

Admissions Policy

2016 Entry

1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate admissions at Newcastle University. It is intended to provide information about our admissions policies and procedures to applicants and potential applicants, to their advisers and family members, and to staff of the University.

1.2 The policy is underpinned by procedural guidelines issued to admissions tutors and postgraduate selectors from time to time.

1.3 Other related policies and procedures¹ are:

MBBS Admissions Policy (for admissions to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree)

School of Dental Sciences Admissions Policy

Admissions Policy for Applicants with Disabilities

English Language Policy

Policy and Procedures for Admitting Students Under 18

Policy on Credit Transfer and the Recognition of Prior Learning

General Entrance Requirements (contained in the Undergraduate Progress Regulations)

Postgraduate Entrance and Admissions Requirements (contained in the University's

Postgraduate Taught Progress Regulations; Regulations for Research Masters Degree

Programmes (excluding MPhil programmes); and Master of Philosophy Progress Regulations;

and Doctor of Philosophy Progress Regulations)

Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Criminal Convictions Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions

Procedure for Dealing with UCAS Applications Identified through UCAS' Similarity

Detection Service

The Single Equality Scheme.

Ethical Policy for the Acceptance of Gifts and Donations: Major Gifts

1.4. The policy relates to admissions for entry in the academic year 2016-17. It will be reviewed annually in the Summer Term.

2. Institutional Context

The University is committed to widening participation and fair access. It wishes to encourage able, highly-motivated and enthusiastic students of all ages, and from all backgrounds and contexts, to apply to its degree programmes.

¹ If you wish to obtain any of the policies and procedures listed, please telephone 0191 208 3333 or enquire online at www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries.

3. Responsibility for Admissions

- 3.1 The University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (URAC) is responsible for overseeing and monitoring delivery of the University Student Recruitment Strategy and progress against targets and Key Performance Indicators.
- 3.2 URAC has delegated to the University's Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (UGRAMC) responsibility for the development and review of undergraduate admissions policy, and for ensuring that policies and procedures comply with relevant discrimination legislation.
- 3.3 URAC has delegated to the University's Postgraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (PGRAMC) responsibility for the development and review of postgraduate admissions policy, and for ensuring that policies and procedures comply with relevant discrimination legislation.
- 3.4.1 Responsibility for setting the criteria against which applications are to be considered lies with Boards of Studies for each individual degree programme. English language entry requirements for all programmes are reviewed and confirmed annually by Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience/Graduate School Committees.
- 3.4.2 Responsibility for applying those criteria in order to make decisions on applications lies with undergraduate and postgraduate selectors appointed by Heads of Academic Schools, or by delegation to nominated school or central admissions staff.
- 3.5 Responsibility for determining the number of offers to be made to applicants relative to the number of places available on programmes of study rests with undergraduate /postgraduate selectors (appointed by Heads of Academic Schools) in consultation with Deans of Undergraduate/Postgraduate Studies.
- 3.6 Responsibility for staff training and development in recruitment, selection and admissions lies with the Head of Recruitment and Admissions.
- 3.7 Responsibility for communications with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), including the transmission of selectors' decisions to UCAS, is the responsibility of the central Admissions Office².
- 3.8 The central Admissions Office is responsible for providing statistical information to enable the University to monitor numbers of undergraduate applications, offers and acceptances within each application cycle. The provision of statistical information about postgraduate applications, offers and acceptances is the responsibility of the Planning Office.
- 3.9 Overall responsibility for the monitoring of applications, offers and acceptances lies with the Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (UGRAMC) and the Postgraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee (PGRAMC), reporting to URAC, Executive Board, Senate and Council. Monitoring of these elements for equal opportunities purposes is the responsibility of the UGRAMC and PGRAMC, reporting to the University's Diversity Committee for information, and to University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee for review.

