. Whilst every effort to reconsider applicants whose grades are amended as the result of a successful re-mark, it may not always be possible to hold an offer open pending the outcome of an appeal. In the event that a re-mark is successful and the course applied to is full, an applicant may be offered an alternative course or entry year.

### **2.11 Applicants with Criminal Convictions**

As part of its duty of care to staff and students, the University asks applicants who have accepted an offer about any relevant unspent or pending criminal convictions. Assessment of any information supplied is undertaken by a panel of experienced staff and the process is managed by the Head of Admissions (Undergraduate or Postgraduate). Having a criminal record does not necessarily prevent applicants from studying at the University. This will depend on the nature of the course applied for and the circumstances of and background to the offence.

For certain programmes there are separate requirements for applicants to be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, in order to determine fitness to train and practise. Further details may be found on the relevant academic Schools' websites.

### **2.12 Fitness to Practise**

Students registered on a programme of study regulated by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) involving practical education in relation to patients, pupils, clients or

service users (hereafter referred to as clients) are subject to specific expectations around their conduct, behaviour and in some cases health. These expectations are set out in the requirements of the PSRB which accredits the programme of study. For more information see the relevant School's Fitness to Practise process or the University's [Fitness to Practise Code of Practice](#).

Applicants invited for the selection events will be asked to sign a declaration stating that they consider themselves fit to practise and will be required to undertake an Occupational Health Assessment. It should be noted that in some cases the University is able to admit an applicant but the practical education provider is unable to accept an applicant due to its internal or external regulations. In these cases the University would have to abide by the judgement of the placement provider as the applicant would be unable to successfully complete the programme as the practical element would not be completed.

### **2.13 Fee Assessment**

The University charges different levels of tuition fees depending whether a student is classified as being 'Home' or 'International'. The central Admissions Office has responsibility for determining an applicant's fee status (that is, whether the applicant satisfies the eligibility criteria for paying fees at the Home rate or not). Fee status is determined in accordance with the relevant United Kingdom legislation and is consistent with the guidance issued by the United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs ([UKCISA](#)).

Where the information provided on the application does not enable the Admissions team to make a decision regarding fee status, the applicant will be sent a fee assessment form for completion.

### **2.14 Student Visas**

The UK government operates a [points based immigration system](#) for all overseas students. The University is licensed with the Home Office as a Tier 4 Sponsor. To apply for a Tier 4 Visa, applicants must have a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS). A CAS for an incoming student will only be issued when all the conditions of their offer of a place are fulfilled at the University, including payment of a required deposit and agreement from the Immigration Compliance Team that they are suitable for Tier 4 Sponsorship. An offer of a place does not automatically guarantee that an applicant will receive a CAS if the Immigration Compliance Team become aware of an applicant's ineligibility for a student visa. For more information see the [Immigration Compliance pages](#).

### **2.15 The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)**

For some international applicants an ATAS clearance certificate will be required to study postgraduate level or specific integrated undergraduate courses in **certain subject areas**. At

Keele University, this will mainly apply if undertaking a Research degree. If an [ATAS certificate](#) is required, the Research Area or Academic School will inform applicants during the admissions process.

### **2.16 Tuition Fees and Funding**

There is an expectation that applicants will have sufficient funds to pay tuition fees and living expenses during their period of study, and applicants are asked to give details of their funding arrangements at the point of application. Applicants are bound by the University's [Charging and Payment of Student Fee Policy](#). Sponsored applicants should be aware that

should their sponsor fail to pay the required fees, the applicant will become responsible for payment.

For International applicants and for some programmes a non-refundable deposit is required at the point at which the offer of a place is firmly accepted. In these cases, the amount paid will be deducted from the total tuition fee due at the start of the academic programme.

### **2.17 Changes to or Discontinuation of Courses**

The University will use all reasonable efforts to deliver the Programme in accordance with the Course Information or Programme Specification documentation. However, the University undertakes a continuous review of its teaching and research provision to ensure Programmes are of a high quality, up to date, relevant and are consistent with the requirements of regulatory bodies.

The University would only look to make changes to programmes during the admissions cycle in exceptional circumstances. If the University makes changes it will:

- aim, where possible, to keep the changes to the minimum necessary and will notify applicants of the change as soon as possible and work through any questions that applicants may have on their position.
- take reasonable steps to minimise the impact of any major modification by providing reasonable and proportionate support which could include helping applicants find an alternative programme or institution or by offering the applicant the chance to withdraw from the Programme.

