ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

At Keele University we are committed to the provision of high-quality fair and transparent admissions policies and procedures for all our applicants. We define an interview as any discussion, where the primary purpose is to determine the suitability of an applicant prior to an admission decision.

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for the management of applicant interviews. It is intended to help both University staff and applicants understand the framework in which interviews are conducted at Keele. Interviews can be stressful for applicants, and this policy aims to ensure that the experience is fair, professional and welcoming, giving the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate potential.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all interviews conducted to assess the suitability of applicants to Keele University undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, and which result in a formal decision on an application to study at the University. Informal meetings, either on or off campus, with university staff, where prospective applicants can discuss the University's courses, entry requirements and their suitability for selected programmes, are not considered interviews in the context of this policy.

2. POLICY

2.1 Rationale for interview

For the majority of courses, the university does not require candidates to be interviewed as part of the admissions process. However, for some courses an interview is required as part of the decision-making process, this may be due to relevant legal or regulatory guidelines. Where an interview is compulsory, this will be made clear to applicants on the relevant online course page. Interviews may take place on an individual basis and/or within small groups and all will be carried out remotely (via Teams) unless otherwise stipulated.

Applicants with non-standard qualifications, or mature applicants who do not meet the standard entry requirements, may also be invited to attend an interview in order to demonstrate their relevant knowledge, skills, motivation to study at the institution and interest in the specific subject.

2.2 Prior to the interview

Interviewers employed by the University must ensure their mandatory online training in Equality and Diversity is up to date. It is essential that at least one member of the interview panel has completed this or similar training.

It is best practice for all formal interviews intended to select applicants to be conducted by at least two interviewers, and where possible have an appropriate gender and ethnic balance. However, in certain circumstances, the University may allow a single interviewer. This would need to be agreed in advance by the Director or Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions and the Microsoft Teams auto-generated transcription of the interview must be saved and stored for a period of two years.

Guidance should be provided to shortlisted applicants on the interview process prior to the interview. Any additional selection criteria or tests should relate to the requirements of the course and agreed in advance of the interview process with the Director or Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions.

The interview process should be designed to be as inclusive as possible. Applicants are invited to provide details prior to the interview of any disability or medical requirements that should be taken into consideration to allow any reasonable adjustments to be made. Interviewers are encouraged to seek advice from Disability Support and Inclusion team where appropriate.

2.3   Scheduling

Interviews should be scheduled as flexibly as possible to minimise the chance of applicants being unable to complete this part of the selection process.

Main cycle
In the Admissions 'main cycle' successful shortlisted applicants will be provided with a number of interview dates to choose from on the Applicant Portal. They will be given a specific date by which they must respond to confirm their attendance, and details of what will happen if they fail to book, confirm, or otherwise decline the invitation to interview. In addition, they may not be offered an alternative interview date if they fail to attend an interview without good reason or if they did not provide sufficient notice of being unable to attend.

Clearing
In Clearing, applicants will normally be interviewed at the time of their enquiry if the applicant has telephoned into the Inbound Call Centre on Level 3 Results Day or in the days immediately thereafter (interviewer availability permitting). Where applicants have applied via other means, the applicant will normally be contacted by email and/or telephone. Applicants applying in this way are expected to be available for interview at short notice and will be provided with a date and time for interview. Alternative interview times may not be offered if an applicant does not provide sufficient notice of being unable to attend or fails to attend the interview.

Those applicants that are still under 18 must be interviewed by 2 members of staff or via Teams and the Microsoft Teams auto-generated transcription of the interview must be saved and stored for a period of two years.

Those applicants invited to an interview should be supplied with more detailed information, with reference to the process and the criteria.

2.4   During the interview
The interviewer(s) should ensure that the identity of the applicant has been verified as per the 'Interview Guidance' published on the Keele website. Applicants will not normally be accompanied into an interview by a third party unless such a request has been made in advance of the interview date and is considered as a reasonable adjustment. Requests for reasonable adjustments for applicants with specific requirements must be formally evidenced. Interviewers are encouraged to seek advice from the Disability Support and Inclusion team.