² For the purposes of this policy, 'central Admissions Office' includes staff who process undergraduate and postgraduate applications in the Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate; in the School of Medical Education; and in the School of Dental Sciences

4. Programme Information

- 4.1 Information about individual programmes and the entrance requirements which guide selection is provided in the Undergraduate Prospectus and Postgraduate Prospectus and other publicity documents. The Newcastle University central website will have the most up to date information at any given time³.
- 4.2 Every effort will be made to ensure that all published material and statements are accurate and provide information which will enable applicants to make informed decisions. This information shall include tuition fees, availability of financial support, dates of terms and any additional costs incurred on the programme.
- 4.3 Applicants holding an offer will be notified in writing as soon as possible before a programme's expected start date if there are any significant changes to the programme of study.
- 4.4 The University makes all reasonable efforts to deliver the programmes of study and research opportunities described on its website and in printed prospectuses. It may be required on occasion to suspend, discontinue or combine programmes of study (for example because a key member of staff leaves the University or there are too few applicants for a programme). In such cases, applicants will be informed in writing at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.5 It may sometimes be necessary to close a programme to new applications if the programme has too many applicants. In the case of undergraduate programmes (except for Medicine and Dentistry), this will not be before the UCAS 'equal consideration' deadline of 15 January.

5. Selection – Undergraduate Admissions

- 5.1 The University accepts a broad range of qualifications and combinations of qualifications for entry to its programmes of study, including vocational and Access qualifications and a wide range of qualifications offered by international applicants.
- 5.2 All applications received by the relevant UCAS deadline are to be given equal consideration. This means that in some subjects, because of limits to the number of places available, some or all applications may be held until after the relevant deadline for consideration in a 'gathered field'.
- 5.3 Offers of places to applicants are to be made, within the constraints of the number of places available, on the basis of individual academic achievement, ability and potential to succeed on their chosen programme of study. This is regardless of age, religion or belief, race, ethnicity, gender, being trans gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, or disability. Exceptionally, it may not be possible to make offers to applicants with a disability in cases where the adjustments that would be needed to make a programme of study accessible to a particular applicant are demonstrably unreasonable within the terms of the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.4 Applicants are expected to disclose information about any disability, including mental health, that would help the University to identify and provide help with support needs.

³ www.ncl.ac.uk

- 5.5.1 Admissions decisions are to be based, within the constraints of the number of places available, on professional judgement of applicants' individual academic achievement, ability and potential, taking into account all of the information presented in applications and applying established entry criteria in a consistent manner.
- 5.5.2 It follows, therefore, that it is the responsibility of applicants and referees to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the University of any changes or corrections to the original application.
- 5.6 Some degree programmes have particular criteria for assessment of applicants other than entry grade requirements. Admissions tests, portfolios or auditions are examples. Such requirements will be set out in the entrance requirements for individual degree programmes.
- 5.7 For UK-domiciled undergraduate applicants only, contextual information relating to participation in Higher Education and educational factors is provided to admissions tutors to help them identify potential where this is not obvious from examination grades predicted or achieved.
- a) For this purpose, applicants' postcodes of domicile are used to identify applicants who live in a neighbourhood which has a low rate of participation in higher education.
- b) Information, where available, about average public examination performance in a given year of the school(s) or college attended by an applicant is provided to show the relative performance of the school(s) or college against the national average and to set the individual's predicted grades in context.
- 5.8 Admissions tutors may also take account, when making a judgement about achievement, ability or potential, of other contextual factors that are disclosed and have affected or could affect an applicant's attainment. These include personal circumstances, opportunities for extra-curricular activities and personal development, parental experience of higher education, disabilities and involvement in special schemes or programmes (such as the University's PARTNERS Programme and the Realising Opportunities Project).
- 5.9 As part of our commitment as an accredited Buttle UK institution, applicants who indicate that they have been in care will be offered the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues or concerns with a Student Recruitment Officer in advance of their arrival.
- 5.10 In assessing individual applications, admissions tutors are to follow the specific procedures which apply to specific groups (eg. applicants with disabilities, PARTNERS applicants etc.) as set out in the relevant documents (see 1.3 above). For example, they are to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to enable disabled applicants to engage in the same or equivalent application procedures as other applicants without disadvantage.
- 5.11 In any given admissions cycle, the terms of conditional offers made to applicants will not normally differ significantly from the entry requirements published in advance in respect of the admissions cycle concerned. Any necessary amendments to typical entry requirements which take place during the admissions cycle will be published on the University's central website.
- 5.12 Where entry requirements for an undergraduate degree programme are expressed as a range of grades (eg AAA-ABB), each offer will be determined on an individual basis, taking account of an applicant's profile. Account also has to be taken of the broader competitive context and the relative merits of each applicant within the whole group of those who apply. It is not possible

therefore to advise enquirers whether they will receive an offer, or of the offer they are likely to receive within a range, before their application has been considered. Subjects and qualifications being taken, predicted grades, contextual data, and information in the personal statement and reference all contribute to an individual's profile.