### **2.18 Feedback and Appeals**

- i) Admissions staff will normally record the reason(s) why an applicant has been unsuccessful and this will be communicated to the applicant as part of the decision.
- ii) We recognise that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to ask for more detailed feedback. In this context, feedback is defined as the communication from the University to an applicant who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place on their original programme. A request for feedback must be made in writing by the applicant and not through a third party
- iii) If an applicant has cause for concern about the way their application has been handled and is not satisfied with the initial feedback received, they may use the Complaints procedure to inform the University of their concerns through a formal channel. The purpose of the [Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy](#) is to enable applicants to raise matters of concern regarding the admissions process without risk of being disadvantaged and for the University to resolve these concerns quickly and fairly.
- iv) An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.

### **2.19 Responsibility of the applicant**

- i) Prior to applying, applicants should familiarise themselves with both the admissions process and entry requirements for their chosen programme of study. This information will be detailed on the programme and School pages of the University website, as well as on UCAS 'course search'. This may include more detail regarding the selection process and any additional non-academic conditions. These conditions usually apply to programmes that have professional requirements and may include Disclosure & Barring and Fitness to Practise clearance.
- ii) The University expects that an applicant will provide full and accurate information in order to be considered for admission. The University reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place

if an application is found to be fraudulent or key information has been purposefully omitted. If it is established that the application is not fraudulent the application will then be considered using the same academic selection process as all applications, and will be assessed using our normal admissions practices and policies.

- iii) The University does not tolerate hostile, aggressive or otherwise inappropriate behaviour by applicants, or their representatives, to University staff, other applicants or students. Such behaviour will be viewed seriously and may result in their offer being rescinded.
- iv) All students are required as a condition of their registration to accept the terms of the Student Terms and Conditions.

## **2.20 Record keeping duties**

The University will retain admissions documentation in line with Keele's Records Management Policy and Retention Schedule.

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all applicants as outlined in section 2.1.
- 3.2 The central Admissions Team is responsible for ensuring that the University has sufficient policies, guidance and training available in order to provide a fair and transparent Admissions process and complies with external legislation as listed in section 1.1.
- 3.3 The University Executive Committee and the Student Finance Group are responsible for reviewing and monitoring the policy. Any questions regarding the policy should be addressed to the Director of Admissions, Jo Ladwa, at [j.l.ladwa@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.l.ladwa@keele.ac.uk)

## **4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Admissions Policy is underpinned by a number of policies and processes designed to ensure fairness and transparency within its admissions process. These include:

- Applicants who are under 18
- Applicants who disclose a Criminal Conviction
- Fitness to Practise Code of Practice
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Admissions Interview Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Code of Practice for Research Degrees
- University Regulations
- Student Terms and Conditions
- Student Protection Plan
- University Transfer Guidance

## **5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION**

- 5.1 Review Consultees: This Policy will be reviewed and agreed by the University Executive Committee (or its sub-group with delegated authority) before final approval.



5.2 Final Approval: The Policy will require final approval from Council.

5.3 Publication: This Policy will be published on the website under the Policy Zone. The University's Admissions web pages will maintain prominent links to this Policy as appropriate on both external and internal facing pages.

## 6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

<b>Document Name</b>	Admissions Policy
<b>Owner</b>	Jo Ladwa
<b>Version Number</b>	2.1
<b>Equality Analysis Decision and Date</b>	TBC
<b>Approval Date</b>	08/09/2020
<b>Approved By</b>	Professional Services Group (sub-group of UEC)
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	08/09/2020
<b>Date of Last Review</b>	03/12/2012
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	08/09/2023
<b>Related University Policy Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Applicants who are under 18</li> <li>ii) Applicants who disclose a Criminal Conviction</li> <li>iii) Recognition of Prior Learning</li> <li>iv) Admissions Interview Policy</li> <li>v) Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy</li> <li>vi) Records Management Policy</li> <li>vii) Code of Practice for Research Degrees</li> <li>viii) University Regulations</li> <li>ix) Student Terms and Conditions</li> <li>x) Student Protection Plan</li> <li>xi) University Transfer Guidance</li> </ul>
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	