

# UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK

## ADMISSIONS POLICY

### Admissions Principles

1. University Campus Suffolk (UCS) is committed to ensuring an inclusive approach to people aspiring to higher education and thus we aim to provide higher education to everyone with the potential to benefit. We accept students with a wide range of educational experiences and recognise a variety of qualifications.

### Aims

2. We aim to:

- Welcome breadth of study and experience
- Promote and actively encourage increasing participation in higher education from under represented groups including those with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, mature people and applicants with vocational qualifications.
- Welcome applications from students who come from families new to higher education and encourage this through our widening participation activities.
- Ensure students have sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding where particular subjects are required.
- Actively promote equality and diversity in our admissions processes.

### Transparency

3. UCS is committed to operating a transparent admissions policy. UCS's website and printed publications will make available clear information on admissions principles and procedures and criteria for each course or programme. We are committed to providing clear, consistent, easily understandable and accessible information regarding entry requirements, selection procedures, conditions of offer and fees which will support students to make an informed decision about their course.

4. Offer levels are reviewed annually and published in the UCS prospectus, UCAS website and in other recognised publications.

5. Feedback on admissions decisions is available to applicants on request.

### Consistency

6. All admissions decisions are taken in line with UCS's Admissions Aims and the procedures set out in this document. We acknowledge that some procedures may vary to meet the particular

requirements of some subject areas but they are all informed by the underlying principles of transparency, consistency and fairness.

7. UCS requires departments to provide the Marketing and Admissions Office with the necessary information to publish course information/entry profiles for each course to be made available via UCAS and UCS's own publications/websites.

8. The Head of Admissions will issue 'Guidelines for Admissions Tutors' and all staff involved in the administration of admissions and those involved in selecting and interviewing applicants undertake regular training to ensure they are up to date with relevant changes in legislation and qualifications as well as UCS policy and practice.

### **Monitoring**

9. UCS regularly monitors and reviews its admissions policies and procedures so that they are fit for purpose. An Executive sub-group reviews and agrees offer levels and entry requirements on an annual basis.

10. The Recruitment Monitoring Group meet regularly throughout the year to review all admissions and recruitment activities.

### **Admissions Criteria**

11. Admissions staff will be expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual candidates. In exercising their judgement, admissions staff must operate in a way that is consistent with UCS's Admissions Aims. Admissions selectors treat each application to UCS individually and when assessing an application for undergraduate study, admissions selectors will normally take a range of criteria into account when making offers, including:

- Academic ability and potential as shown in the qualifications section on the application form, for example, AS and GCSE grades
- Predicted or actual A level grades, BTEC Nationals or equivalents are a key indicator of academic potential for undergraduate level study.
- The Personal Statement and Reference provide important supplementary indications of ability, motivation and potential, as well as information about personal circumstances and social and cultural context. These are read carefully and are taken into account in reaching a decision.
- Related work or voluntary experience showing commitment to a chosen career path (particularly important for courses with a vocational route)
- Extenuating circumstances, whereby circumstances beyond the student's control have caused the student to perform less well in his or her coursework or examinations than he or she might otherwise have been expected to do.

- Portfolio/audition/interview performance where applicable.

12. In order to comply with the requirements of relevant professional bodies, applicants to certain vocational or professional courses may be required to pass a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and/or to demonstrate medical fitness to practice prior to being admitted. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply when they are made an offer of a place.

13. When assessing an application for postgraduate study, admissions selectors will normally consider:

- Applicants who hold a good first degree or an equivalent qualification
- Evidence of relevant personal, professional and educational experience.

14. Post registration professional courses require applicants to have prior academic study or experience at the appropriate professional level.

### **Entry Requirements**

15. In order to ensure that applicants for admission are appropriately qualified for their programme of study and to ensure high standards of fairness and consistency, UCS maintains a record of minimum entry requirements for all courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. All admissions staff will be required to adhere to these regulations.

16. This information will be used in UCS publications such as online and hard copy UCS prospectuses, and UCAS publications.

17. Applicants to DipHE, Foundation Degree or Honours Degree courses, who are under the age of 21, will need to fulfil *both* the general minimum entry requirements detailed below and any specific course requirements as detailed in our prospectus, on the UCS website, or in the UCAS entry profiles on the UCAS website.

18. It is normally expected that applicants will have had a two-year experience of post-16 study.

19. Applicants over the age of 21 should see the paragraph entitled ***Mature Applicants***.

### ***Honours Degree courses – minimum entry requirements***

20. In order to ensure sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding we normally require applicants to have achieved the equivalent of two 6-unit awards or one 12-unit award, for example Advanced GCE or equivalent.

