



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

**Student
Recruitment,
Admissions
And
Marketing.**

Undergraduate Admissions Policy (Full-Time Programmes)

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the University's aims for the recruitment and admission of full-time undergraduate students. It describes also the principles which are used to select and admit new undergraduate students.
- 1.2 It does not describe in any detail the processes used for considering applications; these are explained in general terms at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply>
- 1.3 Each academic department operates its own internal admissions procedures, which conform with the principles stated in this policy. Further information on departmental admissions procedures can be found in departmental web pages, accessible via: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/departments/>

2 Aims

- 2.1 The University aims to maintain the highest standards of excellence as a research-led institution of international standing¹.
- 2.2 In the context of teaching, we aim to:
- educate students within a curriculum and learning environment reflecting and informed by the process of research and delivered by staff working at the frontiers of academic enquiry and professional practice; and
 - provide opportunities for all students to fulfil their potential and develop the skills, attributes and values that are essential to entrepreneurship and employment, lifelong learning and global citizenship.
- 2.3 This Admissions Policy supports the University's *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*² by aiming to recruit students:
- of the highest academic and intellectual ability;
 - with the potential and motivation to succeed on its courses; and
 - who will fully engage with, and benefit from, the University's courses.
- We aim to achieve a student community that is balanced and diverse in terms of experience and background, recognising the educational as well as cultural benefits that this brings to us all.
- 2.4 We aim to recruit these students by:
- encouraging applications from the widest range of educational, social and ethnic backgrounds³;
 - providing clear and transparent admissions information to prospective applicants;
 - operating a fair and flexible admissions process;
 - ensuring the consistent application of policy across the University.
- 2.5 This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice on Recruitment and Admissions and the Schwartz Recommendations for Good Practice⁴, and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students.
- 2.6 This Admissions Policy is reviewed annually by the University in the light of experience, research, and good practice.

1. University of Sheffield Corporate Plan 2003/04 to 2007/08
2. University of Sheffield Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for 2005-10
3. University of Sheffield Widening Participation Strategy, 2005-2010
4. Fair admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for good practice (2004), Admissions to HE Steering Group.

3. Information

3.1 The University provides admission and course information which is clear, comprehensive and easily accessible by applicants. Course and admissions information is provided in:

- the printed Undergraduate Prospectus available from: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/undergraduate/orderprospectus>,
- the online prospectus, which is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospectus/>
- departmental course brochures which are produced by academic departments; these can be requested directly from departments whose contact details are available in the printed prospectus or online at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/departments/>
- the University's and departmental websites at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk>
- the UCAS website at: <http://www.ucas.com/search/index.html>

3.2.1 The University also provides information about student finance, and urges applicants and prospective applicants to seek all available financial support and information. Details of the University's bursary and scholarship provision for undergraduate students is given at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance/help>

4 Admissions Requirements

4.1 For admission, **all students** must:

- have a GCSE in English at grade C or an equivalent qualification (see 4.8 below)
- satisfy the specific entry requirements for the chosen degree course (see Section 3.1 for details of where to find admissions information).

We welcome applications from mature students (see 4.14), students with a disability (see 4.15), and those from groups currently under-represented in higher education (see 4.16).

4.2 Academic Requirements - General Principles

- We consider any qualification at a suitable academic level (Level 3 in the UK National Qualifications Framework or above, see appendix 10.5) – this includes pre-Curriculum 2000 qualifications and many other European and international qualifications.
- Applicants are encouraged to avoid combinations of very similar subjects (such as Law and Constitutional Law for example).
- Applicants who have already met part of the course entry requirements, through an A level taken a year early, will normally be given full credit for this qualification in any offer made; this does not automatically apply to GCE AS levels taken in Year 12.

