

# **Code of Practice**

## **Part I – Recruitment & Admissions**

**1. The University will only admit applicants whom it deems to be appropriately prepared for postgraduate research study at the University.**

**1.1. The University will admit applicants who are believed to have the potential to complete their chosen programme of research within the appropriate time.**

**1.2. The University has clear minimum entry requirements which all successful applicants are required to satisfy.**

**1.2.1. Research applicants will be expected to:**

- be a recognised graduate and to have attained a standard at least equivalent to that of a good Honours Degree in a subject related to that of the proposed programme of study or research *or*
- have passed a qualifying examination in such a subject at a standard equivalent to Level 3 and at a time and subject to such conditions (which may include attendance for an appropriate programme of study) as may be prescribed by the board *or*
- have been deemed qualified for admission as a candidate by the Board.

**1.2.2. Applicants will also be expected to have a sufficient level of English language competence and to demonstrate it through the achievement of a recognised English Language qualification. The University will make overseas applicants aware of the English Language qualifications, and the levels of achievement, it deems as meeting its minimum English Language requirement.**

**1.3. The University will verify that new students have met its entry requirements before commencing their programme.**

**2. The University will ensure that its admission policy, procedures and entry requirements are clear and transparent.**

**2.1. The University will provide a clear explanation of the admission processes to prospective and new applicants. In doing so, the University will make clear where, within the institution, the responsibility lies for each part of the admission process.**

Information is provided, on both central and departmental web pages, about the University's admissions policy, its entry requirements and the admission process. Information on the admission process and departmental contact details is also provided in the printed prospectus. The University will publish

its policies, procedures and entry requirements in the relevant prospectus and on its web site.

**2.2. The University will ensure that materials are designed so they are appropriate for the range of potential applicants.**

**3. The University will ensure that its admissions procedures are fair and applied consistently throughout the institution.**

**3.1. The University will ensure that its policies and procedures in respect of access, recruitment and admission, are fair and in accordance with its Equal Opportunities policy.**

The University's Equal Opportunities policy states that "*The University of Sheffield is committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to the promotion of equality of opportunity, for students and prospective students, in all its functions*".

**3.2. The University will consider applications from prospective disabled students on an academic basis in the first instance, and according to standard admissions procedures. Discussions with regard to additional support requirements will be kept separate from the process of academic selection.**

The University will consider the academic merit of applications from disabled students according to its standard selection procedures. Applicants to whom an offer is made will subsequently be assessed for additional support needs and will be asked to supply information regarding any such needs. The University will make every effort to provide appropriate support for disabled students.

**3.3. The University will strive to provide overseas applicants with equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for undertaking a research programme as other applicants and will consider applications from overseas students according to its standard selection procedures.**

**3.3.1. The University will provide clear guidance to overseas applicants on qualification equivalences and their relation to the University's minimum entry requirements.**

**3.3.2. The University will encourage academic departments to interview all short-listed applicants. For those applicants for whom a face-to-face interview is not practical, alternative arrangements will be made.**

**3.4. The University will ensure that its agreed procedures and policies are implemented consistently across its academic departments.**

The central admissions office will monitor patterns of applications and decisions, and will use this information to support admissions staff in academic departments with delivering an efficient and fair admissions service.

**3.5. Applications for research study will be considered by at least two members of staff.**

All applications will be considered by at least two members of academic staff before a decision is reached on whether to make an offer or to

reject an applicant. The members of staff will typically be the applicant's expected programme supervisor and the admissions selector.

**3.6. The University will ensure that applicants are in possession of the information they need in order to make a decision whether to accept or reject an offer.**

Applicants to whom an offer is made will be given the following information:

- The expected total fees relating to the research programme
- The expected start date of the research programme
- The expected period of registration for fee-paying purposes
- The terms and conditions of the offer.

Applicants will also be advised of additional sources of relevant information (University Regulations; the Code of Practice and Guidebook for Research Students and Supervisors which includes information about the obligations of students; sources of funding; accommodation and travel).

**3.7. Applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their application.**

Applicants will be referred to the University's application tracking facility which allows applicants to view the status of their application and reminds them of any action they may need to take.

**4. The University will provide appropriate and timely information to applicants.**

**4.1. The University will inform successful applicants of any relevant changes to their research programme (e.g. transfer of a supervisor from the University) promptly, and with due regard to the implications for each applicant.**

**4.1.1. Where changes to a programme of research are significant, the University will make every effort to offer the successful applicant(s) a suitable alternative.**

- 4.2. The University will provide clear and timely information to successful applicants about the arrangements for registration and induction.**
  - 4.3. Pre-registration and registration information will be sent to applicants three months prior to registration or, thereafter, as soon as they have accepted an offer of a place.**
  - 4.4. The University will make every effort to provide overseas applicants with the official documentation they require to support visa and funding applications.**
  - 4.5. The University will have a mechanism for providing unsuccessful applicants with appropriate feedback on their application, upon request.**
- 5. The University will ensure that staff with recruitment and admissions responsibilities are provided with the opportunity for training in the areas of policy, procedure and good practice.**
  - 5.1. New admissions staff will be required to attend appropriate training in all areas related to the selection and admission of new students.**
  - 5.2. The central admissions office will publish its admissions procedures for research programmes and related Good Practice in the Selector's Guide, and this will be reviewed and updated annually.**
- 6. This Code of Practice may be supplemented by additional departmental procedures and codes.**

It is understood and expected that academic departments will build upon this Code of Practice with their complementary procedures.
- 7. The University will review its policies and procedures annually to ensure they continue to support its mission and strategic objectives, and that they remain current and valid in light of changing circumstances.**