21. Certain courses do insist on a particular level of performance in a subject at GCSE, A level or other examinations. Where particular subjects will not be considered, these will be specified e.g. General Studies.

22. Equivalent awards include BTEC or OCR Nationals, the 14-19 Diploma (Advanced or Progression award) CACHE Diploma, Vocational A level (double award) and Access Courses.

***Diploma of Higher Education/Foundation Degree - minimum entry requirements***

23. Generally, applicants will be required to have achieved the equivalent of one 6-unit award for example Advanced GCE or equivalent together with 3 GCSEs at grade C or above. Equivalent awards include 1 Vocational A level or BTEC Nationals.

24. DipHE Nursing applicants will be required to have 5 GCSEs at grade C or above including English and Maths.

***Postgraduate courses – minimum entry requirements***

25. In order to ensure sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding we normally require applicants to hold a good first degree or an equivalent qualification. Evidence of relevant experience will also be considered by Admissions selectors.

**International Baccalaureate, Scottish, Irish and other Qualifications**

26. We welcome applications from candidates with a wide range of qualifications, including Scottish Highers, the Irish Leaving Certificate, and the International Baccalaureate. For further information about how your qualifications equate to a particular course's requirements, contact the Admissions Office or UCAS.

**Key Skills**

27. Key Skills are not a mandatory requirement but could be included within any points offer. Evidence of wider key skills outcomes in personal statements is useful to our Admissions Selectors when deciding whether to make a conditional offer.

28. For some courses, the achievement of Level 2 Adult Skills for Life in Numeracy and/or Literacy will be acceptable as an alternative measure of capability for candidates who do not have GCSE grade C in Mathematics and/or English Language.

**English Language**

29. All students are expected to be able to understand and express themselves in both written and spoken English. Students whose first language is not English will be expected to undertake a recognised English Language test in advance of commencing a UCS course.

30. Applicants must have competence in English language and a Grade C GCSE or an equivalent qualification is normally required.

31. The British Council runs an International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) in many countries which students from overseas can use to check language proficiency. The minimum IELTS accepted by UCS is 6.0 for undergraduate courses and 6.5 for postgraduate courses. Other recognised tests include: the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate (C), the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (B), TOEFL (550 paper-based test or 213 computer-based test).

### **14-19 Diploma**

32. UCS welcomes applications from students studying Diploma qualifications and considers the Progression, Advanced and Extended Diplomas to meet the minimum level required for study at UCS. Depending on which UCS course the student applies for and which Diploma they are studying for, UCS may require specific Additional Learning options, or in some cases additional qualifications. In certain cases, specific passes in GCSE subjects may be required. In order to obtain further information visit [www.ucs.ac.uk](http://www.ucs.ac.uk).

### **Accreditation of Prior Learning**

33. We recognise that experience counts and offer the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of (Certificated) Prior Learning (APL) as processes that allow applicants to gain recognition for skills or qualifications gained at work or elsewhere. APEL and APL can help the applicant gain credit towards a wide range of qualifications and may reduce the period of study time necessary to obtain their chosen award.

### **Entry to Second or Third Year of Programme**

34. Applications to the second or third year of an undergraduate programme will be considered. Applicants will be expected to have the standard entry requirements for the course as well as the appropriate number of higher education credits.

### **International Students**

35. UCS welcomes applications from international students. International students must have entry qualifications equivalent to the general requirements for admission in accordance with NARIC equivalences. The Admissions Office can research and advise on the equivalence of qualifications where requested.

### **Mature Applicants**

36. UCS welcomes applications from people over the age of 21, with or without formal qualifications and we offer a flexible admissions policy which takes into account life and work experience. Applicants will usually need to provide us with evidence of successful recent study in relevant subjects, or relevant professional qualifications or experience. Applicants with no recent experience of studying may be advised to take an Access course or other preparatory study first. UCS offers a science foundation year that leads to progression to science-based courses including Sport & Exercise Science, Nutrition & Human Health and Bioscience.

### **Deferred Entry**

37. We recognise the advantages that some students can gain from a 'gap year', and our Admissions Office is happy to discuss deferred entry with applicants. If an applicant wants to apply to UCS but defer entry until the following year, they should indicate this in their application. It is also recommended that they outline briefly on the personal statement their reason for choosing deferred entry. Applicants will usually be considered on the same basis as applicants for the current year of entry and receive correspondence from UCAS and UCS during the application timetable for that year.

### **Criminal Convictions**

38. UCS aims to provide a supportive, positive and safe environment for learning and teaching. For this reason all applicants will be required to declare any relevant criminal convictions. The relevance of criminal convictions depends upon the nature of the course. It is important to note that having a criminal conviction **does not** automatically prevent an applicant from being accepted on a course. And for the majority of courses, only offences against the person of a violent or sexual nature, or offences concerned with commercial drug dealing or trafficking, have to be declared.