4.3 **GCE & VCE Qualifications** - We accept all GCE and VCE A and GCE AS Level subjects approved by the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Agency). However, we usually expect applicants to offer the equivalent of two A Levels in mainstream academic subjects (ie. no more than one of Textiles, Physical Education, Art & Design etc). We require applicants offering GCE A/AS Levels and VCE A Levels to achieve 18 units for entry. The following combinations of qualifications are normally acceptable:

- 12 units from two GCE A levels plus 6 units from a third GCE A level, two GCE AS levels or a 6 unit VCE A level
- 12 units from two 6 unit VCE A levels plus 6 units from a GCE A level or from two GCE AS levels
- A 12 unit VCE A level (Double Award) plus 6 units from a GCE A level or two GCE AS levels.

4.4 **General Studies** - A/AS Level General Studies is an acceptable subject for entry.

4.5 **Key Skills** - A qualification in Key Skills is not required for entry, but we encourage applicants to highlight such skills in their application.

4.6 **Advanced Extension Awards** - Although we do not require applicants to offer Advanced Extension Awards (AEAs) for entry, we welcome

applicants who have taken or are planning to take one or more AEs as this provides further evidence of achievement and might, in competitive subject-areas in particular, strengthen their application.

- 4.7 **International and European Baccalaureates** – Applications from students taking the International or the European Baccalaureate are very welcome for entry to all our courses. Details of entry requirements are provided by academic departments in the Prospectus and on their web pages.
- 4.8 **BTEC Higher National Diplomas and Certificates** – We also welcome applications from students taking BTEC Higher National Diplomas and Certificates for many of our courses. Details of entry requirements are provided by academic departments in the Prospectus and on their web pages.
- 4.9 **Other Qualifications** - We recognise that suitability for a course may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, and we welcome applications from people offering other types and combinations of qualifications. These might include:
- Access to Higher Education programmes
 - Irish Leaving Certificate
 - Scottish Advanced Highers and Highers
 - many overseas and European national qualifications.
- 4.10 **English Language** - Applicants must be proficient in written and spoken English and are normally required to have the equivalent of a grade C in GCSE English. This can be achieved through a number of qualifications; the list of acceptable English Language qualifications is available at www.shef.ac.uk/undergraduate/policies/englang.html
- 4.11 **Mathematics** - Students are also normally required to have the equivalent of a grade C in GCSE in Mathematics, though this is not a requirement for entry to all courses; if you do not have this or an equivalent qualification, you should contact the department(s) concerned before submitting an application.
- 4.12 **Course Requirements** - Courses have varying subject and grade requirements for entry. Applicants should check the up-to-date entry requirements before submitting an application.
- 4.13 **Foundation Years** - The University offers a number of foundation years in:
- Engineering
 - Medicine
 - some science subjects.
- These foundation years are normally designed for strong applicants who do not have the required subject background for entry to these courses. They may also be suitable for overseas applicants who have completed their secondary school education in their country of origin

and achieved a high standard in a qualification which is not deemed to be equivalent to a UK Level 3 qualification (e.g. A Level).

- 4.14 **Mature Students** - We welcome applications from mature students (anyone aged 21 or over) and do not set an upper age limit. We value the contribution that mature students make to our academic community and are committed to ensuring that mature students have an equal opportunity of access to our courses. In addition to recent and relevant academic study, we look for a combination of enthusiasm for study, life experience, and an understanding of the subject(s) applied for. As part of the selection process, Admissions Tutors may wish to meet with mature applicants, or request examples of recent coursework, to assess their potential further.
- 4.15 **Disabled Applicants** - We welcome applications from students with disabilities. Their application will be assessed following standard selection procedures and consideration of their support requirements will remain entirely separate. If an offer is made, an assessment of needs is carried out to ensure that the University can provide the required support. In the unlikely event that the adjustments needed to provide the required support could not be considered reasonable, the University undertakes to offer the applicant support in submitting an alternative application.
- 4.16 **Applicants from Under-Represented Groups** - The University aims to encourage applications from the widest range of educational, social and ethnic backgrounds. We work with a large number of schools and colleges to ensure that students who have the potential to benefit from and to succeed in studying at Sheffield have the opportunity to do so. We offer the following outreach programmes and progression schemes which target students from groups currently under-represented in higher education, or 'first generation' students:
- Sheffield's Outreach & Access to Medicine Scheme
 - Professions Progression Partnerships Schemes in Law, Accountancy and Architecture
 - The University's Compact Scheme
 - The White Rose Compact Scheme, which offers students applying to the Universities of Leeds and York an opportunity to benefit from special consideration from the University of Sheffield, as appropriate.
- Admissions tutors may give special consideration to such applicants, as they deem appropriate.
- 4.17 **Health checks** - All students must be in satisfactory state of health on entering the University. In order to confirm this, all new students are required to complete a medical questionnaire and to attend an interview with the University Health Service. All offers of a place are therefore subject to a satisfactory health check, which is normally undertaken during Intro Week, as part of the University's main registration process.

In addition, in accordance with national guidelines for the protection of both patients and healthcare workers including students, all prospective medical and dental students are required to show that they are not infectious carriers of Hepatitis B, and that they have successfully completed a course of hepatitis immunisation prior to commencement of the course.

- 4.18 **Applicants with a Criminal Conviction** - As part of the University's duty of care to its staff and students, the University will ask for information about any relevant criminal convictions. Relevant convictions, as defined by UCAS "*are only those for offences against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, and for offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and you should not reveal them*¹.

This information will not necessarily prejudice the application.

There are additional requirements for applicants to health, health-related, social work and teaching courses. Applicants to these areas are advised to read the University's *Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Policy Statement [Prospective Students]* which is available at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/crbpolicystatement/> More information is also supplied by the relevant departments.

1. 06 Applying Online (5.6 About You, Criminal Convictions), UCAS

5 Applications

5.1 **Submission** - Applications for entry to our full-time undergraduate courses must be submitted via UCAS. Please see www.shef.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply or www.ucas.com for further information on how to apply.

5.2 **Deadlines** - Applications for entry to Medicine and Dentistry should be received at UCAS by 15 October. As there is high competition for entry to these courses, we will not consider late applications.

Applications from home fee-paying (UK and EU) students to all other courses should be received at UCAS by 15 January. The decision to consider late applications is dependent on the number and quality of applications received by the deadline and will vary from course to course. We strive to be as flexible as possible and will do our utmost to consider late applications; however, this may not always be possible.

Overseas applicants should submit applications by 30 June of the UCAS application year.

5.3 **Deferred Entry** - We welcome applications for deferred entry. Applicants who apply for deferred entry:

- will be considered under the terms which apply in the UCAS application year in which they apply; and
- must satisfy the conditions for entry in the year in which they apply ie. by 31 August of the UCAS application year.

5.4 **Entry to Year/Level 2** - We consider applications for entry to the second year of an undergraduate programme, where applicants can demonstrate that they have undertaken and successfully completed the equivalent of the first year of the course they are applying to enter. The University reserves the right to determine whether an applicant has covered the first year of its course through an external programme of study. In assessing this, the University may require further information from the applicant.

5.5 **Offers** - Academic departments are responsible for making offers. Admissions Tutors will only make offers to students they believe are capable of benefiting from, and successfully completing, the course.

The level of the offer reflects the number of applications expected for a course, the number of places available on that course, and the level of achievement usually required to do well on it. Offers are reviewed annually by departments and are subject to change. The standard offer should be checked on the University's and UCAS' websites before submitting an application. Applicants who, at the point of application, have already achieved grades equivalent to or above the standard offer are not automatically entitled to an offer.

We make offers based on the information provided by applicants in the UCAS form. Any change to this information, particularly to the information pertaining to qualifications which are being studied, must be communicated as soon as possible to the University's Admissions Section, as it may affect the offer made.

We are committed to making offers which are appropriate to individual applicants and the qualifications they offer. In addition, admissions staff have the discretion to vary the weight they give to examination results and other indicators of achievement, motivation and potential. This means they have the discretion to vary the offer that they make to applicants, within the University's Admissions Policy, and this may result in applicants for the same course receiving different types, or levels, of offers.