At the start of the interview, applicants should be given the following information:

- the structure of the interview, including the number and format of the questions;

- when applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions;

- that candidates are made aware that the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems during an interview or any other third-party assistance is strictly forbidden and if found to be utilised will result in an automatic rejection;

- that candidates must not share specific questions from their interview with other people or internet services.

Interviewers should also ensure the following:

i) questions at interview should not be (a) discriminatory in nature or intent (an applicant's age and/or family status should not be asked about where this might influence the decision whether to offer a place) or (b) refer to choices made at other Higher Education institutions (e.g. where the applicant has applied);

ii) be aware of the differences in educational experience that applicants may have and should not assume that an applicant has progressed via a particular educational route or pathway. Any queries regarding the equivalence of an applicant's qualifications should be discussed with Admissions prior to interview;

iii) that all questions cannot be construed as discriminatory and any humorous remarks should be appropriate;

iv) that all questions should be consistent between interviews to ensure fairness and must be drawn up in advance and allow for some probing and exploration of skills and ability within a defined set of parameters. Schools are encouraged to use score sheets to ensure consistency;

v) that candidates can demonstrate that they are not receiving any assistance during the interview, for example facilitating a 360-degree view of their location for interview;

vi) candidates who are unwell or experiencing circumstances that may adversely affect their performance at interview must inform the interviewer(s) at the start of the interview. As stated in the 'Applicant Interview Guidance', declarations after the event will not be considered.

The interview should not be used to provide the primary evidence of linguistic ability for the purpose of making a course offer but may be used to provide context for admissions decisions.

2.5   Interviewing applicants aged under 18
Interviewing staff should be mindful of the potential sensitivities of interviewing minors and be aware that the university has a duty of care to prospective students. The interview should be in an appropriate location, and all aspects of the interview process should comply with the University's policy on Safeguarding.

2.6   After the Interview
Interviewers should ensure that:

i) they follow the agreed procedures with regard to recording a decision or threshold score post-interview via eVision and any comments regarding an interviewee's performance are noted appropriately;

ii) applicants should be informed at the end of their interview when and how they will be notified of the outcome of the interview. Interviewers should not make verbal offers of a place to applicants unless previously agreed with the Deputy Director of GSRA. Where an applicant has applied through UCAS the University will communicate its decision via their UCAS Hub, all other applicants will be notified through an offer letter;

iii) there is an audit trail from the start to the end of the process and should be kept for all applicants,

documenting clearly all steps that were taken. This should normally be included on the eVision applicant record;

iv)   all those involved in interviewing applicants should be aware of the Admissions Feedback Procedure and Appeals Policy in order to direct applicants appropriately, if required;

v)   storage of interview notes or score sheets should be kept in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule: (https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/policyzone20/studentandacademicservices/records-retention-schedule.pdf).

2.7   Feedback

The University will endeavour to provide applicants with appropriate feedback (see Admissions Feedback Procedure and Appeals Policy).

Any interview records compiled are subject to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Any written notes of the interview can be requested by applicants following an interview.

3.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all applicants as outlined in section 1.1. The Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions and the Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries are 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 the appropriate external legislation.

The University Executive Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the policy. Any questions regarding the policy should be addressed to the Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions, Jo Ladwa, at j.l.ladwa@keele.ac.uk

4.   RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

- Admissions Policy
- Applicants who are under 18
- Faculty/Course Interview Guidance
- Applicants who disclose a Criminal Conviction
- Fitness to Practise Code of Practice
- 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

Review Consultees: This Policy will be reviewed and agreed by the University Executive Committee before final approval.

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

Document Name	Admissions Interview Policy
Owner	Deputy Director GSRA
Version Number & Key Amendment	Version: 4.0 - Interview policy includes additional information regarding remote interviews
Equality Impact Assessment Form Submission Date	26/11/2025
Approval Date	09 December 2025
Approved By	University Executive Committee
Date of Commencement	04 December 2012
Date of Last Review	09 December 2025
Date for Next Review	09 December 2028
Related University Policy Documents	• Admissions Policy • Applicants who are under 18 • Faculty/Course Interview Guidance • Applicants who disclose a Criminal Conviction • Fitness to Practise Code of Practice • 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
For Office Use – Keywords for search function	