39. There are however some very necessary exceptions if the course brings the student into contact with children or vulnerable adults when a full Criminal Records Bureau disclosure (including the disclosure of spent convictions) will be required. From November 2010 applicants will be also be legally required to register with the Vetting and Barring Scheme which is administered by the Independent Safeguarding Authority to monitor all individuals who want to work or volunteer with vulnerable people. Full details of UCS's policy is available on our website.

40. The following advice is given to applicants:

- Remember that only relevant criminal convictions have to be declared – check the specific entry requirements for the course.
- If applicable, be honest about your criminal convictions on application and enrolment forms.
- Information is treated in the strictest confidence and is shared only with appropriate staff on a need to know basis.
- If a criminal conviction is not declared and subsequently becomes known, this will be treated as a Student Disciplinary matter and could result in withdrawal from the course.

### **Interviews/Visit Days**

41. All undergraduate applicants are invited to a series of Visit Days which will normally be held at the campus of application. This provides an opportunity to meet our staff and students, and to see the facilities and campus for oneself.

42. Applicants to Art and Design courses will be invited to a portfolio review and applicants to the Dance course to an audition. Applicants to the courses in Nursing, Midwifery, Radiography, Operating Department Practice and Social Work will be invited to attend a selection day. Applicants to the Counselling, Engineering, Construction, PGCE/CertEd courses will be invited to attend an interview.

43. For other courses, it is not normally required to interview applicants. One to one discussions with a tutor are available on request.

44. Where courses have a selection procedure such as interviews or auditions, applicants will receive details of the selection procedure in advance to ensure sufficient time for any preparation. Applicants with additional needs are invited to stipulate any additional requirements on their 'reply to interview' form.

### **Pre-entry Study Skills**

45. UCS is committed to supporting students to enable them to succeed in their studies. Free Pre-entry Study Skills courses are offered to our applicants throughout the year to assist them in preparing for study at UCS.

### **Progression Accords**

46. UCS is committed to the practical support of any and all individuals who wish to progress to higher levels of education for which they are suitably qualified. Progression Accords provide an effective way for Further Education Colleges, Schools and Diploma Consortia to work together in a way which facilitates greater understanding of learners about the choices available to them at a higher education level.

### **Additional Support Needs**

47. UCS welcomes applications from students with additional needs and will make every reasonable effort to meet their needs to enable them to study at UCS. It should be noted however that the provision of reasonable adjustments mechanisms will not enable every prospective student to be able to access any course. Where specific competencies are assessed within a course, students with particular disabilities may not be able to demonstrate the competencies.

48. Applications from students with disabilities and/or additional needs are considered on their academic merits in line with applications from all students. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their likely additional support requirements with UCS as soon as possible in the application process to ensure that early consideration can be given to any arrangements that may need to be put in place. Ideally, we aim to put such arrangements in place before study starts. UCS, through its Student Support department, is committed to providing on-going support with the focus on providing accessible services and supporting students to complete their courses as independently as possible.

## **Offers**

49. We usually express offers on a tariff point basis and will take into account qualifications taken and points accumulated across both years of post-16 study.

50. Within any offer, a pass at a particular grade and/or in a particular subject may be required, or tariff points from a particular subject may be limited.

51. The making of an offer of a place commits UCS to a contract with the applicant. Therefore only appropriate Admissions Selectors are permitted to make formal offers to applicants.

## **Withdrawal of a Course**

52. UCS shall only withdraw a course if it is impossible to provide the course through serious unforeseen circumstances or if the institution fails to recruit a satisfactory cohort such that the quality of the student experience cannot be maintained or the course is not economically viable.

53. In the event of a course or programme having to be withdrawn or discontinued for any reason, or in the event of significant changes being made to the programme, UCS undertakes to notify students personally by telephone, and to provide assistance in helping to secure an alternative place either with UCS or elsewhere.

## **Feedback to Applicants**

54. Applicants who are rejected are given feedback on request. If an applicant requires feedback on an unsuccessful application, this should be in writing to the Admissions Office. This request will then be passed to the appropriate Admissions Selector. UCS will not enter into discussion relating to the outcome of individual applications with anyone other than the applicant themselves.

## **Complaints**

55. Concerns that UCS's admissions principles and procedures have been incorrectly implemented may be raised through the UCS Complaints Procedure.

## **Questions about this policy**

56. Any questions about UCS's Admissions Policy should be directed to the Admissions Office:

University Campus Suffolk  
Admissions Office  
Waterfront Building  
Neptune Quay  
Ipswich  
IP4 1QJ