- 5.13 Unless a particular A or AS level unit is necessary for entry to a course, unit grades will not normally be included in offers to undergraduate applicants.
- 5.14 Admissions tutors have discretion to make conditional offers which differ from the typical entry requirement, if in their judgement the typical entry requirement would not be appropriate because of the particular circumstances of an applicant.
- 5.15 For certain programmes, unconditional offers may be made to selected students before the outcome of their entry qualifications is known.
- 5.16 Admissions tutors are responsible for ensuring that prospective students are appropriately qualified for the degree programmes to which they are admitted. This may sometimes mean that it is not possible to include certain subjects, or a combination of subjects, in an offer of a place where the admissions tutor considers that they do not provide an appropriate preparation for the degree programme concerned.
- 5.17 Where it is judged that an applicant is not appropriately qualified for the programme applied for, an application may be considered for entry to an alternative programme or stage.
- 5.18 Applicants who do not fully meet the terms of conditional offers may nevertheless have a place confirmed during Confirmation, subject to the availability of places. In considering such applicants, admissions tutors may take into account factors such as unit grades, overall performance (which may include performance at interview) and personal or educational circumstances which may have affected attainment.
- 5.19 Where an admissions tutor decides, after taking all relevant factors into account, that an applicant should not be made an offer, the reason or reasons for the decision are recorded. This information is used for audit and monitoring purposes.
- 5.20 The University reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers, but will treat each case on its merits.

6. Selection – Postgraduate Admissions

- 6.1 For postgraduate admission, applicants should normally hold a recognised undergraduate degree level qualification or hold other qualifications and/or have relevant experience approved by the relevant dean of postgraduate studies.
- 6.2 Where a programme has a deadline for application, all applications received by that deadline are to be given equal consideration, and where no deadline exists selectors shall make conditional, unconditional or reject decisions at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.3 Offers of places to postgraduate applicants are to be made, within the constraints of the number of places available, on the basis of individual academic achievement or relevant experience, ability and potential to succeed on their chosen programme of study. This is regardless of age, religion or belief, race, ethnicity, gender, being trans gender, marital or

family status, sexual orientation, or disability. Exceptionally, it may not be possible to make offers to applicants with a disability in cases where the adjustments that would be needed to make a programme of study accessible to a particular applicant are demonstrably unreasonable within the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

- 6.4 Applicants are expected to disclose information about any disability, including mental health, that would help the University to identify and provide help with support needs.
- 6.5.1 Admissions decisions are to be based, within the constraints of the number of places available, on professional judgement of applicants' individual academic achievement or relevant experience, ability and potential, taking into account all of the information presented in applications and applying established entry criteria in a consistent manner.
- 6.5.2 It follows, therefore, that it is the responsibility of applicants and referees to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the University of any changes or corrections to the original application.
- 6.6 Where practical, postgraduate selectors shall interview shortlisted postgraduate research applicants seeking admission to doctoral degree programmes.
- 6.7 Final offers of a place made to postgraduate research applicants shall be made with the involvement of more than one member of academic staff who have relevant experience and for whom training in selection shall be available. Offers of places for postgraduate research at the University shall only be made where appropriate resources are available to support the proposed programme of study.
- 6.8 Some degree programmes have particular criteria for assessment of applicants other than entry grade requirements. Admissions tests, portfolios, research proposals or auditions are examples. Such requirements will be set out in the entrance requirements for individual degree programmes.
- 6.9 In assessing individual applications, admissions tutors are to follow the specific procedures which apply to specific groups (e.g. applicants with disabilities, or those who do not meet the University's minimum entry standard of IELTS 6.5 in English Language etc.) as set out in the relevant documents (see 1.3 above). For example, they are to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to enable disabled applicants to engage in the same or equivalent application procedures as other applicants without disadvantage.
- 6.10 In any given admissions cycle, the terms of conditional offers made to applicants will not normally differ significantly from the entry requirements published in advance in respect of the admissions cycle concerned. Any necessary amendments to typical entry requirements which take place during the admissions cycle will be published on the University's central website.
- 6.11 Postgraduate selectors have discretion to make conditional offers which differ from the typical entry requirement, if in their judgement the typical entry requirement would not be appropriate because of the particular circumstances of an applicant.
- 6.12 For certain programmes, unconditional offers may be made to selected students before the outcome of their entry qualifications is known.
- 6.13 Postgraduate applicants who do not fully meet the terms of conditional offers may nevertheless have a place confirmed during confirmation, subject to the availability of places. In