5.5.1 **Conditional Offers**

Most offers will be based upon the portfolio of qualifications being taken in Year 13 or the last year of secondary education, and will normally be conditional upon achievement in three A Levels or equivalent qualifications. We recognise, however, that some UK schools and colleges in particular, may not be able to offer their students the required range of qualifications and subjects. If this is the case, ask your school or college to indicate any limitations in provision in the reference part of your UCAS form.

We also recognise that some applicants may have had their number of A/AS Level subjects restricted through special personal circumstances. This is particularly important in the case of applicants who will be offering fewer than 3 A Levels or the equivalent; if this is the case, you should contact us as early as possible to discuss the suitability of your qualifications and any circumstances which may have impacted on your studies.

Offers may also be conditional on other, non-academic, conditions such as the receipt of a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (see Admissions Requirements).

5.5.2 **Unconditional offers**

Unconditional offers are only made to students who have already achieved all the conditions for entry to their chosen course.

All offers are subject to the University's *Terms and Conditions of Offers* which are available in the undergraduate prospectus or at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ugtermsandconditions/>

5.6 **Interviews** - Most applications are assessed on the basis of the UCAS application form and interviews are not normally a pre-requisite of admission. The exceptions are the departments of Medicine, Dentistry, Orthoptics and Human Communication Science (for entry to Speech Science), which conduct interviews to further assess the motivation

and personal qualities of applicants, such as their communication skills, and the depth of understanding of the subject.

Other departments may also interview applicants. If so, they will provide a clear explanation of the reasons for, and structure of, the interview, and will follow University agreed good practice.

- 5.7 **Results** - Applicants who narrowly fail to satisfy the academic conditions of their offer may still be offered a place, subject to the availability of places. We aim to be as flexible as possible. We also take account, as far as is possible, of any extenuating circumstances that may have impacted on the exam performance of the applicant; to confirm this, we usually require a supporting statement from the academic referee.
- 5.8 **Verification of Qualifications** - The University requires all applicants to provide evidence of the qualifications upon which their offer of a place is based. For the majority of UCAS applicants, UCAS supplies the results directly to institutions. Other applicants, however, should expect to provide original certificates of their qualifications prior to registering.
- 5.9 **Fraudulent Statements & Omissions** - Offers of a place are based on the information provided by the applicant at any point during the application process, and are made in good faith by the University. False statements or omissions of relevant information may lead to the withdrawal of an offer or a place. Please refer to the *False Statements and Omissions* available in the *06 Applying Online*, UCAS booklet.

6 Assessment of Applications

- 6.1 **Students** - The University looks for motivated and inquisitive students with the necessary academic preparation and personal attributes, as detailed in the entry requirements for each course, who will benefit from the University's research informed curriculum and learning environment.
- 6.2 **Methods of Assessment** - We are keen to ensure that all applicants are provided with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills, potential and achievements. The University's methods of assessment are fair and valid, are applied consistently, and are regularly reviewed.
- 6.3 **Academic Achievement** - Applicants are assessed primarily, but not only, by reference to prior and predicted academic achievement. Each applicant is assessed as an individual, with academic discretion used in assessing the range of evidence presented by applicants.
- 6.4 **Core Information** - In assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants, we consider the following information in the UCAS form:
- the subjects and grades achieved in qualifications already awarded, including GCSE and AS achievement
 - the subjects and predicted grades in qualifications which are being studied
 - the personal statement for evidence of:
 - motivation and commitment to the subject(s)
 - work or voluntary experience showing commitment to a chosen career
 - extra-curricular activities, achievements and interests.
 - the referee's statement for confirmation of academic potential and personal qualities.
- 6.5 **Additional Information** – The following information is also taken into account:
- participation in any of the University's Outreach or Compact schemes (Compact, SOAMS, Professions Progression Partnerships etc.)*
 - whether the applicant is from a social group currently under-represented in higher education*
 - participation in Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Summer Schools*
 - Any additional statement(s) supplied by the school or referee in support of the application, including references to special personal or extenuating circumstances
 - Other evidence of academic potential, such as membership of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY)*.
- 6.6 **Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (APL/APEL)**
The University considers all relevant indicators of academic potential and of motivation; this includes any experience gained through, for instance, paid or unpaid work.

- 6.7 **Other Information** - Admissions Tutors may take into account additional factors, and draw on a variety of methods of assessments (interviews, portfolio, essay-work etc.), to assess further the suitability of applicants. Information about departmental selection procedures is available in the prospectus, departmental course brochures and departmental websites.
- 6.8 **Irrelevant Factors** - In selecting students, the University does not consider factors which are irrelevant to the assessment of applicants' individual academic merit and potential, such as financial factors or links with the University (e.g. relatives of graduates or benefactors of the University) .
- 6.9 **School Data & Entry Testing** - The University does not use DfES school data (for example, DfES school league table information) or admissions tests in its selection of undergraduate students.

* UK-domiciled applicants only.

7 Feedback & Complaints

7.1 **Feedback** - The University feels it is important that unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. However, since it is not possible for the University to provide every applicant with feedback, feedback is provided upon request only. Once feedback has been provided, the University reserves the right not to respond to additional requests for information on the same application.

67.2 **Complaints** - We recognise there may be occasions when applicants wish to make a complaint. If applicants feel they may have a cause for complaint, they are invited to write in the first instance to:

The Head of Admissions
Admissions Section
Student Recruitment, Admissions and Marketing
9 Northumberland Road
Sheffield
S10 2TT
UK.

8. Training of Admissions Staff

- 8.1 Admissions Tutors are normally academic members of staff appointed by the head of the academic department. They are based within academic departments and they may receive secretarial and organisational support from within their department.

- 8.2 The training of all admissions staff, however, is the responsibility of the central Admissions Section, and Admissions Tutors are required to attend training in admissions procedures, relevant legislation and good practice, so that they can discharge their role fairly and competently.

9 Monitoring of University Admissions Policy

- 9.1 The University's **Academic Development Committee** has responsibility for overseeing the admissions process, including:
- implementing and developing the corporate strategy for student recruitment and admissions
 - monitoring and reviewing University and departmental recruitment and admissions policies and practices
 - admissions quotas
 - monitoring recruitment and admissions to courses and defining such University recruitment strategies as may be necessary within the context of:
 - the University's agreed student number targets
 - the strategies for learning and teaching and widening participation.

- 9.2 The **Admissions Section of the Student Recruitment and Admissions office** has responsibility for:
- determining and managing the University's Admissions Procedure;
 - monitoring adherence by academic departments to the University's Admissions Policy and Procedure;
 - training Admissions Tutors and disseminating relevant information;
 - advising applicants on UCAS procedures;
 - liaising with UCAS;
 - monitoring applications.

The Section works closely with Admissions Tutors in academic departments to provide an efficient and fair admissions service to applicants.

- 9.3 **Academic departments (Admissions Tutors)** are responsible for:
- determining entry criteria, deciding on selection procedures and setting offers for each of their courses;
 - assessing applications and making offers;
 - running departmental open days;
 - ensuring that departmental selection procedures and principles comply with the University's overarching policy and procedures, and are applied consistently;
 - providing detailed and up-to-date course information for applicants and prospective applicants.

Heads of academic departments delegate the responsibility for admissions matters to a Principal Admissions Tutor who may be supported by other Admissions Tutors within the department. Admissions Tutors have discretion to establish departmental selection procedures within the University's overarching Undergraduate Admissions Policy and Procedure.

10 Appendices

- 10.1 English Language Qualifications
- 10.2 CRB Policy Statement
- 10.3 Terms & Conditions of Offers
- 10.4 Admissions Complaints Procedure
- 10.5 UK National Qualifications Framework