considering such applicants, postgraduate selectors may take into account factors such as module grades, overall performance (which may include performance at interview) and personal or educational circumstances which may have affected attainment.

- 6.14 Where it is judged that an applicant is not appropriately qualified for the programme applied for, an application may be considered for entry to an alternative programme or stage.
- 6.15 Where a postgraduate selector decides, after taking all relevant factors into account, that an applicant should not be made an offer, the reason or reasons for the decision are recorded. This information is used for audit and monitoring purposes.
- 6.16 Postgraduate applicants will be informed promptly of an offer of a place at the University with information on how they notify the University if they wish to take up their place.
- 6.17 Advice will be available for postgraduate applicants who request a deferred entry to the programme or who do not achieve the conditions of their offer.
- 6.18 The University reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers, but will treat each case on its merits.

7. Confidentiality and Declaration of Interest

- 7.1 All individuals involved in the admissions process are to observe the relevant regulations and principles of ethics, confidentiality and data protection.
- 7.2 Any member of staff who has personal connection with or other interest in an individual applicant is to declare that interest to his or her line manager who will determine how the application is to be considered.
- 7.3 Representations on behalf of candidates made other than in the application will be given such weight, if any, as is appropriate under this Admissions Policy. Any perceived improper pressure from any person, whether employed by the University or not, will be disregarded and reported in the first instance to the Senior Undergraduate/Postgraduate Admissions Manager.

8. Fraud

- 8.1 Applicants suspected of providing, or found to have provided, false information shall be referred to UCAS if their application was originally submitted through that service.
- 8.2 The University reserves the right to cancel an application and withdraw any offer if it is found that the application contains false or misleading information.
- 8.3 The Academic Registrar may exclude from the University students who are found to have gained admission through the provision of false or misleading information, or through failing to disclose information that would have materially and adversely affected the determination of the application for admission. A student so excluded shall not have an automatic right to a full refund of tuition fees.

9. Feedback

- 9.1 The competitive nature of admission to many of the University's degree programmes means that many good applications are unsuccessful. For most subjects, the University does not

provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants automatically, but will provide written feedback to unsuccessful applicants who submit a written request.⁴

- 9.2 Feedback will be provided to an applicant only, not to any third party, unless an applicant has given specific permission in writing for the third party to act on his/her behalf.
- 9.3 The University will not enter into discussions with applicants about the academic judgement behind decisions on applications.
- 9.4 The University maintains an Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure.⁵
- 9.5 No applicant who requests feedback, or complains about or appeals against the decision of an admissions tutor, shall be disadvantaged in any way in any future applications to the University as a result of the feedback request, complaint or appeal.

10. Queries about this Policy

- 10.1 Any undergraduate queries about this policy should be directed to the Senior Undergraduate Admissions Manager, Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate, Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU.
- 10.2 Any postgraduate queries about this policy should be directed to the Senior Postgraduate Admissions Manager, Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate, Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU.

Lucy Backhurst, Head of Recruitment and Admissions

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions Policies were consolidated and approved by University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (via Chair's action) October 2015

⁴ Requests for feedback from applicants to **undergraduate programmes** should be made to Undergraduate Admissions, Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, with the exception of requests for feedback on decisions for Medicine and Dentistry. For Medicine, requests should be made to: Faculty Undergraduate Office, School of Medical Education, Newcastle University, Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4HH. For Dentistry, requests should be made to: School of Dental Sciences, Newcastle University, Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4BW.

Requests for feedback from applicants to **postgraduate programmes** should be made to the Postgraduate Admissions Service, Newcastle University, King's Gate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU

⁵ Available from 0191 208 3333 or online at www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries.